

# Experiencing uncertainty in brady's character



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The play *Inherit the Wind* is one that exhibits contrasting characterisations of its major, influential individuals. Yet, within this contrast of personalities, each separate role is portrayed to the audience in a slightly ambiguous manner, and as a result, the congregation views him with a slight ambivalence towards some of the playwright's dominant figures. A prime example of this complicated dramatization is the big-voiced, high-status Mathew Harrison Brady. At points in the production, Brady is often pompous and shows hubristic values with his bombast but at others, he exhibits pathetic emotions and a fragile state of mind, leading us to perceive him with empathy.

Our first impressions of Brady are that the social charisma and pretense he displays as the townspeople welcome him is affected by an underlying vulnerability that he has, which appears to us to be eating, 'Brady is a great eater'. Retrospectively his greed seems all the more gratuitous in the sentence which reveals that not only has he just feasted on the produce of the Hillsboro community, but he had had a meal before, 'But you see we had a lunch box on the train'. The satire in the moment when the juxtaposition of him reassuring himself that he had the support when he ran for president, showing perhaps electoral corruption, to Davenport stepping in and introducing himself to Brady, and then Brady possessing a patronizing attitude towards the circuit district attorney, undercuts magisterial patriarch, 'I trust it was in three separate election?...Sir, I'm Tom Davenport...Of course. Circuit district attorney. We'll be a team, won't we, young man! Quite a team!' We feel Brady, quite near the beginning, displays his hubris; pride before the fall, and his paternal strategy on Rachel to try and obtain

information about her lover, Cates. He is sympathetic and considerate with, 'I understand your loyalty, my child.' This title of 'my child' is superciliously religious and is an example of power play by Brady to create an aura of false security. 'He moves her easily away from the others.' This portrays that he can easily manipulate; tenderising the person he is 'interviewing', and in this case, Rachel is passive and cannot do anything to object.

The mouthful of food he has whilst addressing her makes the situation seem all the more crass. Once more his tainted hubris is displayed with his gradation, or growth into the prospect of the great Henry Drummond as his opposition in the courtroom, 'Henry Drummond has stalked the courtrooms of this land...When he fights, headlines follow. The whole world will be watching our victory over Drummond.' Bathetically, this is then contrasted with the offer of more food, 'Would you care to finish off the pickled apricots Mr Brady?' from a local. His grandiloquence of speech far surpasses that of the townspeople, seemingly portraying him as out-of-place, and so he resorts back to the sanctuary and comfort of food: what he knows he is able to trust. We understand that Brady likes the attention and enjoys the adulation he receives; he is wise in the art of public speaking, 'Brady assumes the familiar oratorical pose' (for a photo). One would feel that it would be a spontaneous action but he does it without conscious thought; presenting him as an eminent character with charisma and authority. However, like at so many other points in the play, his stature is undercut bathetically, 'Howard has stuck his head, mouth agape, into the photo'. It just contrast Brady's formality and seriousness over the whole situation to the quirky, incredulous (to Brady's prestige), ignorant community that surrounds him.

As the production progresses into the trial of Cates for teaching Darwinism, the more vocational Brady appears. At the prayer meeting, Brady's arrogance and concern over his profile is displayed with ' he was loving the feel of the board beneath his feet. This is the squared circle where he has fought so many bouts with the English language, and won'; he loves the stage and the aura. However, we do occasionally get the impression that Brady is trustworthy and knows fundamentally what must be done beneath all the evangelical/ Christian ethos that he follows during most of the book. He warns Reverend Brown not to entirely alienate his daughter, ' He that troubleth his own house...shall inherit the wind. (He makes a gesture with his open hand to indicate nothingness: the empty air, the brief and unremembered wind.)' This wisdom is a rarity from Brady and is shown at a time of tense quietness as the ' dazed' Brown exits from the hysterical, hypnotic trance he has worked himself into which is not a good sign and shows the extremities of his belief- at this point we neglect the idea of Brady's pretentious values, and warm to his genuine paternal figure of benevolence and rationality.

There is then a pensive moment where the two great enemies, once friends, where they ponder on how they have drifted away. Drummond sheds light on the matter with a paradoxically strong statement which is incisive after all the hysteria and excitement of the prayer meeting, ' All motion is relative. Perhaps it is you who have moved away- by standing still.' The sentimentality in this phrase forces Brady to be burdened with the blame, perhaps making the audience feel sympathy for him – ' slowly the lights fade on the silent man'. This quietness and pensiveness about Brady witnessed in

the previous scene, might debatably be seen again in the trial, when Howard, a young boy; ignorant and innocent, is called to the witness stand by Brady, it is evident that he is merely exploiting the lack of knowledge the boy possesses to make his case more credible. He makes a show of the interview with his stereotypical elaborateness. He plays on naturalistic feelings, using bad puns such as ' Evil-ution' which comes across as heavy handed and unnecessary. His emotive, metaphorical language alienates Howard, ' legislature...sovereign...peddlers of poison...to think that he wriggled up from the filth and muck below...not unaware'. The latter quote is an example of litotes which Brady uses subconsciously and exhibits his hubris yet again. This supercilious language is impersonal to the boy; irrelative to the witness: ' Howard gulps. Brady points at the boy'- he is using the boy merely to withhold his integrity; it is an intended stage direction to address him as the demeaning, derogatory ' boy' to create a sense of distance between them. ' The faithful the whole world over' is hyperbolic and signifies how dramatic Brady creates his argument. There is ' applause from the spectators' as if the gravity of the court case has been lost, as if at some procedural event.

Drummond is different in how he addresses Howard; much more composed and gets down to the level at which Howard is able to understand what is being thrown at him. He cleverly utilizes Howard's everyday life to contradict the bible. ' A harmonica following a symphony orchestra' is what Drummond is described as; a humble, every day instrument synonymous with this man- that is the difference between the living-in-the-past Brady and him. In the moments where Brady is defeated and as a result, has a breakdown, we are

reminded of the comfort eating from when he first arrived subtly contrasted ironically with what he is now: an emotional wreck, ' Mrs. Brady sways gently back and forth, as if rocking a child to sleep'. We empathize with Brady here and the pathos that he evokes, as we know his sole ambition was to not be satirized in this situation or defeated morally. This is another rare moment where I feel that the audience should be sympathetic to the troubled lawyer. In conclusion, there are many examples that are the antithesis of each other as to whether Brady is meant to be portrayed as someone to be comforted due to visible pathos displayed to the viewers and somebody with charismatic values or some abhorrent, overly confident, hubristic lawyer, who is self-righteous and dwells one step behind society. Yet from my eyes, he is exhibited more as having the latter values and as a result is repugnant, impersonal and simply objectifies situations in order to fuel his ego.