Modern Language Studies

Biblical Substructures In The Tragic Form
Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
Agnon, *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight*

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Bringing together Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886)[1] and Agnon's *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight* (1912),[2] a novella not yet translated into English, may seem an arbitrary yoking of different social milieus, cultural frames of reference, and verbal associations. But the apparent gap between Hardy and Agnon, and especially between these two particular works, is reduced considerably once we become aware of striking similarities in a number of artistic motifs and dramatic coincidences, as well as in the central tragic vision. Though both stories first appeared in serialized forms, they manifest an unmistakeably Aristotelian "unity of action" in their unremitting focus on the decline and fall of their respective protagonists. In both stories, an initial act of "shame and horror," to use Dorothea Krook's tragic formula,[3] triggers a series of dramatic coincidences that, abetted by forces of fate and chance that seem to have been let loose, contribute to the inevitable tragic catastrophe.

While it is impossible to establish a direct influence, the glaring affinities between the two works call our attention to the sometimes mysterious ways in which folk motifs and literary patterns travel across countries and cultures and find themselves in different settings.[4] The fair as a grotesque reflection of moral and social chaos, and as the actual and symbolic backdrop for the protagonist's intoxicated surrender to temptation, is a powerful vision in both stories. A wrongful, immoral "business transaction" is at the heart of the tragic entanglement in both. In Hardy's story, the selling of the wife in a moment of drunken rashness, with which the novel starts, sets off a series of coincidences beyond the protagonist's control. In Agnon's tale, the "act of shame and horror" is not one single episode but rather a protracted state; it starts with the protagonist's ill-advised departure from his hometown and wife for the purpose of collecting alms, and culminates in his selling the letter of recommendation given to him by his rabbi. In both stories, the protagonists' final failures are tied to the obscure vicissitudes of the business world as well as to the uncertainty of harvest. The reappearance of a person thought lost and dead, the mishandling of letters, the motif of the "double," and the case of the wife who is married to a second "husband" while her lawful first husband is alive are elements of fateful significance in both stories.

But it is not only in the plot that the similarities between the two stories are so provoking. In fact, in terms of plot line alone, Agnon's tale seems to be a prose version of Tennyson's poem "Enoch Arden" (1864).[5] Like Enoch Arden, Menashe-Hayim, Agnon's protagonist, comes home to find his wife nursing a child by a second husband whom she married

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when the first husband was declared dead. Like Enoch Arden, Menashe-Hayim chooses to spend the rest of his life in self imposed exile and complete anonymity, away from human community, rather than ruin the happiness and reputation of his wife, who is unaware of the sinfulness of her second marriage. But while Tennyson's hero does not offer any philosophical observations regarding his personal experience, both Henchard, the deposed mayor of Casterbridge, and Menashe-Hayim, Agnon's hapless protagonist, comment on the moral and theological implications of their tragic predicament. The central situation is similar: in both cases: the first marital union, sanctified by God and community, was fruitless. Henchard's child died in infancy, and Menashe-Hayim's marriage never produced an offspring. However, the wife's second marriage, though impure and unlawful, seems to have been blessed by nature; the wives of both protagonists bear children to their second "husband." In both works, the bewildered protagonists question the moral order of the universe in words which reverberate with Jobian echoes. Hardy says of his protagonist: "Part of his wish to wash his hands of life arose from his perception of its contrarious inconsistencies—of Nature's jaunty readiness to support unorthodox social principles."[6] Agnon's protagonist expresses a similar sentiment while at the same time accepting God's verdict.[7] In fact, the Jobian stature of both protagonists, while not fully developed in either story, is quite apparent; Hardy's Henchard "cursed himself like a less scrupulous Job,"[8] while Agnon's hero is described in words taken from The Book of Job (14:1): "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."[9] Moreover, both Henchard and Menashe-Hayim find solace in The Book of Psalms, and see in it a reflection of their own predicaments.

