

***Thomas Town**

(Craig)

The most interesting part of the poem "Thomas Town" is the way that the periods separate the poem into fragments with different meanings. The first line, "Hand and hand into his mind never," indicates a loving relationship of some kind as the two people are referenced first as holding hands, but it is then contradicted as saying that the two never go into his mind hand in hand. This suggests that the relationship exists, but that he (I assume Thomas) had some kind of guard up; he would not let the other into his mind. He was holding back some of himself. It is impossible to say whether or not the other is a child, lover, wife, or husband for that matter, but it seems to work in all directions. Here to fore, though, the 'other' will be referred to as she (wife, lover, daughter or what have you; gender seems irrelevant). The line then is almost completely negated by the next line, which in context reads "into his mind never a thought came." The lack of punctuation also allows double meanings, as if when they were hand and hand, he was occupied enough by her that no thoughts entered his mind "but that other." The period at the end of this line functions in a similar way as the other, saying that she followed him as he thought of here. This suggests a very loving relationship. A loving relationship is also offered here in the contradictory interpretation previously mentioned, which demonstrated the mental block of Thomas. Here, as in "but that other followed," it is suggested that though he had a block up, the other was willing to stick around and "follow". Thus us a strong gesture of love; to accept the faults of the other and work on a compromise despite them. The two meanings here presented show both sides of a real loving relationship; the good with the bad, and the entire piece seems to be an illusion to the fact that no relationship is only one or the other.

Amendments

Thomas Town (tiffany)

My interpretation of this poem differed greatly from Craig's in that I assigned a famous Thomas to it in hopes that it would clarify the meaning. Thus, here's what I came up with. When I think of Thomas, the first one I think of is Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence. In keeping this allusion in mind, this is how I interpreted Carson's town. "Hand in hand", as Craig did say, denotes a kind of togetherness, connection, completeness. I connected "hand in hand" to thoughts, in the sense that a revolutionary thought must be complete. And these don't always come easily to the mind, which would explain the phrasing "Hand in hand into his mind never a thought came". It's like Thomas is thinking, but truly great ideas will only come if multiple ideas can be joined successfully and then stay that way inside the mind. This leaves "but that other followed", which doesn't make a lot of sense. However, if you change the phrasing so that the phrase "a thought came" works for both, we're left with "a thought came but that other followed". I get an idea of completeness here. I could be totally off and I know I'm reaching, but this one was a tad difficult to decipher for me.

Thomas Town (monte)

Three meanings: he has is "lover" or whatever but he will not let her come to mind. He

has his “lover” and he will not let her leave his mind. He has his “lover” but there is some other thought that is getting in the way. Any of these could be read based on how you joined the lines.

Thomas Town (mike)

There are definitely meanings divided by punctuation in this poem as Tom mentions in his analysis. Hand and hand into his mind a thought never came. What type of thought comes into a mind hand in hand? Is it two people as a couple or the inability for thoughts to come together into the mind collaborating, connected? What is that other that followed? How does it follow nothing. I think the players in the poem may represent the relationship between three people. The two that never came in his mind hand in hand, and one that followed.

Thomas Town Amendment: (matt)

You seem to immediately leap to the conclusion that this is about a relationship and then stick with that assumption throughout the analysis. I, on the other hand, never saw any sense of a relationship. The idea of a thought “entering” one’s mind is already a personification to some degree (doesn’t the mind simply create thoughts?), so I had no problem extending the personification further to see thoughts holding hands. The fact that they never enter is mind can convey several things. One, he isn’t really thinking very much. Two, the thoughts are deliberately avoiding his mind, perhaps because he is insane or embittered, or otherwise an unpleasant place to be (this idea of Thomas as a “place” that thoughts “enter” is a nice play on the title). And the fact that one thought seems to be alone, either entering his mind or following the other thoughts (depending on how you punctuate it) seems very ominous. The other thoughts are together, holding hands. This thought however, is “one” and is picked out from the rest by the poem. Its separateness gives it a slightly sinister air. If the other thoughts are deliberately avoiding Thomas for some reason, this one thought seems likely to (or perhaps has) ignore the taboo and enter Thomas for an unknown purpose.

Thomas Town (martin)

There’s a very possible allusion to Thomas the apostle from the Bible, like Doubting Thomas. This doubt goes along with the poem – “into his mind never a thought came but that other followed.” That other could be Jesus who proves it in the Bible, that he resurrected, despite Thomas’s doubts. Hand in hand could mean marriage, but it could also mean someone walking you through something, hand in hand. Perhaps Thomas was walked through his life, following this teacher who seemed to know all the answers, yet he still doubted, which is pretty contradictory much like how you talked about the lines contradicting themselves in this poem.

Thomas Town (marina)

This poem seems to most likely be referencing the Biblical doubting Thomas, as in the disciple who did not believe in Jesus’ resurrection until he was given physical proof of the aforementioned event by putting his hands on Jesus’ hands – hence the “hand” in the poem. The thought could then be occurrence of doubt, and the “other” that “followed” might be referencing both Thomas becoming a true follower of Jesus or the true belief/thought following the doubt.

Thomas Town: (courtney)

Good job finding the reference of a relationship and thoughts of another woman. The progression of things in the poem could also mean that thoughts of the other woman never stop coming. If the punctuation is ignored, this poem is a progression that builds on itself. Thoughts come hand-in-hand of one another, constantly followed by more thoughts—never ceasing.

Thomas Town (casey)

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Thomas Town (Allison)

Since the first poem of Carson's Towns is called "Apostle Town," I couldn't help but draw Thomas into being the Apostle of Jesus's, which I could see working. Maybe hand in hand a thought never came into Jesus' mind about-- something-- but that other, Thomas, followed him and wrote down what Jesus said. Maybe Jesus never thought to write things down and Thomas followed and did so and now we've got a big following on Christianity. There are about a million other Thomases that this poem could be referring to-- Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Edison, Thomas the Tank Engine... This poem I'm sure could reference them in some ways as well. For what is actually written, I like the analysis of this poem, especially because it really is very ambiguous.

Thomas Town (abby)

A “doubting Thomas” is a biblical reference to the disciple Thomas who doubted Jesus’ resurrection. Today it commonly means someone who is frequently a doubter. I think Carson is referencing this because of the fact that never does one thought enter his head without another, which is most likely referencing the doubt that follows an idea. I am pretty sure it’s just that simple—Carson is that good.