

Notes on Poetry and Politics

This essay was originally published (in Hebrew) in *Ha'darim* 15 (2003), pp. 23-31.

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These are work notes that arose as I progressed, especially at times when I was stymied. No poet has ever set out to write political poetry; distress, oppression, injustice and the degradation of language led to it:

The evil leaps o'er the high walls; it finds everyone,
Even him fleeing to the inmost chamber.

This my soul commands me teach the Athenians:
A bad constitution brings civic turmoil...²

So wrote Solon in the beginning of the 6th century B.C.E. And so says Mandelstam, in the "Wolf" a poem written in Moscow in 1931:

For the sake of the thundering glory of the coming ages,
For the sake of the lofty tribe of men.'
I have been deprived of the cup at the feast of my fathers,
Of merriment and honor.³

Political material, by its nature, is the kind of thing one is thrust into, and to those of a more "sophisticated" mindset, it seems somehow chewed over and recycled. This is their ideological understanding, which belongs to the specific way of thinking and influences the people who are trapped within it -- in inertia, in hopeless dilettantism, in the media myths and so on. This way, the public discourse represents, and thereby also conceals, the parallel, underlying state of all the experiential materials. One could say that here is its official function: to engender desensitization and demoralization. Sebastian Haffner attests in *Geschichte eines Deutschen (The Story of a German)*⁴ that in the years immediately following the Nazis' rise to power, nature poetry and delicate sentimental poetry flourished in Germany. Such dissociation reveals to which extent language, whose ethical function is all-encompassing, had been eviscerated. On the lowest level, the assimilated political materials fulfill their reductive role of creating a simplistic and distorted view of reality; at the same time, on the more refined level, this is precisely why reality is perceived as so intricate and complex that it would be both difficult and over-simplistic to take an unequivocal moral stance. In the last generation, complexity has acquired hegemonic academic and intellectual standing. This is evident at every level of the discourse, from the highest to the lowest, and finds its banal expression in an annulment of moral perception and of moral certainty.

For the moral sense is an instinctive, spontaneous non-"complex" response of vehement opposition which sets in when a person witnesses to an injustice being committed. It is not a random fluctuation on the emotional seesaw that before long will seize on a counterbalancing idea which will restore complexity and ambivalence, so that from today's ideological standpoint you remain in the fold, a part of "the tribe." For this reason, too, in this day and age, most people only become cognizant of the absence of the moral sense by a sudden insight. Because this deficiency, having become built-in, becomes an ethical norm, and, as such, is not easily recognized. The people in Israel appear, very similar to people every-where in the world: normal, intelligent and even likable; however, in public conduct, in the manner of writing, the style of speech, the response to events, this ignorance is hinted at, this deficit of human compassion, which is suppressed and disguised ideologically, and serves, *ex post facto*, as the defining the Israeli character. I am not referring to people's psychological potential (reading Victor Klemperer's diary shows that many Germans in Dresden privately acted with kindness and courage when they encountered a Jew), but to an ethical phenomenon that is apparent not only on the lowest level (as barbarism), but also in the reasoned and sophisticated attitudes of those who are responsible for the cultural messages. The government has an interest in inflaming nationalist emotions, in provoking fear and hatred, so that it may continue liquidating the Palestinians. In this framework, propaganda is propagated with the aim of convincing the good and enlightened as well that the situation is very complex indeed, since there is no one to make peace with. To this end, the authorities continually disseminate falsehoods to the effect that generous offers have been made to the occupied (while meanwhile the theft of lands is intensified along with the violence that leads to a creeping Transfer), and at the same time the powers that be persistently and provocatively fuel horror by means of military terror inflicted on the population (imprisonment, starvation, demolition of houses and destruction of crops), and especially by means of the targeted assassinations, whose purpose in the strategy of the army and the government is made clear whenever a period of quiet seems to be emerging.

