

Kaspar Hauser: Perceiving the unfamiliar other

(Part I)

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Introduction

In the history of curative education, the figure of Kaspar Hauser is given much prominence in both philosophical anthropology and psychology. The observations made about him offered plentiful food for thought as to the conditions of language acquisition as well as the social and cognitive development of the child. From his first arrival in Nuremberg on Whitsunday of 1828, Kaspar Hauser's enigmatic fate famously attracted an unusual degree of public attention, and still does to this day. Many artists made him their subject matter, both in fact and in fiction, through poetry, novel, drama and film. He is portrayed as the epitome of man, or rather of a particular human condition: In many ways, he is the abandoned stranger with no knowledge of his past or control of his own destiny. For Karl König, curative pedagogue and founder of the Camphill movement, Kaspar Hauser, Victor von Aveyron and others stood at the very beginning of curative education, representing the fate of children who are, for a multitude of reasons, prevented from developing their individuality and participating in social life.¹

Controversial debate in the public arena focused on Kaspar Hauser's alleged aristocratic roots, with political motivation behind his childhood incarceration and eventual assassination being suspected by some while questioned by others. Despite Hauser's own comments on the subject, both his origins and his life prior to his arrival in Nuremberg remain obscure. There must also be some doubt as to whether or not his account of events was perhaps influenced by a leading style of questioning. Certainly Anselm von Feuerbach, Hauser's mentor, presumed as much.² Still, the many documents that cover Kaspar Hauser's brief public life, as well as his own accounts, show that he was forced to spend a considerable time in captivity under conditions of social isolation.³ His physical and mental condition and his ensuing development give vital clues as to the understanding of childhood development altogether, especially in the context of other cases of maltreated or so-called feral children. Surviving documents also show us examples of how society dealt with such children. Above all, they bear witness to extraordinary personalities and their impact. It is these aspects - rather than the question of his ancestry or the circumstances of his violent death - that are the focus of this paper.

1. Cf. König, 1950/2008; see also Müller Wiedemann, 1981/1994.

2. "The accounts of his incarceration and transportation to Nuremberg are, in part, unbelievable or mysterious, and some are probably even untrue. He was questioned at a time when he had almost no notion, no concept of nature or human matters, least of all the proper words to describe them. He often spoke in his confused, dark gibberish, saying things he did not mean to say, or leaving the questioner enough scope for reading their own thoughts, opinions and hypotheses into his answers." Feuerbach in a letter to the Countess von der Recke, September 20, 1828, quoted from Pies, 1966, p. 37.

3. This was certainly the view taken in psychological literature, e.g., by Lucien Malson, 1976, Uta Frith, 1989 and Inge Seiffge-Krenke, 2004.

Observations, hypotheses, judgments - perceiving the unfamiliar other

As obscure as his childhood and youth may have been, his arrival in Nuremberg instantly made him a very public matter. He drew hundreds of curious onlookers, was questioned by representatives of the city and the police, and thoroughly examined by physicians and teachers who subjected him to numerous experiments. There are other examples of such overwhelming interest: Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron, attracted attention from far beyond his native France. The fate of Amela and Kamela, the Wolf Girls from India, gave rise to similar levels of interest (Malson, 1976). Another example is the 13-year old girl Genie who, in 1970, was freed from captivity in her parental home (Curtiss, 1976; Frith, 1989). Finally, Helen Keller should be mentioned even though her social isolation was due to her deaf-muteness. In her particular case, it was the overcoming of this condition and Keller's further life that captured the public interest and, on occasion, aroused suspicion.

