

On what is offered, by M*I*n K*nder*

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Abstract. I distinguish two senses of the word “offer.” I do so within a brief pastiche, which I put down to the influence of the European Union.

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Hugo has invited Tamina back to his apartment. He has made her an offer: he is offering her the best night of her life. But let’s not get carried away with excitement. Even a novelist must clarify their terms. What does Hugo offer? When I contemplated the question, two definitions occurred to me.

- (a) The offer is within Hugo’s words. We look into those words and we know: Hugo is offering Tamina the best night of her life. For some reason, I compare it to opening a coffin and peering inside at a corpse.
- (b) The offer is what Hugo will actually provide. It is what the fellow, with his bad teeth, is actually able and willing to offer. It is a night in his apartment, certainly not the best night, but also not the worst.

Worse, much worse: back in her homeland, Tamina is hiding from the police in a closet. A neighbour has reported that she left the house twice yesterday. The police want to know if she had a certificate for that. In the closet, she holds onto a piece of paper but it is actually a love letter. Tamina cannot read the letter in the dark. She feels a sensation of warmth and loses a button.

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Noise from the apartment above is spoiling their date. A popular song called Blurred Lines is playing. A little girl is dancing to it. She seems to me as if she stepped out of one of Papa's art history books, but here she is: a child interpreting sexiness, to a mindless rhythm. An ostrich too is dancing to it. Each is so preoccupied with their own dance moves that neither notices the other.

References

- Davidson, D. 1973-74. On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 47: 5-20.
- Kundera, M. (translated from French by A. Asher) 1996. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. London: Faber and Faber.