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Joseph J. Egan

The Indebtedness of George Douglas Brown
to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

James Veitch mentions that when George Douglas Brown was at Oxford, a fellow Scot and close friend, William Menzies, "adversely criticized Thomas Hardy, and Brown was up in arms in a trice. Words poured from him in a trenchant flood, so that instead of Menzies attacking Hardy it ended by Brown vigorously attacking Menzies. They could afford to let themselves go, because they knew they would not quarrel."¹ Brown's defense obviously suggests an esteem for Hardy; as William E. Buckler observes, "The naturalism which affected George Moore and Thomas Hardy also affected George Douglas Brown."² More recently, Jeffrey Sommers has noted that both *Jude the Obscure* and *The House with the Green Shutters* exhibit a "perversion of the typical pattern of the Victorian *Bildungsroman*."³ It is quite possible to argue, however, that Brown not only used general fictive strategies similar to Hardy's but was virtually inspired by one of the older author's novels, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), when he came to write the one book on which his own modest fame rests, *The House with the Green*

¹George Douglas Brown: *Author of The House with the Green Shutters*, foreword by the Right Hon. Walter Elliot (London, 1952), p. 67.

²William E. Buckler, ed., *The House with the Green Shutters*, in *Minor Classics of Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Boston, 1967), II, 391.

³Jeffrey Sommers, "The House with the Green Shutters: George Douglas Brown's Perverse *Bildungsroman*," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 19 (1984), 253.

Shutters, composed during the 1890s and published in 1901. In fact, Ian Campbell implicitly sanctions such an argument; in noting a difference between the principle figures in the two novels he leaves room for the possibility of similarities as well: "John Gourlay does not descend to the indignity of Michael Henchard, ruined Mayor of Casterbridge, whom Hardy sends out to resume a life of manual toil. Rather the Gourlay fortunes are played out against a consistent background."⁴

Although it is true that both novels share a partial theme of domestic unrest—*turmoil* would be a more appropriate word for Brown's—the strongest link between the two is found in the character and destiny of their protagonists, Michael Henchard, the Mayor of Casterbridge, and John Gourlay, the master of the House with the Green Shutters. The stories present an identical situation. Rising from the obscurity of hay trusser, Henchard has "used his one talent of energy to create a position of affluence" (p. 190)⁵ as corn dealer and is in time elected by the Corporation of Casterbridge to "the chief magistracy on account of his amazing energy" (p. 97). Gourlay, a successful corn broker and cheese merchant, establishes himself as "the sole carrier in Barbie" (p. 42)⁶ by "brute force of character" (p. 44), his "grinding will" (p. 47) making him for long the one "big man" (p. 88) in the village.

Henchard's dominance at length passes to a newcomer to the district (as he himself had once been), Donald Farfrae, first his junior partner and then a business competitor, a young Scot "ruddy and of a fair countenance, bright-eyed and slight in build" (p. 32). Farfrae, with his comely appearance and gift of music, attracts all the young women of Casterbridge, Lucetta, then Elizabeth-Jane eventually becoming his wives: "He had an unlimited choice of [dancing] partners, every girl being in a coming-on disposition towards one who so thoroughly understood the poetry of motion as he" (p. 91). Hardy's title is ironic: there are *two* Mayors of Casterbridge, and, as Henchard's fortunes wane, Farfrae is elected to the mayorship. Gourlay's rival, James Wilson, is also a "stranger" (pp. 86, 87), long-absent from the Barbie

⁴Ian Campbell, "George Douglas Brown: A Study in Objectivity," in *Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction: Critical Essays*, ed. Ian Campbell (New York, 1979), p. 153.

⁵*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. Robert B. Heilman (Boston, 1962). All citations from Hardy's novel in the text and the notes will be to this edition. Occasionally in references to both Hardy and Brown, upper- and lower-case letters have been altered for clarity and improved appearance.

⁶*The House with the Green Shutters*, ed. Dorothy Porter (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1985). Citations from Brown's novel will be to this edition.

environs, and "not a hardy man" (p. 87). In appearance and even to a degree in temperament he recalls Farfrae:

Wilson was what the sentimental women of the neighborhood called a 'bonny man.' His features were remarkably regular, and his complexion was remarkably fair. His brow was so delicate of hue that the blue veins running down his temples could be traced distinctly beneath the whiteness of the skin (p. 111).

