

Hurstwood-Carrie triangle, with its own bigamous marriage, is naturalistic domestic melodrama at its best.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dreiser himself, in watching “that large company of bums, loafers, tramps, idlers, the flotsam and jetsam” of City Hall Park, said, “I presume I looked at them and then considered myself and these great offices, and it was then that the idea of *Hurstwood* was born. *A Book about Myself* (New York: Liveright, 1922), pp. 463–64.

<sup>2</sup> *A Book about Myself*, p. 225.

<sup>3</sup> “Gaslight and Magic Lamp in *Sister Carrie*,” *PMLA*, 86 (March 1971), 238.

<sup>4</sup> That Dreiser admired Jefferson as an actor is clear. He said of the American theater, “A few things had been done, in acting at least, by Booth, Barrett, Macready, Forrest, Jefferson, Modjeska, Fanny Davenport, Mary Anderson, to name but a few,” and “Richard Mansfield and Felix Morris stand out in my mind as excellent, and Sol Smith Russell and Joseph Jefferson as amusing comedians” (*A Book about Myself*, p. 176). Moreover, Jefferson came to be so associated with the role of Rip that he continued to act the part from 1865 until a year before his death in 1905 (see Arthur Hobson Quinn, *A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War*, 2nd ed., 1923; rpt. New York: Appleton, 1951, p. 332).

<sup>5</sup> Witemeyer, p. 237.

<sup>6</sup> For an account of the evolution of the play *Rip Van Winkle*, see Quinn’s *A History*, pp. 325–32.

<sup>7</sup> “Rip Van Winkle,” as played by Joseph Jefferson, *Representative American Plays*, 7th ed., ed. Arthur Hobson Quinn (New York: Appleton, 1953), p. 427. The Quinn edition of the play will be cited hereinafter with parenthetical page references in the text. Donald Pizer, ed., *Sister Carrie* (New York: Norton, 1970), p. 376, n. 2, observes that Dreiser’s sister “Emma, whose full name was Emma Wilhelmina, was . . . often called Minnie, which suggests that Dreiser may have derived the name Carrie as a diminutive parallel to Minnie. Carrie’s sister, it should also be recalled, is named Minnie Hanson.” The idea of a young girl named Meenie about to be thrown out into the world on her own may have struck an especially responsive chord with Dreiser.

<sup>8</sup> *Sister Carrie* (New York: Modern Library [1932]), p. 531, cited hereinafter with parenthetical page references in the text.

### Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg*

To the Editor:

In his ingenious examination of “The Lofty Game of Numbers: The Mynheer Peepkorn Episode in Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg*” (*PMLA*, Oct. 1971, pp. 924–39), Oskar Seidlin gives brief attention to

Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*. Of its section 34, he says: “The sum of the digits makes 7, and each of the two digits, 3 and 4, are indeed the reason why 7, as their sum, is the holy number: 3 is the Trinity, the divine and noumenal; 4 is the earth with its four corners, seen under this symbol all through the ages” (p. 925). In a note to this statement, he continues: “The conception [sic] of the four-cornered earth probably goes back to the Babylonians. . . . In *Der junge Joseph*, Jaakob speaks of the four elements, ‘das vierte, die Erde’ ” (p. 936, n. 11). Now, the number 4 may well stand for “the earth with its four corners”; but, continuing the idea of the number 3, the usual meaning of 4 in medieval Christian symbolism would have been more appropriately adduced: the Empedoclean classification of matter into fire, air, water, and earth. The passage in *Der junge Joseph* from which the author quotes, in fact, includes the mention of fire, air, and water as well as of earth (and this from Mann’s Jaakob, incidentally, well in advance of Empedocles’ time). Mr. Seidlin, indeed, seems to hint in note 11 at this ancient quaternary (the term “elements” is his, not Mann’s). But to pass abruptly from the subject of “the four-cornered earth” to that of the elements (with incomplete quotation) confuses the reader, when no mention of these elements has been made. “Das vierte” after which three? he asks himself. To be sure, reference to the points of the compass is made elsewhere in *Der junge Joseph*, when the youth receives instruction from old Eliezer. “Auf der anderen Seite war vier die Zahl der Weltgegenden, denen die Tageszeiten entsprachen . . .” (Thomas Mann, *Gesammelte Werke*, Frankfurt, 1960, iv, 403): this passage, rather than the one cited, demonstrates that “Thomas Mann was well aware of this idea” (Seidlin, p. 936, n. 11).