In Kaspar Hauser's case, the curiosity had a multitude of motives: Sensationalism as well as concern for what was seen as his cruel fate, scientific interest and the question of 'human nature', a charitable attitude such as the impulse to give the child what it clearly had been deprived of, i.e., care and interest, nurture and education. At the heart of the initial reports however, is the way the public was touched by Hauser's personality. Excepting curiosity, all of the motives expressed played a key role at the very beginnings of curative education. Another striking phenomenon in this climate of assumptions and hypotheses is - effectively as a counterpoint - people's struggle for a description of what they saw that is precise, detailed and as 'objective' as possible, one that is consistent with the spirit of a scientifically minded century.⁴ Similar efforts are manifest in Jean Itard's reports about Victor von Aveyron, as well as the thorough documentations of Heinrich Maria Deinhardt and Jan Georgens in their 1858 *Levana* yearbook.⁵ Kaspar Hauser's chroniclers evidently tried to distinguish between their descriptions and the assumptions based upon them, ensuring that the latter were clearly recognisable as such.⁶ They and many other observers were not only mystified by the child's ancestry and history but also by the image that presented itself to them. It lacked consistency. They were familiar with tramps and neglected people and those 'backward in their development'. Hauser's appearance did not fit any of these patterns, though. Here was a young man who seemed unable to stand upright but could write, who was showing completely incomprehensible reactions and had the manner of "a barely two or three-year old child inside the body of a youth" (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 9), without appearing to be childlike. His accounts, appearance and manner left his contemporaries unable to form any clear picture or categories. Hence they are left with assumptions and speculations: Is he a feral or semi-feral child? Is he neglected, a maniac or imbecile? Or even a fraud making fools of the people of Nuremberg? (Feuerbach, 1832) During his entire lifetime and beyond, Kaspar Hauser is labelled with extreme and contradictory attributes: imposter, pure soul, suicide, heir to the throne deprived of what is rightfully his. Also, Kaspar Hauser's abilities or manner of expression did not amount to a consistent picture, either. Especially during his first few weeks and months in Nuremberg, people around him thought he had great mental potential. In retrospect, Baron von Tucher, probationary judge and later his guardian, said: "[...]For his mind completely resembled a tabula rasa, absorbing with limitless receptivity the whole world of concepts, and doing so with an intense, reproductive energy that left everyone in awe and attributing this to extraordinary mental powers" (Tucher, 1834, quoted in Pies, 1966, p. 35). Anselm von Feuerbach also saw in him someone who was "full of the most splendid natural talent, gifted with the fastest comprehension and a most admirable memory⁷[...]. The speed of his progress is extraordinary. He acquires in a matter of days what would take others months or years." (Feuerbach, 1828, p. 36). It was exactly this pace of progress - inexplicable to many - that aroused the suspicion of some. From where we stand, this phenomenon can only be explained

4. It should be noted that descriptions following a systematic format only started a few months after Hauser's arrival.

5. Itard, 1801/1976, Itard, 1806/1976, Georgens, Gayette, & Deinhardt, 1958.

6. See e.g., Fuhrmann, 1833/1983 and Feuerbach, 1832/2004.

7. Daumer wrote in his notes: "With regard to virtually anything that concerned him, he was able to remember how many days or weeks ago it had happened. He knew how many times he had had his soup, his hot chocolate or his porridge. Of the checkers or chess matches he had played, he could remember how many and with whom he had played them. Of five games of checkers he had played he could remember every single move in the right sequence. Of each of the all the gifts he had received he knew exactly who gave them to him. Even with coins he could tell who they came from on account of the various smudges on them." Daumer, 1873/1984, p. 246.

by a relatively normal early childhood (Seiffge-Krenke, 2004). The girl Genie who was found in 1970 after 13 years of extreme physical and social deprivation, had spent the first two years of her childhood under relatively normal circumstances. She too acquired speech very rapidly (Curtiss, 1977, quoted from Frith, 1989). Their accounts also show similarities with regard to more subtle aspects: Four weeks after being freed, her look changed. She appeared to be “alert and familiar with known and unknown adults (p. 33)”. About Kaspar Hauser it is said that: “After a few months, his facial features changed completely. His look became expressive and lively [...] and his old physiognomy was barely recognisable.” (Feuerbach, 1832 quoted in Daumer, 1823/1983, p. 40.) In this respect, they both differed from Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron’. He made relatively slow progress in acquiring speech and developing social relationships as he probably lacked the foundation of a normal early childhood (Itard, 1806/1976; Frith, 1989; Seiffge-Krenke, 2004).