Just as Farfrae becomes Mayor of Casterbridge, Wilson rises to Provost of Barbie.

Because of his shrewd business head and penchant for order—" [Henchard's] accounts were like a bramble-wood when Mr. Farfrae came" (p. 91)—Farfrae quickly establishes himself as an independent corn and hay merchant after quarreling with Henchard and leaving his employ. Committed to the most up-to-date methods and equipment, he brings a new corn-drill to Casterbridge that will "revolutionize sowing heerabout" (p. 145). When Farfrae acquires Henchard's home and stores, "the scales and steelyards began to be busy where guess-work had formerly been the rule" (p. 192). Upon buying an old house and converting its accompanying barn into a general store, Wilson "means to work a perfect revolution" (p. 91) and is hailed as "cunning" and "demned cute" (p. 91) by the locals. Having established his Emporium under "those improved methods of business which have been confined hitherto to the larger centres of population" (p. 92), Wilson sets himself in opposition to Gourlay in the carting business and cheese trade.

Before the arrival of Farfrae and after his departure from his employ, Henchard clings to what Elizabeth-Jane calls "the romance of the sower" (p. 145), declaring that it is impossible that Farfrae's drill should act (p. 144): "He used to reckon his sacks by chalk strokes all in a row like garden-pailings, measure his ricks by stretching with his arms, weigh his trusses by a lift, judge his hay by a chaw, and settle the price with a curse" (p. 91). Gourlay, too, remains a champion of the traditional ways of commerce—and is also a loser thereby: "'Atweel aye,' quoth Gourlay with pompous wisdom; 'they'll maybe find, or a's bye, that the auld way wasna the warst way. There was to be a great boom, as they ca't, but I see few signs o't'" (p. 124).

The immediate cause of the financial ruin of both Henchard and Gourlay consists, however, of disastrous gamble:

Henchard had backed bad weather, and apparently lost. He had mistaken the turn of the flood for the turn of the ebb. His dealings had been so extensive that settlement could not long be postponed, and to settle he was obliged to sell off corn that he had bought only a few weeks before at figures higher by many shillings a quarter. . . . Thus he lost heavily (p. 162).

Ironically, the weather does at last turn bad: "If Henchard had only waited long enough he might at least have avoided loss though he had not made a profit. But the momentum of his character knew no patience" (p. 164). Henchard himself is forced to admit, "I did what I have never done before—speculated rashly; and I lost" (p. 181). Gourlay opts for reckless business practices, with identical results:

When everything seemed to go against him, he tried several speculations, with a gambler's hope that they might do well, and retrieve the situation. He abandoned the sensible direction of affairs, that is, and trusted entirely to chance, as men are apt to do when despairing. And chance betrayed him. He found himself of a sudden at the end of his resources (p. 188).

Deeply superstitious, Henchard entertains "the thought that some power was working against him" (p. 164), convincing himself that "I am to suffer" (p. 107). Gourlay exclaims, "My God! . . . had *I* not enough to thole?" (p. 203), and after the death of his favorite horse, his thoughts turn toward superstition: "Coming on the heels of his other calamities it seemed to make them more poignant, more sinister, prompting the question if misfortune would never have an end" (p. 136). But each man is largely the victim of his character and his own worst enemy.

Hardy quotes the famous phrase from Novalis, "Character is Fate" (p. 98), and repeatedly stresses its application to Henchard:

Thereupon promptly came to the surface that idiosyncrasy of Henchard's which had ruled his courses from the beginning and had mainly made him what he was. Instead of thinking that a union between his cherished stepdaughter and the energetic thriving Donald was a thing to be desired for her good and his own, he hated the very possibility (p. 263).

Throughout, the mayor remains "overbearing—even brilliantly quarrelsome" (p. 5), a man of "temper" (p. 31), "strong impulses" (p. 55), and "suddenness of . . . moods" (p. 59)—a "stern piece of virility" (p. 238).