Still, in articles published in the world's newspapers, the important Israeli writers and intellectuals (such as David Grossman and Amos Oz), who represent the peace camp and, of course, disagree with the occupation, always take care to balance the picture: They do not fully support the Palestinian cause, nor do they call for an immediate departure from the territories. They adhere (as in the days of Oslo) to the manipulations (endless negotiations and bogus peace plans) used by the government (with the help of the Americans) in order to extend the occupation. Out of intellectual responsibility, they state that the Palestinian side is also to blame, and explain to the reader that the subject of peace is very tricky and complex.

Here the connection between politics and poetics is evident. First, in terms of the poet's ethical position and scope of writing, this talk of complication places him within the ideological bounds of the separation fence, yet, the taking of a moral stance (which may simplify the complexity) places him outside of it. So the poet gazes beyond the West Bank fence toward the horizon that is called humanity, as does Mandelstam in the lines cited above. Second, in terms of the linguistic ethos, a moral insight requires the embracing of a clear and confrontational stance. This difference in the *logos* is demonstrated in Brecht's story "What's Wise about the Wise Man is his Stance":

A philosophy professor came to see Mr. Keuner and told him about his wisdom. After a while Mr. Keuner said to him: "You sit uncomfortably, you talk uncomfortably, you think uncomfortably." The philosophy professor became angry and said: "I didn't want to hear anything about myself but about the substance of what I was talking about." "It has no substance," said Mr. Keuner. "I see you walking clumsily and, as far as I can see, you're not getting anywhere. You talk obscurely, and you create no light with your talking. Seeing your stance, I'm not interested in what you're getting at." ⁵

Poetics (the poet's position, the stance and the *logos*) depends on how one relates to political knowledge. In order to take a stand you must wish to know politics and economics and, among other things, grasp the general rule propounded by the American historian Howard Zinn: "Governments Lie." Alternative political knowledge is what, as an ethos, sets the South American poets apart (Huidobro, Vallejo, Neruda, Guillen, Nicanor Parra, Cardenal and others). Poets in the United States (Kenneth Rexroth, George Oppen, Charles Olson, Muriel Rukeyser, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, Allen Ginsberg and Amiri Baraka) also introduced a radical counter-culture on the basis of political knowledge. The impact of poetry written during the Vietnam years was made manifest in the Baraka trial (following the 1967 Newark riots), when the prosecution cited his poems as incriminating evidence. Generally, experience teaches that particularly poetry, because of its attentiveness to language, is sensitive to an ideological distortion of the picture of reality. But when the attitude toward political knowledge is ambivalent, as it is in Israel, then poetry, as do the other arts, fulfills its role as a dissociation that makes it possible to write poems about the beautiful and human side of life carrying on at the western side of the fence (and occasionally, out of the same compassion, displays sensitivity to the suffering on its eastern side).

"I hate political poetry," stated a well-known poet recently during an interview coinciding with the publication of a volume of her collected poems. Of course, not this is the role the tribe assigns the poet. She also says she avoids turning on the television, and this is quite expected, as well. Poetry itself needs the separation fence, which in these circumstances also protects its feigned innocence and provides it with its ideological function of giving ethical value to complexity, thereby expressing the wrenching dilemma of the Israeli soul, revealed in the petty everyday tribulations and woes of the violence forced upon us. And since the occupation has existed for decades now, the Derridean or "refined" rejection of this simple knowledge shackles the image of the poet and the Israeli image that he represents. He reviles the treatment of the occupied, yet at the same time he is broadminded, for he knows that the solution is complex and it is this knowledge that enables him to give vent to our constant hesitations, which is our innocent, human trait. This good and obedient boy ponders for our sake the meaning of the threatening secret (Unheim) contained within the family text, rendering it both deeper and more paradoxical, as in a novel, by showing empathy for his protagonists. In the Karamazovian constellation of the soul of the tribe, the poet is the Alyosha who exalts humanity over his elder brothers, Dmitri the army officer and Ivan the wily statesman. And indeed the poet is someone who sees things from a youthful standpoint, who writes for readers who, caught inside an ideological