Still, the development of both Genie and Kaspar Hauser had its limits. Hauser’s impression on his contemporaries changed significantly. In 1830, his guardian Baron von Tucher put on record that “he does not [lack] mental abilities, although they are not brilliant”. (Tucher, 1830, p. 90). On the same subject, Feuerbach wrote in 1832: “His mind is not that of a genius, and neither does he have extraordinary talent. Whatever he does learn is due to tenacious, stubborn diligence [...]” (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 68). Yet it remained difficult to gauge his abilities and limitations. Heinrich Fuhrmann gave a powerful testimony to that effect. He gave Kaspar Hauser a personal immersion course in religious education during the foundling’s last year.⁸ Fuhrmann perceived in him an odd mixture of “the maturity of youth and the naivety of a child [...]. He now talks surprisingly well about a subject, displaying a proficient grasp of subjects altogether, when suddenly the oaf appears” (Fuhrmann, 1833, p. 18). Fuhrmann summarises: “I had to judge with great care as to whether or not he had actually grasped what I was trying to teach him. All too often, I had to recognise that while, at times, the youth in him appeared to speak sense, the child told me that he had not quite understood me.” (Fuhrmann, 1833, p. 20).

There is a trace of an initial uncertainty about this and other opinions. Kaspar Hauser’s life was constantly in the public focus. This suggests that many aspects of these discussions would have left their mark on him.⁹

Less convincing than the above descriptions, with room for many more attributions, is an almost poetising characterisation by an otherwise quite prosaic von Feuerbach:¹⁰ Hauser’s initial and complete ignorance of everyday objects and activities as well as most foodstuffs made him appear like an “inhabitant of another planet who was transplanted down to earth by some miracle, or for one of Plato’s beings, born and raised below the earth, and only in maturity ascending to the light of the sun to join the world of the living” (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 16). This description is remarkable in more ways than one. It is also critical for the understanding of exceptional humans or behaviours. Feuerbach is not judging past or present. He is considering the hypothetical question as to under what circumstances the behaviour he observed would appear reasonable or ‘normal’. At the same time, he is using an image. Thus, he achieves a new level of understanding that is poetical in its density and vividness but still comprehensively fact-related. It enabled the existential unfamiliarity that Kaspar Hauser perceived as his surroundings to become vivid. As will be shown later, this description is linked to Kaspar Hauser’s own experience in as far as he was able to relate it.

The more gaps which remain in understanding Kaspar Hauser, the more powerful the impact of his personality appears to be; normally the attributes of a personality are formed by a framework of social perception: parents and family, nationality, social and cultural background, corresponding socialisation and education - all of these give meaning to the encounter structure. Under these circumstances it is no surprise

8. Five to seven hours weekly between October 1832 and May 1833, cf. Fuhrmann, 1833/1983, p. 29.

9. “There is no doubt that Hauser knew of the existence of such writings, especially of one published in 1831 by Police Superintendent Merker. It was quite often discussed in his presence, and I have heard him say that he thought it hurtful that people took him for a fraud. He was also well familiar with the name of Merkel as the most eminent representative of this opinion. Whether or not he read one of these writings himself I cannot say with certainty. It seems very plausible, however... I also know from his bills that he bought Feuerbach’s publication... for the purpose of sending it to the mayoress’ sister. While I am not certain whether Hauser merely knew of the existence of Merker’s more recent writings or whether he actually read them, I think it likely he did read them. As Hauser remarked himself, this publication lay open in teacher Meyer’s living room [...] while [Hauser], in late September, lodged at my home for eight days and was accidentally shown the room in which I keep my books, among which was the latest of Merker’s writings.” (Hickel, 1834/1966, p. 120).

10. Frith, 1989, p. 30 and Malson, 1976, p. 59 also view him in much the same way.

that artists took this situation as an opportunity for describing the human situation *per se*. Feuerbach himself formulates a quintessence that is capable of imagining the individual in radical ways: He is neither child nor youth, “without motherland, without parents or relatives - the only creature of his species [...]” (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 69). It echoes the opinion of Dacier, one of Jean Itard’s colleagues, on Victor: “Where Victor is concerned, one must first and foremost consider from whence he came and where he has arrived. For if this young man is to be judged fairly, he can be compared to himself only” (quoted from Malson, 1976, p. 93). Those thoughts are rooted in a fundamental theme of the 19th century, i.e. the completely new question of the development of man as a nature and spirit being - with regard to the species and becoming of the individual as well as the question as to how the two are linked.¹¹ In 1841, Ludwig Feuerbach characterised man as the only being capable of making a subject of its own species, the universally human.¹² Max Stirner thinks humans capable of pushing the boundaries of their own species by their acts of volition.¹³ His view is clearly juxtaposed to an image of man limited to a framework of biological facilities and their evolutionary origin, as it emerged in the 19th century along with the subsequent standardising and measuring of the human being, e.g., by way of the first intelligence tests.