Brown's novel illustrates that Gourlay, too, suffers because of his character; indeed, in *Rules for Writing*, a fragment of notes on the craft of the novel collected near the close of 1901, Brown makes this observation:

When characters are first brought on they must be seen at once with the good or evil qualities that shall make or mar them. . . . In a very real sense every character in life and letters is justified of itself. . . . His Heaven or Hell is in himself.⁷

⁷As quoted in Veitch, p. 167.

From the beginning the dialect word *gurly*, meaning "gruff," "surly," sums up Gourlay: "Deed, I don't wonder that gurly Gourlay, as they ca' him, has an ill temper" (p. 50). "Nobody could stand up to black Gourlay" (p. 220) with his "brutal dourness" (p. 65) and "mad violence when roused" (p. 137): "Gourlay went slowly up to him, opening his eyes on him black and wide. 'You swine!' he said with great vehemence; 'for damned little I would kill ye wi' a glower!' Gilmour shrank from the blaze in his eyes" (p. 58).

Yet passion and tyranny lead ultimately to isolation. Henchard "might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described—as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him on a better way" (p. 98). Gourlay continues "a strong block of a man cut off from the world by impotence of speech" (p. 112).

As in temperament, so in appearance. Hardy gives a detailed description of Henchard when his wife, Susan, and his stepdaughter, Elizabeth-Jane, come to Casterbridge nearly twenty years after the rash wife sale:

Facing the window, in the chair of dignity, sat a man about forty years of age; of heavy frame, large features, and commanding voice; his general build being rather coarse than compact. He had a rich complexion, which verged on swarthinness, a flashing black eye, and dark, bushy brows and hair (p. 27).

Gourlay presents virtually a mirror image:

When Gourlay put on his hat, the shallow meanness of his brow was hid, and nothing was seen to impair his dark strong gravity of face. He was a man you would have turned to look at, as he marched in silence by the side of Templand-muir. Though taller than the laird, he looked shorter because of his enormous breadth. He had a chest like the heave of a hill (p. 111).

Both men can make others blink in intimidation. In his financial and social decline Henchard "gazed . . . less into the pupils of [men's] eyes with the blazing regard which formerly had made them blink" (p. 188); Gourlay habitually looks "with the wide open glower that made people blink" (p. 140).

To emphasize the relation between character and physical type, Hardy frequently describes Henchard in terms of animal imagery. He is likened to a tiger (p. 77), a buffalo (p. 97), and twice to a lion (pp. 262, 268). Similarly, Gourlay is compared to the gorilla (p. 205) and, several times, to the tiger (pp. 132, 214, 219). The animal that best characterizes both men is, however, the bull.

When in one of his black moods, Henchard abandons reason altogether and acts by sheer impulse alone—in "bullish" fashion. Accordingly, Hardy employs the bull image throughout his novel: "The bell-ringing and the band-playing, loud as Tamerlane's trumpet, goaded the downfallen Henchard indescribably" (p. 211). The "old bull-stake" (p. 121) in Casterbridge calls

attention to the situation of the mayor, who in his fall from power is "baited" by the townspeople and his own capriciousness: "A stone post rose in the midst, to which oxen had formerly been tied for baiting with dogs to make them tender before they were killed in the adjoining shambles" (p. 165). After Farfrae interrupts his drunken greeting of the visiting Royal Personage, Henchard himself remarks, "He drove me back as if I were a bull breaking fence" (p. 233). Even the features of this man of great size and strength suggest those of an obstinate bull: "Henchard watched him [Farfrae] with his mouth firmly set, the squareness of his jaw and the verticality of his profile being unduly marked" (p. 234).

Walter Allen maintains that John Gourlay's "tragedy is the tragedy of the bull insulted, baited, goaded, and finally killed in the ring,"⁸ and certainly the imagery in *Green Shutters* supports this contention in the main. Witness, for example, the journey in the public carriage, which leaves from the Black Bull tavern:

They had Gourlay on the hip at last. More than arrogance had kept him off from the bodies of the town, a consciousness also, that he was not their match in malicious innuendo. The direct attack he could meet superbly, downing his opponent with a coarse birr of the tongue; to the veiled jibe he was a quivering hulk to be prodded at your ease. And now the malignants were around him (while he could not get away); talking *to* each other, indeed, but *at* him, while he must keep quiet in their midst (pp. 137-8).