Elsewhere in the article, two statements are made which find no support in textual fact. Again with reference to *Der junge Joseph*, we read: “When young Joseph takes his walks with little Benjamin through the countryside in order to teach the boy about the living things that surround them, he holds him by the wrist and lets the tiny hand wiggle back and forth. . . . The hand of the ‘seized’ one is free to move as it pleases, not constrained, not forced, obeying its own will, and yet there is leadership, loving, friendly, brotherly” (p. 935; no reference is cited). But Thomas Mann, in describing Benjamin at this time, specifically mentions “seine kurzfingerigen Hände, deren eine er immer dem Bruder gab, wenn sie zusammen gingen” (Mann, p. 441); and states: “Hand in Hand gingen sie weg” at the start of the excursion that forms much of the *Drittes Hauptstück*: an unambiguous expression, or better denotation, of manual, not carpal, contact (Mann, p. 442). A bit later on this walk, Joseph does indeed take Benjamin by the wrist, but not at all to

provide “the most sensitive and the most tactful touch imaginable” (Seidlin, p. 935). Rather: “Wenn Benjamins Hand in der seinen zu heiss und nass wurde, hatte Joseph die Gewohnheit, sie am Gelenk zu nehmen, das Benjamin lose machte, und mit ihr zu fächeln, damit sie im Winde trockne” (Mann, p. 443). In other words, fraternal assistance of younger by elder, if one will, but hardly unconstrained freedom of movement, “obeying its own will.” The context of this reference to *Der junge Joseph* is hand-wrist contact between Clawdia, Castorp, and Peeperkorn respectively, the author’s remarks on which may be quite acceptable, but to which his reference to the later novel is unrelated in any meaningful way.

I would close these emendations in agreement with Professor Seidlin that Benjamin is not being led by Joseph’s hand (p. 935). “Hand in Hand” implies a closeness of association, an affectionate parity: just what Mann may well intend to convey about this fraternal dyadic relationship. “Desto inniger schloss er [Benjamin] sich dem Vollbruder an, den er auf alle Weise bewunderte und der . . . doch recht vereinsamt dastand, solche Anhänglichkeit also wohl brauchen konnte und auch für sein Teil die natürliche Zusammengehörigkeit mit dem Kleinen stark empfand, so dass er ihn also zum Freunde und Vertrauten nahm” (Mann, p. 441).

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Mr. Seidlin replies:

To start with a minutia: Why does Professor Tucker insert a (sic) between my “the conception” and “of the four-cornered earth”? Is the word inappropriate? The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* gives as the definition of “conception”: conceiving, thing conceived, idea. This is exactly what I wanted to say: the conceiving of the earth as four-cornered.

Now to the footnote (and a footnote it is!) which bothers Mr. Tucker. My article “The Lofty Game of Numbers” operates with the conception (sorry!) that the number four is equated with: earth. For this I furnish in this footnote a few well-known examples (a full dealing with this subject is to be found in *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, to which I refer in an earlier footnote): namely, the four corners of the earth, an idea already familiar to the Babylonians, some passages from the Bible, and finally pointing to Thomas Mann’s familiarity with this idea, for which I do *not* offer an example, but simply state that he “was well aware of this idea.” (Mr. Tucker supplies as supporting evidence a passage from *Der junge Joseph*, for which I am grateful, al-

though, being obvious enough, I did not find necessary to include it in a short footnote.) Here should have followed in my footnote a dash, which was, unfortunately, left out. For now I proceed from the “four-cornered earth” to another complex, namely “the elements,” in whose scale four is again equated with earth. This I document as being familiar to Thomas Mann by a passage from *Der junge Joseph*: “das vierte, die Erde.” I would think that it must be obvious to every reader that I am now no longer talking about the four-cornered earth, but about another age-old foursome: that of the four elements. How can Mr. Tucker state that “no mention of these elements has been made”? After all, my sentence as quoted by him reads: “Jaakob speaks of the four elements: ‘das vierte, die Erde.’” Is it asking too much from a reader of *PMLA* to know what I am talking about when I speak of the “four elements,” identifying, to boot, as No. 4: earth? And is there anyone, as Mr. Tucker hypothesizes, who, reading about the “four elements” (the fourth being earth), will have to ask himself: the fourth “after which three”? After all, the theory of the four elements has been the cornerstone of all thinking about natural phenomena from the days of Empedocles to the advent of modern chemistry. No, I did not enumerate the other three elements, because they are obviously not pertinent to my argument. The only pertinent factor is: No. 4 equals earth. The other three are of no consequence whatever in this context, because they designate those elements that are *not* earth. It is true, Thomas Mann—or Jaakob—does not call this foursome: “elements.” (Do I say anywhere that they do?) But, then, neither did Empedocles. The term does not appear in this sense before the middle of the thirteenth century A.D., i.e., 1700 years after Empedocles.

By the way, Mr. Tucker is quite in error if he considers these four elements as being “the Empedoclean classification of matter.” They are, of course, nothing of the sort. For Empedocles they are highly mythical entities to which he assigns names of deities—hardly “matter.” In his thinking they constitute “roots,” which in various combinations and ever shifting compounds are at the bottom of *all* matter, including all vegetative, animal, and human life.

As to Mr. Tucker’s other objection: I noticed that the loving and brotherly bonds concluded between Clawdia-Hans and Hans-Peeperkorn respectively are accompanied by a strange “joining of hands,” not a handclasp, as we might expect, but by seizing the partner’s carpus (I would say “wrist,” but then this would not sound so erudite), which, although “seizure,” allows for a free swaying and play of hand and fingers. I then, just as an aside, add that this same bodily touch, and it is an unusual one, appears again