bubble, are unable to grow up and need literature to preserve them in their youth. And for as long as the project of assassinating and expelling the Palestinians continues without arriving at the final act, we will have youth poetry and youth prose. Because political knowledge is like carnal knowledge: It, too, requires exposure, penetration and consummation. In order to grow up, one must acquire knowledge. The discovery of alternative knowledge had a formative value in the lives of young people in the first half of the last century. In *The Measures Taken*, Brecht's 1930 play, there is one section that is like a radical version of the "giving of the Torah at Sinai" and of the ritual of the Four Questions a child asks on the Passover night. Three agitators arrive in China on a mission for the Comintern, and a young comrade who joins them at the border station poses questions to them:

Three Agitators: We come from Moscow.

The Young Comrade: We have been waiting for you.

Three Agitators: Why?

The Young Comrade: We are stuck. There are disorder and want here, little bread and much fighting. Many have courage, but few can read.

The Young Comrade asks whether they have brought with them locomotives and tractors and machine-guns and ammunition. On the contrary, they failed to even bring a letter from the Central Committee to tell them what to do.

Three Agitators: It is thus. We bring nothing for you. But over the border to Mukden we bring the Chinese workers the Principles of the Classics and of the Propagandists: the ABCs of Communism; to the ignorant, knowledge of their situation; to the oppressed, class consciousness; and to the class conscious, the experience of the Revolution. From you, however, we have to get an automobile and someone to guide us.

The Young Comrade: Then was I wrong to ask?

The Three Agitators: No, for your good question received an even better answer...⁶

This scene remains apt, though the circumstances today are different. The Communist movements were organized in a centralized fashion, and like the corporations, the factories and the army, they maintained an oppressive discipline (which is the theme of *The Measures Taken*). Today, however, the many radical organizations around the world – whose power has grown since Seattle and Genoa and Durban and the demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq – are pluralistic, the values that unite them are liberty, human rights and the defense of society. They have no sacred and discipline-enforcing doctrines such as the writings of Marx and Lenin, but rather an abundance of alternative information found in countless books, magazines and Web sites (Znet for example). At the same time,

the new radicalism also has its teachers and historians together and a number of classic writings: the monumental opus of Noam Chomsky, the books of Edward Said and Howard Zinn, the political dispatches of George Orwell – *The Road to Wigan Pier* and *Homage to Catalonia* plus his numerous essays such as "Politics and the English Language",⁷ and in economics (since we've returned to the recession, unemployment and poverty of the 1920s) – the classic writings of John Maynard Keynes and Carl Polanyi are being read again. Besides these, there are journalists with guts and authority like Robert Fisk (who wrote the wonderful book about the Lebanon War, *Pity the Nation*).⁸

I mention these people and books in order to demonstrate that there is a defined territory of political knowledge that opens the eyes but even more so in order to show that we are not living in a bubble, that our problems are part of the agenda of the entire world. Political poetry is supposed to consistently be opposed to, since it connects the place to the soil of general human values. And this connection to humanity is not an abstract slogan, but a genuine bond, that truly exists among the books that I mentioned and all the people and organizations working throughout the world for the sake of liberty, human rights and social justice. This basis enables poetry to be confrontational and provocative, yet, at the same time it allows it not to be solely embittered or wallowing in wretchedness but offer hope. Because hope, even if it has a local aspect, is rooted as a mythic value in the ground of the culture:

For ere this the tribes of men lived on earth remote
and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sickness which bring
the Fates upon men; for in misery men grow old quickly. But the
woman took off the great lid of the jar with her hands and
scattered all these and her thought caused sorrow and mischief to
men. Only Hope remained there in an unbreakable home within
under the rim of the great jar, and did not fly out at the door;
for ere that, the lid of the jar stopped her, by the will of
Aegis-holding Zeus who gathers the clouds.⁹