But the gossips of Barbie—with their tireless barbs—do not have it all their own way:

Now, though everybody was spying at Gourlay in the market, all were giving him a wide berth; for they knew that he was dangerous. He was no longer the man whom they had baited on the way to Skeighan; then he had some control, now three years' calamities had fretted his temper to a raw wound. To flick it was perilous (p. 207).

Once again, the animal imagery becomes important to character revelation; like Henchard, Gourlay summons up the idea of an aroused and potentially dangerous bull.

Moreover, each novel includes an episode dealing with a real bull. Henchard's rescuing Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane from an angry bull becomes significant to our discussion:

He ran forward towards the leading-staff, seized it, and wrenched the animal's head as if he would snap it off. The wrench was in reality so violent that the thick

⁸*The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (New York, 1954), p. 339.

neck seemed to have lost its stiffness and to become half paralyzed, whilst the nose dropped blood. The premeditated human contrivance of the nose-ring was too cunning for impulsive brute force, and the creature flinched.

The man was seen in the partial gloom to be large-framed and unhesitating. He led the bull to the door, and the light revealed Henchard (p. 178).

In his introduction to the Riverside Edition of *The Mayor*, Robert B. Heilman dismisses this scene as "an amateurish contrivance,"⁹ but Henchard's defeat of the bull is not without symbolic value and generates a pointed irony. Although he can easily master the real bull, the mayor is unable to subdue the metaphorical bull of "impulsive brute force" within. Hardy suggests that the vanquished beast had perhaps not intended any real mischief: "Coming out she [Elizabeth-Jane] paused to look for a moment at the bull, now rather to be pitied with his bleeding nose, having perhaps rather intended a practical joke than a murder" (p. 179). The parallel remains exact when we consider Henchard's refusal to injure Farfrae—"And now—though I came to kill 'ee, I cannot hurt thee!" (p. 237)—and Lucetta's summing up of the mayor: "He is a hot-tempered man—a little proud—perhaps ambitious; but not a bad man" (p. 117). Henchard, then, is also "to be pitied," for he remains incapable of harming others as much as he does himself.

Near the end of *Green Shutters*, Brown presents a scene at Barbie's monthly cattle auction: "A big, red bullock, the coat of which made a rich color in the ring, came bounding in, scared at its surroundings—staring one moment and the next careering" (p. 208). Although a man of "high courage" (p. 114) who "shrank from nothing" (p. 137), Gourlay can be thrown into utter confusion by the unfortunate combination of his "black pride" (p. 65) and a lack of any but the crudest verbal skills: "Wilson had seized the chance to put him in a false position. He knew Gourlay could not put forty words together in public, and that in his dilemma he would blunder and give himself away" (p. 113). The auctioneer's repetition of the phrase "*this* fine bullock" (p. 208) reinforces the parallel with Gourlay, as do the animal's subsequent antics in the ring:

Now that he was in the circle, however, the mad, big, handsome beast refused to go out again. When the cattlemen would drive him to the yard, he snorted and galloped round, till he had to be driven from the ring with blows. When at last he bounded through the door, he flung up his heels with a bellow, and sent the sand of his arena showering on the people round (p. 208).

Although the despicable Tam Brodie likens the bullock to young John Gourlay—"That maun be a College-bred stot, from the way he behaves. He

⁹Heilman, p. xvii.

flung dirt at his masters and had to be expelled" (p. 208)—and is, in turn, put down by Irrendavie—"Put Brodie in the ring and rowp him! . . . He roars like a bull at ony rate" (p. 208)—the reader identifies the beast with the "brutal" (the word defines him throughout) elder Gourlay:

There was a laugh at Brodie, true; but it was at Gourlay that a hundred big red faces turned to look. He did not look at them, though. He sent his eyes across the ring at Brodie.

"Lord!" said Irrendavie, "it's weel for Brodie that the ring's acqueesh them! Gourlay'll murder somebody yet. Red hell lap out o' his e'en when he looked at Brodie" (pp. 208-09).

Seemingly impervious, Gourlay experiences a dawning awareness of "curious compassion" (p. 136) for himself as "one who was being hardly used" (p. 136). He has been goaded unmercifully by the spite of the "bodies" of Barbie and by the conspiracy in chicanery of Wilson and his cohort, Cunning Johnny Gibson, which precipitates his financial collapse: "Amid his storm of anger at the trick, Gourlay was conscious of a sudden pity for himself, as for a man most unfairly worsted" (p. 126).