Both stories are saturated with Scriptural citations and references that are not just isolated allusions that illuminate individual episodes. In both, a specific Biblical pattern provides the structural meaning of the total work, and serves as a scaffold that supports the entire narrative. The main dramatic situation in Hardy's novel, the conflict between Henchard, the old mayor of Casterbridge, and Farfrae, his successor, is described as analogous to the Saul-David conflict in 1 Samuel. In Agnon's story, the protagonist who leaves his home and wanders among strangers is seen as reenacting his nation's destiny of dispossession and exile, a major Biblical theme. But the differences between Hardy's and Agnon's treatment of the Biblical structures are of great significance. Let us first see how the Biblical materials are evoked in these two stories and incorporated into the narrative.

On several occasions in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy likens his protagonist to specific Biblical characters. At times, it is only the writer who is aware of the analogy, while his protagonist remains oblivious to the Biblical dimension of his own predicament. In addition to the reference to Job, Hardy also tells us that Henchard felt "like Saul at his reception by Samuel,"[10] and at another point he depicts him as "Samson shorn."[11] On other occasions, it is Henchard who suggests the similarity between himself and a Biblical character: "I—Cain—go alone as I deserve—an

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outcast and a vagabond";[12] and, "I felt quite ill . . . and, like Job, I could curse the day that gave me birth."[13]

But the only parallelism that extends to the entire plot and is sustained throughout the story is undoubtedly that between Henchard and Saul.[14] To delineate briefly the major features of this analogy: Henchard is a Saul-like figure in his potential of greatness as well as in his lapses into rages and depressions. Gloomy and lonely, he is drawn to the younger man, Farfrae, who, like his Biblical counterpart David, possesses musical skills. But the loving relationship between the two men deteriorates into suspicion and animosity when their fortunes change. Henchard loses his business, his social position, and even his daughter; while Farfrae gains the admiration of the townspeople, prospers financially, and marries first Henchard's fiancee and then his beloved stepdaughter. Eventually, the younger man will inherit the older man's position as the mayor of Caster-bridge. The Biblical parallels are obvious. Saul, too, felt betrayed by people whose loyalty he demanded on the basis of their natural ties to him: his son Jonathan and his daughter Michal. The loving friendship between the two Biblical characters also sours when the older man is threatened by the younger man and sees in him the potential usurpur of his title and power. Henchard's secret visit to the weather caster parallels Saul's nocturnal trip to the witch who raises the prophet Samuel from the dead. It is in this scene that Hardy himself draws the readers' attention to the parallelism between Henchard and Saul. In the modern story, as well as in its ancient counterpart, the encounter with the prophet bodes ill for the seeker of the future and marks his final doom.

Since Hardy's focal point is Henchard and not Farfrae, the correspondence between Henchard and Saul is much closer than that between Farfrae and David. While Farfrae possesses David's good looks, fine voice and social charm, he ultimately emerges as lackluster, a pale reflection of his glamorous counterpart in the Bible. Furthermore, while in the central conflict Henchard's role parallels that of Saul, Hardy attributes to Henchard some of the qualities of David. In one instance, Henchard fights with Farfrae, yet at the last moment he refrains from destroying him; this is reminiscent of two Biblical incidents in which David has a chance to kill Saul, yet he decides to spare the king's life. In another scene, Henchard identifies with the "Servant David" and asks the church choir to recite Psalm 109 to him.[15]

Henchard, then, incorporates in his character a variety of Biblical figures: the ill-fated Saul, the strong Samson rendered powerless, the puzzled sufferer Job, and the prototypical sinner, Cain. While each Biblical figure illuminates one aspect of Henchard's personality, the most dominant is that of king Saul.