Thus, in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, hope appears on the horizon of humanity (which exists thanks to work and justice). Hope belongs to the human side of politics – and is manifested in brotherhood and love of one's fellow man as an emotion that cancels out the hatred between classes and peoples. The excerpt from Solon which I quoted above, was written after the poet, who was also an active political figure, redeemed the Athenian peasants who'd become mired in debt and were sold as slaves, and after he had removed from their lands the stone markers signifying that these plots were under a pledge:

The mortgage-stones that covered her, by me
Removed - the land that was a slave is free¹⁰

Hope rests in the love of one person for another, Arab and Jew alike. To the extent that

such love and brotherhood exist in Israel, and they do indeed exist, Israel, our country, is a part of the landscape of humanity, which supports the moral values, human rights and culture that embody hope. When this love is silenced and trampled, despair prevails. And then barbarism in general and barbaric Zionism in particular - do not offer any future or hope. This is the reason why despair and desolation prevail so thoroughly here. And only a clear decision that Zionism shall be humane, and defined not by mines and barbed wire fences, but uncompromisingly be a part of the area enclosed within the fence of humanity, will produce a future and hope.

The aim is not for the poet to become fattened up, like a hen, on kernels of knowledge so that he may lay political eggs. The political is a component in the humanism of poetry, which is expressed in relation to all materials and experiences. The lack of humanism, of interest in humanistic values, is the salient characteristic of the Hebrew poetry written under the cover of the fence. Humanism is the underlying ethical, continuous and logical current that we discern in the great works – in Dante, or in the plays of Shakespeare. Such a continuum also informs smaller bodies of work. For example, if you look at the few poems left by Avraham Ben-Yitzhak, you will locate the ethical continuum between the early poem, "The Mountains Gathered Round My City" ("Heharim Shehubru Mesaviv Le'iri")¹¹, a poem about the experience of light (enlightenment) and the later political poem, preserved in the estate "Why Have Your Flags Faded?" ("Lama Navlu Digleichem"). Leah Goldberg, who used to sit with poets in Jerusalem cafés, describes in *Encounter with a Poet*¹² a meeting with a poet who expressed his aversion to the nihilism of the Zionist leadership and its henchmen, and the revulsion with which he reacted to the Jewish terror (the bombing of the King David Hotel). From the material she cites, one sees how the great poet, who was active in his youth in the Zionist administration on behalf of a Hebrew renaissance (in language, labor and working the land), found himself, following the rift that led to his resignation, in ideological distress and utterly blocked. I would say that Avraham Ben-Yitzhak's silence anticipates by decades today's lack of humanism, which is still being silenced in the current poetic discourse.

Avraham Ben-Yitzhak is the poet who influenced me when I first started writing. The line "Pure and hard and white is the world" ("Tahor vekashe velavan haolam")¹³ is the key to my writing style and to the insight that poetry formulates an ethos of purity, clarity and hardness. It is obvious in *Kibbutz*: "I love gas/I love electricity." And this constitutes the conceptual core of my *Hapoema Habeitit* (*The Domestic Poem*): "I write//poetry//devoid of//ambiguity [...] The style//is apt for thoughts//of sacred bonds[...]"¹⁴ The perception that an ethos, just like a way of life that is continually reaffirmed and is linked to the continuum that applies to all matter and ideas, builds the books of *The Domestic Poem* up to the political allegory of *Begin*.¹⁵ The idea of *Begin* is that the ethical home is the political home, and that the ethos entails confrontation and a decisive stance. But the stance was adopted in accordance with the ideological baggage, and the concept of the political as a national identity relied on theories of the "self" and on the elitist nostalgia for the authentic, for "nature" – as it was expressed among other instances in Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and in the concept of *DASEIN* as

enunciated in the refined, existential fascism of Heidegger. For he, too, when he spoke about the forest and about the wood (Holz), aspired in his way to purify, to harden and to whiten. On this matter, Brecht (as per Mr. Keuner) noted that he would occasionally enjoy seeing a tree or two when he left the house, but when it is suggested that he go to the forest, he is reluctant:

'We must make use of Nature sparingly.