A parallel baiting also appears in the classroom scene at Edinburgh, which brings about young Gourlay's dismissal from the university: "It was a bear garden. . . . The lecturer glared with white repugnance at his tormentors. Young Gourlay flung himself heart and soul into the cruel baiting" (pp. 195, 196). This scene becomes almost a microcosm of the book.

Heilman suggests that "though its sources are inner, Henchard's life is public in its ramifications, like those of the heroes of Greek tragedy."¹⁰ In his foreword to Veitch's biography, Walter Elliot says this of Brown and his novel:

It was the cardinal fact of his life that he was educated above all in the classics, and above all, in Greek. . . . Here was the fruit of his watching, of all his reading. Here was the shadowing of all the ways, the first Homeric phrase which ever struck through to his imagination. Here was the array and discipline of the great Greek dramatists.¹¹

¹⁰Heilman, p. xxxii.

¹¹Elliot, pp. 6, 8. In the introduction to his edition of *The House with the Green Shutters*, (Edinburgh, 1974), J. T. Low also emphasizes the Greek influence on Brown: "The Second Part [Chapter XXIV to the end] concentrates on the Fall of the House of Gourlay, and takes the form of a five-act tragedy with prelude leading to dramatic confrontation, first tragedy, bridging section depicting young John's break-down, final triple tragedy with epilogue" (p. xvi).

In addition to structure, a Greek element in both novels is the inevitability of tragedy. Hardy's narrator refers to human life as "a brief transit through a sorry world" (p. 290) and "a general drama of pain" (p. 290). Young Gourlay exclaims, "Oh, it's a terrible thing the world" (p. 131), the assurance of disaster being advanced by such bald announcements as "that was how young Gourlay left Barbie for what was to prove his last session at the University" (p. 186) and "on the morning of the last market day he [old Gourlay] was ever to see in Barbie" (p. 203).

Each book presents the Greek notions of the tragic flaw, the reversal of fortune, and catastrophe piled on catastrophe. If anything, Brown's novel is even more deeply cast in the classical mold:

The downfall of Gourlay had an unholy fascination for his neighbors. . . . They seemed to be watching, with bated breath, for the final collapse of an edifice that was bound to fall. . . . It was as if they were watching a tragedy near at hand, and noting with keen interest every step in it that must lead to inevitable ruin. That invariably happens when a family tragedy is played out in the midst of a small community (p. 202).

The novel, which ends in a patricide and three suicides, never recants its thesis that the Gourlays are compelled by temperament: the father is a prideful brute, the son is a weakling driven to rage by alcohol, the mother and the daughter are feeble in body and spirit. Surely among the grimmest scenes in late Victorian fiction, John's killing his father with the great kitchen poker is wholly in keeping with the vision of the novel. The patricide signals the "destruction" of the House with the Green Shutters, which has been prefigured in John's waking dream of "a ruined castle, its mouldering walls mounded atop with decaying rubble" (p. 193). In Chapter VIII Brown introduces the poker image, intimating, a trifle maladroitly perhaps, its future role: "'Put it down, sir,' said his father with a grim smile. . . . 'You'll be killing folk next'" (p. 84).

But the ambiguity of the patricide scene prompts the idea that, ironically, old Gourlay has taken part in his own death by springing at his son from a ladder and, after the blow of the poker, dashing his head on another of "his dear possessions" (p. 51), the massive range fender, "its rim, a square bar of heavy steel, with bright sharp edges" (p. 83): "Gourlay thudded on the fender, his brow crashing on the rim" (p. 226). His descent from the ladder corresponds with the dissolution of the family, but in keeping with his impetuous nature, Gourlay "leapt" (p. 226) from the ladder, does not fall from it: to the end he is impelled by his own destructive self.

