

NATASHA GORDINSKY

“Homeland I will name the language of poetry in a foreign country” – Modes of Challenging the Home/Exile Binary in Leah Goldberg’s Poetry

There are only a few Hebrew poets of the stature of Leah Goldberg who played such a crucial role in the development of modern Hebrew culture. Along with nine books of poems, Goldberg wrote two novels, three plays, six books of research and non-fiction and twenty books for children. She was also a prolific translator, editor and theater critic. Among her translations we find sonnets of Petrarca, novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy and lyrics by various European poets.

Leah Goldberg was born in Königsberg in 1911. From her childhood in Kovno/Kaunas, despite the fact that Russian was her mother language, she started writing verses in Hebrew. After earning her doctorate in Semitic Languages from the University of Bonn, she emigrated to Palestine in 1935. That same year her first poetic volume *Tabaot Ashan* (Smoke rings) was published.

Soon after her immigration, together with Nathan Altermann and Avraham Shlonsky, Goldberg became a leading figure in the Hebrew modernist movement. In 1952, she established the Department of Comparative Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She held a chair of the department until her death in 1970.¹

As an immigrant who refused to forget her past after her arrival to a “new homeland,” Goldberg searched for various poetic solutions for the representation of her multiple existence in different cultural spaces. This article explores two of Leah Goldberg’s strategies for challenging the traditional modernist binary of home/exile.

On the one hand, Goldberg is not romanticizing the exile as the most productive place for writing, on the other hand, she is also questioning the traditional Zionist perception of the place of birth as “galut.”

Surprisingly, the research on Leah Goldberg’s poetry and prose has just started to develop in earnestness in recent years. The reasons for this fact are themselves a

I wish to acknowledge the support of the Simon Dubnow Institute whose generosity allowed me to undertake extensive research for my dissertation during six months in 2005. I would especially like to thank Dan Diner for the invitation and for providing me with a new perspective on my research. I am grateful to my friends and colleagues Susanne Zepp, Yvonne Kleinmann and Nicolas Berg for the ongoing dialogue and a great support. Furthermore, I would like to thank Ilana Pades and her students for the inspiring discussion in the seminar “Critics and Immigrants” at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with whom I shared some of my ideas on the topic during my “guest-lecture”.

¹ The source for the part of the biographical information is the Home Page of the Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature <<http://www.ithl.org.il/>> [17.09.2005]. For further biographical information see Abraham Benjamin Yoffe, Leah Goldberg. Tavey dmut vi-ytzira [Leah Goldberg. An Appreciation of the Poet and Her Work], Tel-Aviv 1994.

topic of historical-poetic research. Three important studies on the different aspects of Goldberg's poetry were published at the turn of the new century. Dan Miron dedicated a long discussion to the poetic psychological development in the early poetry of Goldberg and its relation to her late poetry in his book *Ha adam eino elah*.² Ruth Kartun-Bloom and Anat Weisman edited a collection of recent essays and articles, *Pgishot im meshoreret*, about various thematic issues in her poetry, prose and dramaturgy.³ In 2002, Ofra Yaglin published *Ulaj mabat aher* in which she explored the relations between classicism and modernism in the poetry of Goldberg.⁴

Michael Gluzman probably has been the only scholar to broach the question of homeland and its meaning in Goldberg's poetry. In his book *The Politics of Canonocity*, in a chapter "Modernism and exile: a view from the margins,"⁵ Gluzman argues that "the negation of exile in Hebrew modernism should be viewed as inverted mirror image of the celebration of exile in the writings of Anglo-American writers."⁶ In the section dealing with Hebrew modernists who immigrated to Palestine, he concentrates on poets who continuously "expressed ambivalence towards the Zionist project" and challenged the Zionist concept of homeland in their works.

At the end of his quite brief discussion on Leah Goldberg, Gluzman makes an important remark about her ability to "question and rewrite the home/exile binary" through her "constantly problematized binary."⁷ However, the discussion itself does not focus on Goldberg's strategies for rewriting this binary, but rather tends to bring the reader to the conclusion that "her poems offer perhaps the most ambivalent poetic rendition of Jewish 'homelessness' in Hebrew modernism."⁸

It is very true that Leah Goldberg never concealed her ambivalent feelings toward her "new home." In her various poems, we can find expressions of irony and criticism towards it. But that did not turn her automatically into a "homeless" or "uprooted" person. Intending to establish a crucial difference between Gertrude Stein's and Leah Goldberg's exile in particular, and aiming to deromanticize the European modernist perception of "exile" through the perspective of Hebrew modernism in general, Gluzman seems to overlook and to simplify Goldberg's unique position.