Spending your time amidst Nature without any work, you may easily fall into a diseased condition; you are seized by something like a fever.'¹⁶

Begin is my last Zionist poem that talks about the horizon of Zionism as a matter of "nature." This poem has aroused great anger (and was erased from the general consciousness), because it questioned the complexity which was the ideological attire of the left at that time, during the Oslo years, and is to this day. The poem expressed disillusionment with the political atmosphere of "shooting and crying," and by taking a stance that had integrity, underscored what was latent in it and has been exposed in our day. What is said today openly and on the practical level is argued there in midrash style: "And this//is the deep meaning//of/Love thy neighbor as thyself//as Rabbi Nahman says// - Choose for (your neighbor)//a nice death//Pour into his throat//molten metal (so he may die fast)//as Rabbi Matana says//because a great principle// is/ (as long as you are alive) your life takes precedence!"¹⁷

The collapse of the ethical home that is based on "sacred bonds" (as opposed to Eros) and the terrible fulfillment of the prophecy entailed in the cult of the "self" and the national identity are, of course, what prompted me to change my views. When I moved from "the forest" of Jerusalem to "the one or two trees" near the house in Tel Aviv, I again encountered the political, which came and hit me in the face, but this time as a subject objectively connected to one's life and to the lives of the people that one sees from up close. The first political poem I wrote was the sonnet "Lishvua Hashira 1992" ("For Poetry Week 1992"), which was included in *The Heart (Halev)*¹⁸ collection. However, this poem was written incidentally. It took me a few more years before I began to write the poems that were published in *Haaretz* and are included in the *Politica* collection.¹⁹

The first poems were the works of an apprentice. These really were political eggs or political turds in the sense that kernels of the knowledge gleaned from the previous evening's reading were evident in them: "The politicians give over to the corporation the industries of the people/immediately they lay off, cut salaries and the CEO/ is compensated in proportion to the soaring value of the stocks/ The profit is invested in foreign currency, it does not reach/ the field and the workshop..."²⁰. But these poems were important as an example of the way one learns the facts and the analysis, and as an expression of the foreign, alienated and dryly technical essence of this knowledge, which has no place in and is not expected within the realm of poetry, but stomps in wearing heavy boots like a plumber plunking down his tool box on the rug. The apprenticeship is what shaped the image and gave it authority, because of its internalized knowledge and its emotion and its vulnerability:

No, Sappho

The most beautiful thing, Sappho said, is the one you love.

No, Sappho, I say. The one you love will not be beautiful

As long as a contractor or a corporation or a manpower company sucks his blood

For 15 shekels an hour there's no future for beauty.²¹

Or:

Students, Students, your future is as tenuous as a set of dentures...²²

This self, which serves as spokesman and teacher, embodies that which is opposed, i.e., political rebellion. Its vulnerability, which imparts credibility, derives from the fact that the hostility which, because of its status and function, is monolithic is an emotion that recycles itself, and this repetitive stress erodes the character. On the one hand, abstraction lurks in wait: You get stuck when you realize what a vast expanse of details separates you from the worker in the manpower company or the farmer in the territories. On the other hand, denial is a poison that works on you as well. In one poem that was published in *Haaretz*, "Morning, wind I say" ("Bekor Ruah Omar"),²³ there is a line which runs: "And who will you kill? The rifle fires, but the killing happens in your heart." The poet does not act as a sniper; the bitterness and hostility also surrender and produce instead a feeling of guilt, and in order to get out of this passivity you must delve deeper into the political feeling, deeper than hatred of evil, to find the positive and the common bond, and this happens first of all in a very specific fashion:

The garbage workers, the garbage trucks, Sappho, are
the most beautiful thing.²⁴

And afterwards, in a more general fashion, in the idealization of politics:

All that is good and worthy for humanity is within my sight and my reach,
Behold my politics, luscious limbed, sprawled before me on the bed.²⁵