A more subtle symbol of the killing derives from John's Raeburn essay: "A ship put to sea, and Gourlay heard in his ears the skirl of the man who went overboard—struck dead by the icy water on his brow, which smote the

brain like a tomahawk. The ship in John's essay "drifted on the pathless waters, a white dead man at the helm" (p. 160). The young man is that courseless vessel; even in death, old Gourlay is at the "helm," steering him to aimless destruction. Haunted by conscience and the phantom eyes of his father, the counterparts of the malicious eyes of Barbie that have long pursued the family, the "scion of the house of Gourlay" (p. 143) poisons himself. When the mother and the daughter subsequently take the poison, the pattern is completed: the lives of the Gourlays have been "poisoned" by an atmosphere of brutality, hatred, and fear, and by the failure of their own characters.

Nevertheless, part of their lot is entwined with physical environment and part with an almost preternatural nemesis. The final chapter, wherein Mrs. Gourlay in her madness speaks of "the Gourlays whom God has cursed" (p. 241) and her daughter asserts that "there's a curse on us all!" (p. 242), suggests such a reading, as the Greek elements combine with the naturalistic: "They were the equal victims of necessity. Fate set each of them apart to dree a separate weird" (p. 239).

If environment helps to shape the destiny of the Gourlays, then a significant part of that environment is the "bodies" of Barbie, the likes of Deacon Allardyce, Tam Brodie, and Sandy Toddle—and their counterweight, the curiously unnamed baker, "the only kind heart in Barbie" (p. 183):

The bodies of Barbie became not only the chorus to Gourlay's tragedy, buzzing it abroad and discussing his downfall; they became also, merely by their maddening tattle, a villain of the piece and an active cause of the catastrophe. Their gossip seemed to materialize into a single entity, a something propelling, that spurred Gourlay on to the schemes that ruined him (p. 105).

The chorus of bodies indicates yet another Greek influence. As Brown says of "the value of The Chorus" in *Rules for Writing*, "It gives the moral environment. In its composite character it is an actor contributing to the final result. The gossips in *The House with the Green Shutters* act directly on the two Gourlays."¹²

Although perhaps less malignant and influential, "the philosophic party" (p. 267) of the Three Mariners Inn—Solomon Longways, Christopher Coney, Billy Wills, Mr. Buzzford, and their cronies—become the chorus in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, supplying another link between the novels. In fact, Henchard's attitude towards these gossips immediately recalls Gourlay's contempt for the bodies: "Their reminiscences were cut short by the appearance of the reunited pair—Henchard looking round upon the idlers with that

¹²As quoted in Veitch, p. 167.

ambiguous gaze of his, which at one moment seemed to mean satisfaction, and at another fiery disdain" (p. 73).

Finally, Hardy and Brown, both men of the countryside, purposely set their novels in the past and give the reader vivid descriptions of landscape, often, however, for bitterly ironic effect. First Hardy:

Two miles out, a quarter of a mile from the highway, was the prehistoric fort called Mai Dun, of huge dimensions and many ramparts, within or upon whose enclosures a human being, as seen from the road, was but an insignificant speck (p. 268).

Brown's narrator for a moment interrupts his account of the savage baiting of Gourlay in the public wagon:

The brake swung on through merry cornfields where reapers were at work, past happy brooks flashing to the sun, through the solemn hush of ancient and mysterious woods, beneath the great white-moving clouds and blue spaces of the sky. And amid the suave enveloping greatness of the world, the human pismires stung each other and were cruel, and full of hate and malice and a petty rage (p. 139).

Of course, *The House with the Green Shutters* is not a carbon copy of Hardy's novel, and there are several noteworthy differences. For one thing, Hardy's story is more balanced and its tragedy, though inevitable owing to Henchard's rash decisions, less inexorably forced. Then too, Michael Henchard is a far more admirable man than John Gourlay. The mayor's love for Elizabeth-Jane, the daughter not his own, immediately comes to his defense. In implied comparison to Henchard, Hardy writes:

There are men whose hearts insist upon a dogged fidelity to some image or cause thrown by chance into their keeping, long after their judgment has pronounced it no rarity—even the reverse, indeed; and without them the band of the worthy is incomplete. But Farfrae was not of those (p. 261).