Remarkably, in their pioneering work on curative education, Georgens and Deinhardt also delved deep into the question of the individuality, based on ‘abnormal’ children. They characterise the ‘peculiarity of the human individual’ in the cultural nations as “each representing its own species, as it were [...]”.¹⁴ In their opinion however, individuality is not without its problems: It can be too pronounced or addressed educationally in an exaggerated manner.¹⁵ Individuality is seen as potentially in conflict with society or the universally human. At the same time, the accounts of Dacier, Anselm Feuerbach and Georgens/Deinhardt illustrate how the encounter with unique human beings can sharpen the focus even if the link between being and appearance, individuality and species, remains open. In 1904, 45 years after Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species*, Rudolf Steiner formulates such a synthesis based on the concept of the human biography: “Anyone who reflects accurately on the essence of biography becomes aware that in regard to spiritual things each man is a species by himself” (Steiner, 1904/1976, p. 57).

Understanding the human being while reflecting on borderline cases

With the age of enlightenment came the task of redefining the relationship between man and nature, and man and society (‘civilisation’). Against this background, ‘wild’ and ‘neglected’ children acted as welcome objects of interest and a touchstone for pertinent theories. By fostering Victor, Jean Itard tried to reinforce the philosophical concepts of empiricism (Locke, Condillac, Diderot) which signified that rather than being based on ‘innate ideas’, mental development is chiefly the product of sensual experiences and social influences, namely education.¹⁶ According to Itard, his records were intended to demonstrate for the first time “the sum total of knowledge and ideas that man owed to his education” (p. 116). From another point of view, the conception of ‘natural education’ according to Rousseau, with its corruptive influence of society, was also at issue and to be tested on the feral children. These and similar questions also come into play when assessing Kaspar Hauser’s moral situation. Which abilities are acquired and which inherited? To what extent can shortcomings of emotional and mental development be made good? Following his first encounter with the foundling, Feuerbach thought that ‘in regard to morals [...], Kaspar Hauser [is] a living rebuttal of the doctrine of original sin. The purest innocence and kind-heartedness was in everything he did and said, even though he lacked even the slightest notion of right or wrong, good or evil” (Feuerbach, 1828, pp. 36-37).

11. Already K. König pointed out that, around the time of Kaspar Hauser’s arrival, the first essay on embryology by K. Ernst von Baer was published, cf. König 1960/2012, p. 28.

12. Cf. Feuerbach, 1849³/2011, p. 37, p. 41.

13. Cf. Stirner, 1844/1972.

14. Georgens, 1861/1979, p. 40. (This reference is also found in the essay *Ästhetische Kraft in der Heilpädagogik*.)

15. loc. cit., p. 40., see also p. 19, p. 108.

16. “Cast on this globe without physical strength or innate ideas, unable of his own accord to obey the constitutional laws of his organisation, which destine him for the first rank in the system of beings, it is only in society that man can find the eminent place reserved for him in the natural order, and without civilisation he would be one of the weakest and least intelligent of animals.” Cf. Itard, 1801/1976, p. 114.

He also thought Kaspar Hauser disproved the concept of God as something inherent and demonstrated that it was indeed acquired by education or study of nature (Feuerbach, 1828, p. 36). In discussions during his religious lessons, Heinrich Fuhrmann concluded “that while the sense for religion was inherent in man, knowledge of it remains something to be acquired” (Fuhrmann, pp. 34-35). In contemporary adoption, these philosophical issues have been replaced by more specific thoughts on social and speech development.¹⁷ All are insights into the nature of man and his education as reflected in borderline cases.

Developmental-psychological aspects – approaches to childhood consciousness?

The biographies of Victor and Kaspar Hauser, as well as those of Helen Keller and Genie, imply the existence of ‘sensitive’ or ‘critical’ phases both during normal speech acquisition and social development. The documents about Kaspar Hauser also contain clues about other areas of development. There is some uncertainty however, in how far these observations may be applied generally. The reports quote impressive accounts of his incredible sensitivity of perception and the structure of his consciousness, in as far as this was conveyed to his contemporaries by his remarks. The resulting overall impression is that of an imbalance between a childlike and a more mature side of his personality, as indicated by the above quoted voices. The phenomenon is not so much suggestive of retardation as of different developmental stages taking place at the same time.