At the same time, a different frame of reference that becomes apparent in the novel links the mayor of Casterbridge to another ancient king, Oedipus of Thebes. While the Biblical parallelism is established by the actual naming of Biblical figures, the analogy between Henchard and Oedipus is done mainly through a series of incidents as well as imagery. One of the first scenes in the novel portrays the arrogant mayor confronting the embittered townspeople who complain about the damaged wheat

that the mayor had sold to the bakers and that produced debased bread. The theme of pollution and the protagonist as responsible for it suggests an analogy with the first scene in *Oedipus Rex,* in which the people of Thebes complain about the plague to Oedipus, who turns out to be the source of it. Hardy, then, draws the image of the diseased monarch from both Hebraic and Hellenic sources.[16] The analogy with Oedipus reinforces the tragic framework of the novel and suggests the existence of malevolent forces in the universe. Henchard's one act of violence has unleashed those irrational forces and, no matter how much he tries to make amends for his initial act of "shame and horror," those forces, in the form of chance coincidences, fatal reappearance of people, and the vicissitudes of nature, will finally defeat and destroy him. "Tragedies end badly," says George Steiner, the tragic personage "is broken by forces which can neither be fully understood nor overcome by rational prudence."[17]

On the other hand, the introduction of the Biblical pattern takes the novel away from the exclusively tragic domain and anchors Henchard's predicament in a sphere that emphasizes human responsibility and free will, and calls for a just punishment for man's sin. If the analogy with Oedipus implies that Henchard's universe is a vicious circle in which he is trapped regardless of what he will do, the Biblical dimension offers another vision that sees human life in terms of progress and change and views time as a healing mechanism.

The Greek conception of time recognizes no historical development says Tom Driver, "and the changes come about not through the guilt of man but through the will of the gods."[18] The Judeo-Christian consciousness of time, on the other hand, emphasizes "the significance of action taken in the historical present."[19] The Hellenic element in Hardy's novel would suggest that Henchard's tragedy lies in his imperfect human nature, in his inability, as man, to alter or control the powers around him. And the novel offers many instances of Henchard's sense of entrapment. The Hebraic presence, on the other hand, sees Henchard's predicament in the context of a dynamic moral frame in which human suffering is a consequence of the wrong human action. Henchard accepts his role as sinner and understands the nature of his punishment in Biblical terms when he likens himself to Cain and adds: ". . . But my punishment is not greater than I can bear."[20] The Hebraic conception of human life as determined by human action is certainly present in the story. Hardy, who read Matthew Arnold,[21] was undoubtedly acquainted with the chapter "Hebraism and Hellenism" in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) in which Arnold sees the polarity between Hellenism and Hebraism as that between pursuing knowledge ("right thinking," in his words) and choosing moral action ("right acting").[22]

It is hard to say which vision ultimately wins in *The Mayor.* Both the Hellenic and the Hebraic are present as optional conceptions of man and his place in the universe; ons is stark and uncompromising, the other demanding but reconciliatory. It is not surprising that there is no critical consensus as to whether Hardy's novel achieves full tragic proportions.[23] The Biblical figures who function as the archaic prototypes of Henchard

are remote from the tragic sphere.[24] However, one may wonder why Hardy chose Saul as the main counterpart of his protagonist. While the Biblical vision as a whole is non-tragic, as Steiner explains, it is undeniable that there are tragic moments in the Bible. Moreover, of all Biblical characters, it seems that Saul comes closest to the tragic.[25] In fact, the tragic potential of the Saul story has been fully utilized by the Hebrew poet Tchernichovsky in two ballads which emphasize the heroic stature of Saul, the starkness of his fate, and the sense of doom that accompanies him. In one ballad ("Shaul B'Ein Dor"), Tchernichovsky recreates the scene of Saul's painful confrontation with the ghost of Samuel the prophet. The king emerges as an appealing figure, attempting to understand his fate, trying to impose order over chaos. The prophet speaks in the name of an irrational, obscure power, the laws of which are arbitrary and inscrutable. This episode is reminiscent of the Oedipus-Tiresias bitter exchange in *Oedipus Rex*. Interestingly Hardy has also anchored the analogy between Henchard and Saul in the protagonist's attempt to gain knowledge with the aid of a soothsayer.