The engaging, tuneful Farfrae is certainly more commendable than Wilson of *Green Shutters*; but Donald has some less attractive traits, of which Hardy occasionally reminds us: "Farfrae had never so passionately liked Henchard as Henchard had liked him" (p. 285). Donald often becomes virtually a caricature of Scotch parsimony, lowering wages and extending working hours when he takes over Henchard's business and fretting over the amount of liquor to be consumed at his own wedding. With naked sarcasm the narrator at one point remarks that Farfrae was "giving strong expression to a song of his dear native country that he loved so well as never to have revisited it" (p. 281). Another allusion to Henchard is found at the close of the novel: "But her [Elizabeth-Jane's] strong sense that neither she nor any human being de-

served less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more" (p. 290).

Henchard's steadfast honesty elicits the admiration of the senior Commissioner during the bankruptcy proceedings: "I am bound to admit that I have never met a debtor who behaved more fairly. . . . as far as I can see every attempt has been made to avoid wronging anybody" (p. 190). The mayor even offers his creditors his gold watch in payment of his debts since "I don't want what don't belong to me!" (p. 190). Appropriately, he asks for release from historical time—oblivion—in his will: "That no man remember me" (p. 289). After his death, the result, symbolically, of emotional starvation—"he didn't gain strength, for you see, ma'am, he couldn't eat—no, no appetite at all—and he got weaker; and to-day he died" (p. 288)—we learn of Henchard's charity to the mother of childlike Abel Whittle. Despite previous ill-treatment at his hands, Whittle remains true to the mayor at the end, caring for him in his last days: "He was kind-like to mother when she wer here below, sending her the best ship-coal, and hardly any ashes from it at all; and taties, and such-like that were very needful to her" (p. 288). By contrast, Gourlay, before the advent of Wilson, has been in the habit of levying exorbitant carrying charges and cheating Templandmuir out of the profits from his own quarry.

Whereas Gourlay is "dead to the fairness of the scene" (p. 39) of Barbie on a fresh summer morning and fails to appreciate "the beauty of [a] grey wet dawn" (p. 87)—"a fine morning to him was one that burnt the back of your neck" (p. 87)—Henchard is a man of fine, if mute, sensibilities:

If he could have summoned music to his aid, his existence might even now have been borne; for with Henchard music was of regal power. The merest trumpet or organ tone was enough to move him, and high harmonies transubstantiated him. But hard fate had ordained that he should be unable to call up this Divine spirit in his need (p. 256).

Bent on the "wild purpose" (p. 233) of hurling Farfrae to his death from the top floor of the corn-stores, Henchard is completely unmanned when the young Scot hums a passage from "Auld Lang Syne"—"nothing moved Henchard like an old melody" (p. 235)—and abandons his murderous intent:

Henchard took his full measure of shame and self-reproach. These scenes of his first acquaintance with Farfrae rushed back upon him—that time when the curious mixture of romance and thrift in the young man's composition so commanded his heart that Farfrae could play upon him as on an instrument (p. 237).

In opposition to this scene is Gourlay's enraged confrontation with his drunken wreck of a son:

To break a man's spirit so, take that from him which he will never recover while he lives, send him slinking away *animo castrato*—for that is what it comes to—is a sinister outrage of the world. . . . Yet it was this outrage that Gourlay meant to work upon his son (p. 212).

Gourlay is also capable of striking his pathetic wife in the breast with clenched fist, a blow that produces a cancerous abscess.

Nonetheless, John Gourlay is not simply a troglodyte with a birr: "Yet he was not wilfully cruel; only a stupid man with a strong character, in which he took a dogged pride. Stupidity and pride provoked the brute in him" (pp. 53-54). Just as Henchard has been denied the musical faculty, Gourlay has "no gift of the gab" (p. 49), a deficiency that contributes to his tragedy. At times the mayor also suffers from inarticulacy. After the wrestling bout with Farfrae, in which he deliberately handicaps himself because he is the stronger man, "Henchard would fain have recalled him; but his tongue failed in its task, and the young man's steps died on his ear" (p. 237).

Like the mayor, who masters an angry bull, Gourlay is the essential man of action, as his reckless courage on the day of his son's birth attests:

"Ye mind what an awful day it was; the thunder roared as if the heavens were tumbling on the world, and the lichtnin sent the trees daudin on the roads, and folk hid below their beds and prayed—they thocht it was the Judgment! But Gourlay rammed his black stepper in the shafts, and drave like the devil o' hell to Skeighan Drone, where there was a young doctor. . . . In a' the countryside driving like his that day was never kenned or heard tell o'; they were back within the hour! I saw them gallop up Main Street; lichtnin struck the ground before them; the young doctor covered his face wi' his hands, and the horse nichered wi' fear and tried to wheel, but Gourlay stood up in the gig and lashed him on through the fire" (p. 72).