The accounts of Kaspar Hauser are impressive both because of their similarities with and differences to Victor. The latter showed a high degree of ‘adaptation’ to life in nature. He was insensitive to cold and heat as well as many smells, yet sensitive to specific sensations to do with the intake of food, e.g. cracking a nut, while seemingly ‘deaf’ to hearing impressions. Perceptions and movement reactions were one, and he was constantly in motion (Itard, 1801/1976, p. 117, p. 128). By contrast, Kaspar Hauser displayed a high sensitivity and discernability within the overall range of perception, while lacking any ability to protect or distance himself from stimuli.

Both Victor and Kaspar, immediately after being freed by his captors, had no conscious self-awareness, evidenced by their reaction to seeing their own reflections (Malson, 1976; Feuerbach, 1828). Despite these contradictions this demonstrates that, even at the level of sensory perception, an educational process needs to take place within which sensory perceptions and social experiences form a unity. Initially, Victor could not abide wearing clothes or being touched. The initial connectedness of physical perceptions and social experiences developed into an intuitively structured and integrated social perceptiveness. An observation Anselm von Feuerbach made reveals how, initially, Kaspar Hauser recognises faces. Feuerbach mentions an occasion where Kaspar Hauser was introduced to a number of dignitaries: “Whenever such an introduction took place, Kaspar would step up very closely to the party opposite, stared at him, scanned with a quick, piercing glance every feature of his face and finally, as I was able to observe very clearly, assembled all the thus gathered parts of the person’s physiognomy into its entirety” (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 36). This is reminiscent of the way autistic people recognise faces, i.e. in an analytical rather than a holistically intuitive fashion (Joseph & Tanaka, 2003). In Kaspar Hauser’s case, this manner of perception was - probably - due to a lack of human interaction in his early childhood,¹⁸ and the available records give no indication as to whether his behaviour changed during his years in Nuremberg and Ansbach. Quite remarkably, Kaspar Hauser admitted he initially distinguished between different people by random features such as their clothes and had to be prompted to look at the actual person instead. Consequently, he looked at a person’s hands which he managed to recognise well. This came more naturally to him than differentiating between people’s faces.¹⁹

17. The first to do so was the physiologist William T. Preyer. In 1870, he published his work *Die fünf Sinne des Menschen*, cf. Daumer, 1873/1984, p. 48.

18. Ute Frith demonstrated rather convincing reasons as to why, in Victor’s case, autism was a distinct possibility, while the condition can be ruled out for Kaspar Hauser. Cf. Frith, 1989, p. 32.

19. “When I entered the big world I recognised people by random features. Namely, I noticed in the presence of Mayor Binder that I recognised Madam Ryss by her red corals which she usually wears around her neck. Mayor Binder rebuked me for this and instructed me to observe a person carefully by his own appearance and not by any random features. This I did henceforth and found by careful observation that no man’s hand is like that of another. You will find that nails, the parts of the fingers and the back of the hand all show special features, and I deem this observation more reliable than the recognition of faces, as the appearance of the latter

Many observations mentioned in the reports about him are reminiscent of those characteristic in small children, e.g. the fact that infants would initially refer to themselves in the third person. It should be noted however, that, in contrast to Victor, he had no actions - unlike Victor, whose motor abilities were adapted to life in nature - or concepts to handle his universal sensitivity of perception. Thus, perceptions hit him 'hammer-like'. In addition, Kaspar's development was sufficiently advanced to allow him to inform us of his situation, albeit in a piecemeal fashion. He describes an individual in whose consciousness, perception, imagination and concept are out of balance, leaning very strongly toward his perception. Impressions break in upon him with great force and almost tangible vividness. When he first arrived in Nuremberg, Kaspar Hauser seemingly lacked any ability to assimilate these stimuli by way of cognitive structuring and appropriate behavioural responses. This led to a dramatic increase in the pathic momentum inherent in any perception, especially as he was unable to rely on a sensorily and motorically developed bodily experience to counteract this tendency.

The question is, does this constitute an experiencing that approaches 'pure perception'? At the same time, this must not be romanticised - after all, it is not unlike being flooded with stimuli. Essentially, it describes a traumatic situation. Following the first weeks and months of his appearance, Kaspar Hauser's reactions to touch, noise and smell were those of utter defencelessness and helplessness toward these sensations, which he perceived as aversive and painful. At this early stage of his development, Kaspar Hauser lacked awareness of his own person as well as that of his mental processes - he was as yet unable to differentiate between dreams and reality (Feuerbach, 1823), and he was also unaware of other people's mental processes.