It seems that while hardy used the Biblical prototypes for the non-tragic dimension that they would introduce in the novel, he singled out the character of Saul as Henchard's ancient counterpart because of an intuitive perception of the tragic potential of this particular Biblical figure.

The protagonist that Agnon has chosen to carry the weight of the tragic predicament is different from Hardy's hero. Henchard's personal traits immediately suggest that he is likely to come under the tragic pall: he exhibits a capacity for great rages as well as a hubristic defiance of the laws of nature and man; yet he is not evil. Agnon's protagonist, Menashe-Hayim, is colorless by comparison. While Agnon couches his story in an archiac idiom and sets it in an old-fashioned, dying folk culture, he seems to offer the modern idea that even the "little" man, the man of no special "character," is capable of the tragic experience. Indeed, Menashe-Hayim's act of defiant impiety, the selling of the letter of recommendation, is not less outrageous than Henchard's selling of his wife, especially in the light of the dramatic events that it triggers: Menashe-Hayim will lose his wife, who will unwittingly enter a marriage that is sinful and defiled in the eyes of Jewish law.

Unlike Hardy, Agnon does not name any Biblical figure as the ancient prototype of his protagonist; nor does he recreate a particular Biblical episode of dramatic potential in his story. Instead, the Biblical language of exile and redemption that suffuses the narrative, and that is implied in the title itself, suggests that Menashe-Hayim reenacts his nation's entire historical destiny of punishment and restoration. Menashe-Hayim thus relives not an isolated Biblical episode, but the main drama that underlies the total Old Testament vision. The title, which is an exact quotation of Isaiah 40:4 (. . . and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain"), sets the tone; it offers an eschatological vision of national redemption, and establishes the Biblical terms of the story.

However, the Biblical structure is only one of several layers of verbal and cultural associations that exist in the story. In fact, the nine-

teenth century protagonist and his milieu serve as the middle point of a number of concentric circles of ideas and concepts. The other prominent layers are: the Talmudic, marked by the use of Aramaic as well as of legal-halachic terms such as "deserted wife" ("Agunah"), "halachic problem" ("sugiah"), "borrower" ("shoel"), "legal evidence" ("siman"), "testimony" ("eduth"), "transgression" ("averah"), "adultery" ("Issur Arayoth"); the Literature of Ethics, identifiable by wise sayings and ethical aphorisms which are either quoted from actual Rabbinic texts, or imitate their style; the Hassidic-mystical, made up of tales of miraculous, last minute rescues, in which words such as "faith," "salvation," "miracle," and "fate" are predominant; and the popular layer, which represents the ambiance of the contemporary folk culture and is marked by the language of superstition ("the devil," "shed mi'shahat"), premonitions (the protagonist kissing the empty mesusah space, the ballads sung in the fair), and the callous, mocking voice of the community that sometimes intrudes into the tale.[26]

The Biblical layer of the story cannot be read in isolation; it is inextricably tied to the other circles of associations which, together, exhibit the mutation, transformation, and even corruption of specific Biblical concepts. For example: the most predominant concepts within the Biblical orbit are those of redemption and exile. Indeed, the root g'l, to redeem, is the most frequently used in the story; the root glh, to go on exile, also appears quite often. The husband's departure from his home and wife is described as going on exile, and his return is viewed as the redemption of both himself and his wife ("ki yavo v'yigaaal," he will return and redeem).[27] The concept of redemption in this context echoes the prophetic language, hence Menashe-Hayim is reenacting his national destiny. But the word "redeemer" is later used in the narrow legal meaning in which it appears in the Bible (i.e. the kin who redeems the blood, or the property, or the wife, of another family member). Ironically, it is not the lawful husband who will be the redeemer of his wife, but the second husband ("nimtsa la goel," a redeemer was found for her).[28] Furthermore, the verb "to redeem" is used within the Talmudic-halachic context, too, when the rabbis try to "redeem," or free, the wife from the limbo status of "agunah" ("l'gaolah mi'kavlei ha'aigun," to free her from the bonds of "iggun").[29] Again the irony is apparent: the rabbis think that they redeemed the woman, while actually they have enabled her to commit adultery. As the story moves towards its resolution, words deriving from the root g'l, to redeem, appear in greater frequency. At this point, Menashe-Hayim wishes for the redemption of his soul in mystical terms;[30] yet the word redemption is now stripped of all its associations and narrows down to one meaning only—death.[31]