Even after his financial decline, Gourlay calls forth admiration from some of the better citizens of Barbic:

"Yes, gentleman!" said Johnny, to whom the drink gave a courage. "Brute, if ye like, but aristocrat frae scalp to heel. If he had brains and a dacent wife, and a bigger field—oh man," said Johnny, visioning the possibility, "Auld Gourla could conquer the world, if he swalled his neck till't" (p. 183).

Like Henchard, Gourlay has his humanities. Forced to dismiss his one remaining employee, Peter Riney, a simple-minded retainer who has been with the family for two generations, he shows a surprising tenderness: "Gourlay, so often the trampling brute without knowing it, felt it brutal to wound the faithful creature dreaming at his toil" (p. 187). Gourlay's feeding her pet rabbits when his daughter is ill with fever and his reaction to the

death of his "proud pacer" (p. 136) enlist the reader's sympathy: "'Tam the powney,' he said twice, nodding his head each time he said it; 'Tam the powney'; and he turned away" (p. 136). His decision to send his son to high school—Gourlay "was not without a thought of his son's welfare when he packed him off to Skeighan" (p. 128)—and then to Edinburgh University testifies to a rugged altruism mixed with "a salve to . . . wounded pride" (p. 189), and he "battered his brains to get together [money] for the boy's expenses" (p. 184): "More and more, as his other supports fell away, Gourlay attached himself to the future of his son. It became the sheet-anchor of his hopes" (p. 188).

Hence the roots of Gourlay's final persecution of his son. Though Hinchard was "getting on towards the dead level of middle age, when material things increasingly possess the mind" (p. 127), Gourlay's concern for "his dear possessions" (p. 51), especially the House with the Green Shutters itself, smacks of out-and-out obsession: "And so, gradually, his dwelling had come to be a passion of Gourlay's life. It was a by-word in the place that if ever his ghost was seen, it would be haunting the House with the Green Shutters" (p. 49). In being expelled from Edinburgh for drunken insubordination and thereby ruining his life, young John commits the unpardonable sin of violating the integrity of the house that has become a projection of his father himself, as its by-name "the House of Gourlay" (p. 128) attests:

Above all he had disgraced the House with the Green Shutters. That was the crown of his offending. Gourlay felt for the house of his pride even more than for himself—rather the house was himself; there was no division between them. He had built it bluff to represent him to the world. It was his character in stone and lime (p. 204).

Long before, John's betrayal of his father's trust and the ruination of the Gourlays have been symbolically foretold:

Gourlay had a curious stick of foreign wood (one of the trifles he fed his pride on) the crook of which curved back to the stem and inhered, leaving space only for the fingers. The wood was of wonderful toughness, and Gourlay had been known to bet that no man could break the handle of his stick by a single grip over the crook and under it. Yet now, as he saw his bargain whisked away from him and listened to Wilson's jibe, the thing snapped in his grip like a rotten twig. He stared down at the broken pieces for a while, as if wondering how they came there, then dashed them on the ground while Wilson stood smiling by (p. 104).

The symbol of the walking stick is returned to in a later metaphor: "It was John who had brought all this flaming round his ears—John whose colleging he had lipped to so muckle. The staff on which he leaned had pierced him. By the eternal heavens he would tramp it into atoms" (p. 206).

A sentence from *The Mayor of Casterbridge* serves as a fitting metaphorical statement of Brown's own vision of consummate gloom: "The dense trees of the avenue rendered the road dark as a tunnel, though the open land on each side was still under a faint daylight; in other words, they passed down a midnight between two gloamings" (p. 23). Throughout their calamitous careers Michael Henchard and John Goulay have been men at grips with destiny, a destiny largely of their own making. Theirs is a single shared predicament: the inevitable defeat of a man endowed with great, if flawed, capacities but unable to rise above circumstance and the tyranny of his own willful nature. The similarities in these novels, especially when viewed in a total pattern of concept, image, and event, appear too close to be merely accidental.

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