And yet, this political self is not sufficiently vulnerable, just as a person is not until he actually crosses the field on foot to stand next to the trench in Rantis, next to the besieged farmers in Dir Istiya, in order to feel the commonality with peace activists such as Neta Golan, with international volunteers and Palestinian farmers:

Here is the villager
With spikes of gray
Riding on the donkey

He puts on his glasses
With the cracked lenses
Of Yosef Pozner.²⁶

Field experience is what sets apart the poems of the intifada that were collected in *Artzenu*. In a poem like "Life for the Arabs" ("Hayim La'aravim"),²⁷ one feels the weight of a trying interlude. A whole year passes from the demonstration on King George Street at which a motorcycle rider shouts "Death to the Arabs!" until the answer is found: "Life to the Arabs!" This year is the ideological buffer that is felt as uneasiness, and the entire poem is essentially a scaffolding for the proclamation that concludes it: "Life to the Arabs!" And thus, out of experiencing and having to contend with this buffer, the political is absorbed and transformed into compassion and moral feeling. This is the nature of the "Rada" sonnet or the naïve de-familiarization in "Toy Soldiers" ("*Hayalei Ofere*"):

And why didn't you waken them
with a bundle of umbrellas and raincoats?
Or a jeep full of fireworks to spread, for a moment,
a canopy of splendor over the puddles?
Haven't you read Andersen's "The Flying Trunk"?²⁸

And yet the moral feeling still gnaws at you as an abstract awareness. Where are you and where are the children of Rafah? In the poem "Artzenu" ("Our Land"), which is also written in a moral key, it seemed to me that I had found the convergence:

For those fallahin as well,
and also for the children of the village of Sumel,
who herded goats/on Froog Street/
the heart will make room/like a table/opening its wings/
For we are of one body/
Arabs and Jews...²⁹

This convergence manifests itself even more powerfully in the poem "My Heart" ("Libi"), written during Operation Defensive Shield:

My lips mutter: Palestine! Do not die on me!
My heart's with each syringe in your hand, Moustafa Barghouti!³⁰

And then comes a flood of destruction and blood, as in Brecht's famous line: "When sufferings become unendurable, the cries are no longer heard." The moral sentiment is a dimension of the political. And on the other hand, in such situations, the moral feeling is reflected as a stance of patronage in relation to those *fellahin* (Arab farmers) and the children of Sumel; you again encounter

the abstract, and this abstraction of the political is perceived as weakness and inspires despair. How can you cope with the impenetrability of the arguments that are identified with the victors, which Walter Benjamin talks about in "Theses on the Philosophy of History"?³¹ As I am trying to demonstrate, these notes took shape in the course of learning, direct experience, and especially being stymied, which is part of the political struggle and these terrible circumstances. The struggle is what makes you human and transforms politics into humanity, i.e., into both strength as well as vulnerability. The struggle which reveals that which is abstract and flimsy in the moral comprises the quest for hope. In the first stage, you rely on the power of truth claiming that the wicked will fail and only good souls, such as Rachel Corrie, can restore, find wisdom and sustain humanity. This is the attitude taken by Plato, in the first book of *The Republic*.³² This is the outward face of hope. But the inner content of hope is revealed in the second stage, in which you suspend any reliance on force or practical expectation.

You know that the wicked will indeed fail, yet you draw hope from the struggle itself. You do not cling to abstractions and you are not in a position of patronage; rather, you simply feel love and longing and closeness to Rizik and Nezi and the others, international, Arab and Jew, with whom you sat by the tent in Masha, above the trench of the separation fence. This love proves and reaffirms itself in me and in them and in the country and in humanity, and therein rests the hope.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, translations of poetry excerpts in this article are by Anne Hartstein Pace.

² Translation by David Salvin, "On the Athenian Constitution by Solon of Athens," *FIDELIO Magazine*, II., 2 (Summer 1993).