A similar mutation occurs in the root glh, to go on exile. Initially, Menashe-Hayim's wife prepares for him "the gear for exile," a phrase repeatedly used in the Book of Ezekiel chapter 12. This prophetic phrase creates the grand setting for the protagonist's departure from home, and anchors his private experiences in the collective, national destiny. Together with the title of the story, that describes the return of the exiles, the Biblical echoes suggest the Hebraic quality of historical remembrance of past events, and the conception of the future as open and redeemable,

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that Tom Driver sees as the main traits of the Judaic consciousness of time.[32] As the story progresses, however, the relationship between the wandering of the exiled nation and the begging from door to door of our protagonist becomes merely satirical. Menashe-Hayim deteriorates into a greedy, gluttonous vagabond, and Agnon marks this change in his protagonist by adding the Biblical phrase that describes Cain's wanderings: "a fugitive and a vagabond," ("na vanad").[33] At this point, the wandering of the protagonist no longer parallels that of his nation's, since it does not mean an expiation of sin but, rather, sinking more and more into sin. Furthermore, to justify his failure to return home, Menashe-Hayim uses the excuse that he deliberately "exiles himself" ("oseh golah"). He is thus distorting the concept of "exile" as used in the Literature of Ethics and in Hassidic sources. In the former, it is suggested that an individual should temporarily leave his family and wander among strangers in order to perfect his soul. In Hasidic tradition, the Zaddik, spiritual leader, goes on exile as a way of preparing himself for his leadership role. Menashe-Hayim, however, corrupts the Biblical, Rabbinic, and Hasidic meanings of the concept of exile, thus revealing both his depravity and comic pretentiousness.

Towards the end of the story, Agnon abandons altogether the verbs that derive from the root glh, go on exile, and uses repeatedly the verb "wander," ("na vanad") associated with Cain. This time, it is the protagonist, in a moment of illumination, who views himself not in terms of the individual who fulfills his nation's destiny, but as the sinner Cain. He asserts that, just as he has been wandering in this world, so his soul will continue its restless wandering in the other world.[34] Thus the theme of the return of the exiles, described in the title of the story, comes full circle in an ironic reversal of its Biblical meaning; instead of restoration into harmony, we have the vision of Menashe-Hayim's tormented soul, forever in exile, eternally wandering.

Agnon's story abounds with many other Biblical allusions that introduce motifs from Genesis, Lamentations, The Psalms, Job, and The Book of Esther. Generally, the biblical language creates a comic discrepancy between the sublime and the mundane, as when the grotesque musicians in the fair are described in the language with which the psalmist envisions the return of the exiles.[35] In other instances, a Biblical verse is quoted word by word, or slightly paraphrased, and incorporated into the language of the narrative only to reinforce the protagonist's estrangement from the Biblical world, and to foretell disaster. For example: Menashe-Hayim expresses his wish to visit the fair with the phrase used by Moses when he begs God to see the promised land: ". . . let me go over and see" (Deuteronomy, 3:25). Besides the inherent irony, these words suggest Menashe-Hayim's eventual failure to enter his own promised land, i.e., his home.

The reversal of the Biblical context is a satirical device; the Biblical idiom dwarfs the protagonist and exposes his faults and pretensions. At the same time, the Biblical dimension reveals the tragic loneliness of modern man, cut off from the ancient source of meaning and comfort.[36] While the Biblical language in the story creates a world filled with the

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promise of redemption, the actual plot, especially the ending in which the protagonist acts against Biblical law and dies a sinner, reveals a world empty of the main Biblical premises.