In his consciousness, the layers of the impressions, moods and emotions all merged into one living entity, one that resembled the mythical world experience. Kaspar Hauser's early remarks suggest childlike thinking structures, where objects and beings are alive and animated and magically linked to his own consciousness. A number of developmental psychologists claim that a child's consciousness is organised in detaching stages or those that blend into each other. The earliest stage is what J. Perner calls *primary representations*, Ph. R. & Ph.D Zelazo refer to as *minimal consciousness* and D. Bischof-Köhler the *world of the encountered* (Bischof-Köhler, 1998). How this experience of the world is for an infant, or what it is like to be an infant, remains as yet unanswered. William James famously speculated about a state of 'blooming, buzzing confusion' in which the infant lives. Others assumed a world as that in pointillistic paintings (Cohen & Younger, 1984, from Keller, 2011), or an overall condition of primeval sensitivity, [...] uniform and structureless like a mass of fog".²⁰ In light of extensive research into early-childhood differentiation in a broad variety of areas of perception, such speculations can now be considered disproved, even if they can naturally only examine the surface of the reactions to different stimuli or stimulus scenarios. In accordance with findings from developmental psychology, Daniel Stern tried to retrace this earliest stage of world experience - which is beyond the reach of autobiography - and identified an amodal synaesthetic perception and a physiognomic experience of the world characterised by an intense dynamic and vitality (Stern, 1994). It should be noted however, that the other side of such a vivid consciousness makes for an extremely strong learning ability.

Hauser's own descriptions from his early days in Nuremberg indicate such a consciousness which, while barely conceptually penetrated, is still uniquely capable of introspection. He recalled how, looking out of a window, he was unable to see the surrounding landscape as something differentiated, neither with regard to its constituent parts nor its perspective arrangement²¹, he also recalled creating his first categories during that time.²² Many of his descriptions show how areas of perception overlap. Additionally, his mental and motor activities were still directly linked, which is another phenomenon typical of early childhood. According to

can easily change by passage of time, illness and other random events [...]. I have seen people from Hungary, France [...] whom I may not recognise by their faces. There is no doubt in my mind however, that I would recognise them by their hands, according to the power of my impressions and by virtue of my memory." Hauser, 1829/1966, p. 69.

20. W. Stern, quoted from Keller 2011⁴, loc. cit.

21. "When I looked out the window it always seemed as if there was a board right in front of my eyes, and on this board a painter had splattered his different brushes in white, blue, green, red - all mixed up. I was unable to differentiate between separate things, like I see them now [...]. It was only when I went for walks outside that I realised what I had seen were fields, hills, houses, and that things which appeared to be larger than others turned out to be smaller, some big things much smaller." (Feuerbach, 1832/2002, p. 42).

22. "[...] he told me that, originally, he thought the white geese in my yard were horses, too [...]" (Wilhelm von Rumppler, Kaspar Hauser's riding instructor) Rumppler, 1829/1966, p. 51.

Feuerbach, whenever encountering something that caught his interest or that he could not grasp, Hauser started twitching and froze (Feuerbach, 1832, p. 36).

Over time, his consciousness changed and with an increasing ability to make sense of his perceptions, the strength of his sensitivity faded. Kaspar Hauser developed spatial and temporal imagery and learned to distinguish between thoughts and dreams. This also condenses the stages of the development of consciousness. Within a relatively short period of time, Kaspar Hauser learned to differentiate between image and reality. He also learned to comprehend the difference between perceptions and thoughts - or dreams - a process that normally takes a child four to five years.

These developmental stages were accompanied by a fading of his incredible ability to remember which had fascinated the people of Nuremberg when he first arrived in the town. His often described progress also involved a loss of his formerly special relationship with the world around him. The overabundant, painful perception was scaled back by his developing ability to form concepts, resulting in a distancing and his growing self-awareness. In as far as a generalisation is permissible at this point, this demonstrates that the development of consciousness structures is not a linear process that steadily progresses, overcoming existing deficits as it unfolds. Rather, progression means giving up or overcoming certain types of world experience. If we take Kaspar Hauser's statements about himself seriously, this must have been a rather ambiguous process for him.

(End of Part I)

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