The Diasporic individual, in exile from his ‘home’, any home, cannot escape by means of poetry from building one, but can use it to dismantle its confining walls, express solace, strive for creativity and discover love. Poetry may provide one of the most creative potential tools of Diasporic philosophy, love and creativity being its cornerstones (Gur-Ze’ev, 2005a: 13–14), but it can also be a destructive factor seeking to imprison the creative soul within a home with the solid walls of a rigid community.

The Diasporic individual strives against the self-evident and thus does not seek a home, a permanent shelter. He turns against the existing order, does not cling to modernist nor other truths. He recreates himself. He does not merely react nor act on the spur of the moment, but, in the words of Wislawa Szymborska, he makes “Something no nonbeing can hold” (Szymborska, 1998).

The Three Oddest Words

When I pronounce the word Future
the first syllable already belongs to the past.

When I pronounce the word Silence,
I destroy it.

When I pronounce the word Nothing
I make Something no nonbeing can hold.

Poetry has dialectic elements; it may become either committed or Diasporic. It enables the undermining of all-pervading conformism, and through its crises generates the need to abandon the habitual dwelling for a nomadic existence, essential to prevent being drawn into a confining home. And yet it may, in an instant, turn into a warm space, pleasant, protected and even cuddling, simulating a source of creativity, but permeated by a pre-determined and restrictive ideology. In such situations it may lead to commitment, sometimes political and ideological.

Szymborska expresses this stance well in her poem: “We Knew The World Backwards and Forwards...”
We Knew the World Backwards and Forwards…

We Knew The World Backwards and Forwards—
so small it fit in a handshake,
so easy it could be described in a smile,
as plain as the echoes of old truths in a prayer.

History did not greet us with triumphant—
it flung dirty sand in our eyes.
Ahead of us were distant roads leading nowhere,
poisoned wells, bitter bread.

The spoils of war is our knowledge of the world—
so large it fits in a handshake,
so hard it could be described in a smile
as strange as the echoes of old truths in a prayer.
(Szymborska, 2001, p. 35).

Diasporic philosophy is opposed to making an effort to build a home, to violating
the home of the Other or to returning home, in the words of Ilan Gur-Ze’ev (Gur-
Ze’ev, 2004: 180). Both Diasporic education and Diasporic philosophy aim first and
foremost at an ethical-creative way of life, drawing on the idea of exile in Judaism,
and leading to the birth of the improviser, actualizing the essence of Judaism in the
cosmopolitan sense, as a possible life for all humans, not withdrawing to a territory,
a collective or to Jewish tradition:

“From the point of view of Diasporic philosophy, exile is a womb. Between the darkness of its
infinity and the light of the principle of hope and only in the presence of the human, the self-evident
meaning of thingness is born of the seeds of the ‘totally Other’ and being becomes gradually visible
until it is transformed into the ‘problematic of ascribing meaning’” (Gur-Ze’ev, 2005b, p. 202).

The Jewish essence is manifested here in the messianic struggle for the redemption
of the world, no longer in the sense intended by Hess and Marx or Cohen and Leo
Beck (Gur-Ze’ev, 2004, p. 193). It is manifested through its nomadic nature, as an
ethical dimension of life that is neither relativist nor nihilist. It refuses to give up
responsibility and insists on taking a stand. The Diasporic individual’s responsibility
lies above all in his acknowledgment of genuine exile, in confronting the existence
of suffering and in becoming aware of the successful universal journey towards the
dwarfing of humanity. Such responsibility is also directed towards the otherness of
the Other and also towards the evasive otherness in the self as being-toward and
constantly overcoming its normalization. Diasporic education cannot make moral
consciousness or commitment obligatory or enforce it (Ibid, p. 194).

Thus a Diasporic way of life, the product of Diasporic education, will be that of an
improviser, who does not seek a home or fulfillment through tradition in a collective