On the other hand, Agnon's story does not commit itself totally to the tragic vision. While the tragic structure of the plot is undeniable, Agnon rejects the Hellenic conception of man as a plaything at the hands of the gods. The first chapter of the story uses repeatedly various words that signify "fate" (such as "mazal"—fate, "gzeira"—predestination, "galgal"—the wheel of fortune), and creates the impression that the protagonist is exposed to the capriciousness and irrationality of a malevolent force that governs human life. Yet it soon becomes clear that the term "fate" is used as an excuse by a protagonist who is unable to face up to his own inadequacies. Furthermore, the Hasidic stories inserted early into the narrative prove that it is man's own inner resources that determine the happy outcome of events, not outside forces. Therefore, Menashe-Hayim's predicament cannot be fully defined in tragic terms since he is not controlled by hidden, evil forces; nor is he seen as gaining dignity and nobility by spitefully challenging the injustice of these forces. Thus, at the end of the story, Agnon's protagonist is not only denied redemption in Biblical terms, but is also deprived of the grandeur of the tragic hero.

And yet, Menashe-Hayim does ultimately achieve a measure of redemption, though it takes place outside both the Hebraic and the Hellenic orbits. A "dissociation of sensibility" occurs at the end of the story that allows us to separate the concept of "sin" as a Biblical-legal term, from the idea of "guilt" as a psychological state. In the Biblical sphere, within which Menashe-Hayim still moves, he continues to be a sinner; yet he rids himself of his guilt feelings and experiences an emotional tranquility at the end of the story. His redemption is defined in psychological terms as that of a man who has made the courageous decision to sacrifice his own life for the happiness of another human being. His reward is also emotional. He dies convinced of his wife's love and assured of being buried in the grave, and under the tombstone, designated for him.[37] If the crooked is being made straight at the end, it is not in Biblical terms, but in modern, secular, psychological terms. Redemption is located in the subjective consciousness of the individual who has finally made peace with himself, but it is not bound up with his fulfilling the divine destiny of his community.

It is quite apparent that while the Biblical presence functions as a supportive substructure in both works, the two writers differ in their use of the Biblical material. For Hardy, the Scriptures serve as a large storehouse of archaic legends that contain prototypical characters and situations. The relationship between the Biblical universe and the Wessex environment is, therefore, metaphorical: Henchard felt *like* Job, acted *like* Saul, etc. Furthermore, for Hardy the architect the Biblical plot offered a structure that could be used as a direct parallel of the modern plot-line. The symmetrical neatness and the almost geometric precision of the analogy are essential to the narrative form of Hardy's novel. There is no structural tension, no paradoxical or satirical relationship between the

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Biblical story and its nineteenth century counterpart. True, the Saul-David precedence expands the insular, regional story both spatially and chronologically; thus the Henchard-Farfrae conflict is the Biblical tale writ small. But the architectural support that the Biblical frame offers Hardy is mechanical, imposed by a skilled artisan to perfect his fictional creation.

In Agnon's story, the Biblical element is embedded in the language itself and is thus inseparable from the very fabric of the narrative. While Hardy's plot is independent of the Biblical structure, Agnon's tale has no life of its own but that which is inextricably tied to the Biblical dimension. The language of exile and redemption places the individual story in a larger framework of universal significance where the personal and the historic meet, and creates expectations that are eventually defeated. The crux of the narrative is the constant tension between the Biblical frame and the modern plot. Thus the language of absolute justice and eschatological promise constantly challenges the temporal, relative, and enclosed reality of the protagonist and is, in turn, challenged by it. Both the Biblical and the modern are tested against each other; the correlation between them is simultaneously direct and reverse, genuine and ironic. Agnon does not need the adjective "like" because the Biblical presence asserts itself as an organic part of the verbal life of the tale, rather than as a structure extraneous to the actual dramatic web. For Agnon, the Bible exists not as an archaic layer that the artist can draw on to reinforce his narrative, but as a ubiquitous presence, constantly claiming attention and provoking the imagination.