³ Freidin, Gregory. *A Coat of Many Colors: Osip Mandelstam and His Mythologies of Self-Presentation*. Berkeley C.1987, p. 233

⁴ Sebastian Haffner, *Geschichte eines Deutschen : die Erinnerungen 1914-1933*, Stuttgart 2001, c2000

⁵ [http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/brecht-keuner. tm](http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/brecht-keuner.htm)

⁶ Fischer, Ruth. *Bert Brecht: The Minstrel of the GPU*.

<http://ozleft.wordpress.com/2003/08/15/brechtgpuminstrel/>

⁷ George Orwell, *The road to Wigan Pier*, Harmondsworth, Mid. 1984, C1937; *Homage to Catalonia : and looking back on the Spanish War*, Harmondsworth, England 1978; "Politics and the English Language", *Horizon* (April 1946).

⁸ Robert Fisk, *Pity the nation: Lebanon at war*, Oxford 1992, C1990.

⁹ *Hesiod: Works and Days*. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (trans.) [1914]. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/works.htm>, ll. 90-105

¹⁰ *Solon*, by Plutarch, John Dryden (trans.), <http://clhassics.mit.edu/Plutarch/solon.html>

¹¹ Avraham Ben-Yitzhak, "The Mountains Gathered Round My City" ("Heharim Shehubru Mesaviv Le'iri", Hannan Hever (ed.), *Collected Poems (Kol Ha-Shirim)*, Tel Aviv 1992, p. 9 [Hebrew].

¹² Leah Goldberg, *Encounter with a Poet* (Pegisha Im Meshorer), Tel Aviv 1952 [Hebrew].

¹³ In the poem: "Bright Winter" ("Horef Bahir"), *ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Aharon Shabtai, *The Domestic Poem (Hapoema Habeitit)*, Tel Aviv 1976, p.7 [Hebrew]

¹⁵ Aharon Shabtai, *Begin*, Jerusalem 1986 [Hebrew].

¹⁶ Kapp, Y., Brecht, B., Hamburger, M, *Tales from the Calendar*; Methuen 1961, p. 110.

¹⁷ *Begin*, note 15 above, Part Two, paragraphs 162-165, pp. 82-32 [Hebrew].

¹⁸ Aharon Shabtai, "For Poetry Week 1992" ("Lishvua Hashira 1992"), *The Heart (Halev)*, Tel Aviv 1990, p. b [Hebrew].

¹⁹ Aharon Shabtai, *Politics (Politica)*, Ra'anana 1999 [Hebrew].

²⁰ Aharon Shabtai, "Why is Poetry Silent?" ("Lama Hashira Shoteket"), *ibid*, p.11-13.

²¹ From "No, Sappho" by Aharon Shabati, translation by Adva Levin, http://www.challenge-mag.com/en/article_112/the_privatizing_of_the_Israeli_mind

²² Aharon Shabtai, "To the Students" ("El Ha-Studentim"), *Politics*, note 19 above, p. 41.

²³ Aharon Shabtai, "Morning wind He says" ("Bekor Ruah Omer"), *Haaretz*, 6/12/2002 [Hebrew].

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Aharon Shabtai, "Politics" ("Politica"), note 19 above, p. 55.

²⁶ Aharon Shabtai, "Beit Gala's Victory" ("Nitzahon Beit Jala"), *Our Land (Artzenu)*, Tel Aviv 2002, pp. 352-353 [Hebrew].

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

²⁸ Voices from the Desert, http://www.frammenti.it/VociDeserto/english/aharon_poetries_toysoldiers.asp

²⁹ Translation by Peter Cole, quoted in: <http://www.ibiseditions.com/home/bostonglobe.htm>

³⁰ Voices from the Desert, http://www.frammenti.it/VociDeserto/english/aharon_poetries_myheart.asp

³¹ Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" [1940], *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed.), Harry Zohn (trans.) New York 1985.

³² Plato, *The best known works of Plato: including the Republic, the Symposium, and many famous passages*, trans. by B. Jowett, Garden City 1942.