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NOTES

1. Hereafter, *The Mayor*. All page references will be made to the Harper edition (1950).
2. Hereafter, *The Crooked*. All page references will be made to Schoken's 1971 edition, volume "Elu V'Elu."
3. *Elements of Tragedy* (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 8.
4. Agnon was an avid reader of German letters (See: S. Y. Agnon, *M'Atsmi El Atsmi*, Schoken, 1976, pp. 113, 115, et passim). It is possible that he became aware of the works of Hardy through critical reviews that appeared in Germany before he left for Israel (in 1907). It seems that Hardy was popular in Germany even before the turn of the century. Carl. J. Weber, in *The First Hundred Years of Thomas Hardy 1840-1940* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1965), lists works on Hardy that appeared in Germany as early as 1889, 1894, 1901, 1902, and 1903. An indirect source through which Agnon could have heard of Hardy's works was the Hebrew writer Y. H. Brenner. Brenner spent some time in England and, as Agnon himself testifies (*M'ATsmi El Stsmi*, p. 121), was a voracious reader. Brenner read also English and used to have long talks with Agnon on world literature.
5. "Enoch Arden" was translated into German by Carl Hessel in 1874(?) (Leipzig: P. Reclam jun). Another translation, in an illustrated edition, appeared in Berlin in 1883, published by G. Grote.
6. *The Mayor*, p. 368.

7. *The Crooked*, p. 122.
8. *The Mayor*, p. 330.
9. *The Crooked*, p. 123.
10. *The Mayor*, p. 214.
11. *The Mayor*, p. 373.
12. *The Mayor*, p. 361.
13. *The Mayor*, p. 90.
14. The close parallelism between the Henchard-Farfrae drama and the Biblical story has been closely studied by Julian Moynahan in "*The Mayor of Caster-bridge* and 1 Samuel," *PMLA*, 71 (1956), 118-30.
15. *The Mayor*, p. 269.
16. See D. A. Dike, "A Modern Oedipus: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*," *Essays in Criticism*, 2 (1952), 169-79.
17. *The Death of Tragedy*, (London: Faber, 1961), p. 8.
18. *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearean Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 27.
19. Driver, p. 39.
20. *The Mayor*, p. 361.
21. See Carl J. Weber, *Hardy of Wessex* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 42.
22. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. 109.
23. See John Paterson, "*The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy*," in A. J. Guerard (ed.), *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 95.
24. Milton, of course, treated Samson as a tragic character in "Samson Agonistes." The Book of Job was also "rewritten" as tragedy.
25. On the tragic dimension of Saul's figure and career see: Hillel Barzel, "Moses: Tragedy and Sublimity," in R. R. Gros Louis (ed.), *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (New York: Abingdon, 1974), pp. 125-6.
26. This is not an attempt to differentiate between the historical layers of the Hebrew language used by Agnon, but rather, between the areas of cultural connotations and symbols present in this story.
27. *The Crooked*, p. 112.
28. *The Crooked*, p. 116.
29. *The Crooked*, p. 113.
30. Gershom G. Scholem shows how the concepts of exile and deliverance have been converted in Kabbalah, and later in Hasidic thought, into terms denoting personal-psychological processes or mystical-cosmic ideas. See *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schoken, 1974), pp. 286, 305, 341 et passim.
31. *The Crooked*, p. 123.
32. *The Sense of History*, p. 39-66.
33. *The Crooked*, p. 88.
34. *The Crooked*, p. 127.
35. *The Crooked*, p. 99 offers a comic paraphrase of Psalm 126:6 "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seeds, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."
36. The idea that Agnon's troubled protagonists represent modern man's tragic predicament and sense of estrangement is one of the main premises that runs through Baruch Kursweill's works on Agnon. See *Massot Al Sipurei Agnon* (Tel Aviv: Schoken, 1963).
37. Arnold Band argues that the ending of the story takes it away from the tragic sphere. See *Nostalgia and Nightmare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 87.