² Dan Miron, *Ha adam eino elah: hulshat ha-koah, otzmat ha-hulsha. Iyunim be shirah* [Man is not Anything But: The Weakness of Power, the Power of Weakness. Study on Poetry], Tel-Aviv 1999.

³ Ruth Kartun-Bloom/Anat Weisman (eds.), *Pgishot im meshoreret. Masot ve-mehkarim al yetzira shel Leah Goldberg* [Encounters With a Poet. Essays and Researchers on the Works of Leah Goldberg], Tel-Aviv 2000.

⁴ Ofra Yaglin, *Ulaj mabat aher. Klasijut modernit ve-modernism klasi be-shirat Leah Goldberg* [Probably a Different View. Modern Classicism and Classic Modernism in Leah Goldberg's Poetry], Tel-Aviv 2002.

⁵ Michael Gluzman, *The Politics of Canonocity. Lines of Resistance in Modernist Hebrew Poetry*, Stanford, Calif. 2003, 36–67.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

A careful reading of Gluzman's approach to a "striking reversal of the home/exile binary"⁹ in Hebrew modernism makes it possible to reveal two assumptions, ontological and geographical-spatial, both shaping the writer's point of view.

Both of these assumptions have to do with the affirmation of the binary home/exile. The first excludes multiplicity by arguing, as becomes evident from comments on Goldberg, that a person cannot have two homes, since the choice of one of them as home poses the other as exile. The second assumption, which actually can also be seen as ontological, based on spatial continuity between home and exile, excludes spatial discontinuity, i.e. according to it, a space which is neither home nor exile does not exist.

Leah Goldberg's poetry does not only oppose both assumptions, but also suggests poetic, if not existential, strategies in order to create a way out of the binary existential bind of the opposition home/exile. This article explores two such strategies. A usage of the power of poetic imagination in creating a multiple homeland will be regarded as a first strategy and will be demonstrated using the example of one poem. A different strategy is examined in the second part of the paper, which utilizes another topos of time outside the space-time of the homeland, a chronotopos in the Bakhtinian sense of the emotional experience of a person which occupies a certain position in Space and Time.

The Dual Homeland

Before following Leah Goldberg in her voyages to different countries in Europe, we can focus on her programmatic poem "Oren" (The Pine; 1954) which was central for Gluzman's argument as well.

Oren

Kan lo eshma et kol ha-kukiya.
 Kan lo yabhosh ha-ets mitsnepet sheleg,
 aval betsel ha-oranim ha-ele
 kol yalduti she kama li-thiya.

Tsiltsul ha-mehatim: hayo haya –
 ekra moledet le-merhav ha-sheleg,
 le-kerah yerakrak kovel hapeleg,
 li-lshon ha-shir be erets nahriya.

Ulai rak tsipoeri-mas'a yod'ot –
 kshe-hen tluoyot ben erets ve-shamaim –
 et ze ha-keev shel shtey ha-moladot.

⁹ Ibid., 38.

Ithem ani nishtalti pa'amaim,
 ithem ani tsamahti oranim,
 ve-shorashay bi-shney nofim shonim.

The Pine

Here I will not hear the cuckoo's voice,
 here the tree will not wear a snowy hat
 but in the shadow of this childhood
 my entire childhood was revived.

The sound of the conifers: once upon a time –
 homeland I name the snowy planes,
 the greenish ice which chains the stream
 the language of poetry in a foreign land.

Perhaps only the passing birds know –
 as they dangle between earth and sky –
 this pain of the two homelands.

With you, I was planted twice
 with you, pines, I grew,
 with my roots in two different landscapes.¹⁰

This often quoted sonnet led Gluzman to the conclusion that a “simple sense of home is untenable for Goldberg, for she perceives her two homelands as mutually exclusive”¹¹ and that “having ‘roots in two different landscapes’ is by no means liberating.”¹²

Indeed, Goldberg lacks the “simple sense of home,” simply because she has two homes and not one, even though it is rather surprising to find such an essentialistic notion used by an author who seeks to revise the home/exile binary. Goldberg finds nothing liberating in this duality and she is far from romanticizing or celebrating it. The poet is fully aware of the heavy price of this duality, which is “this pain of the two homelands.” But it seems that Goldberg does not experience this as an absence, on the contrary, it is a painful presence that can even be articulated and aestheticised. We should not forget that this poem, which is a first poem in a poetic cycle called “Ilanot” (Trees)¹³ – is first of all a poetic performative act that can be seen as autobiographical as well.

¹⁰ Leah Goldberg, *Kol ha-shirim* [Collected Poems], 3 vols., Tel-Aviv 1970, vol.2, 143. I am using here Gluzman's translation quoted in the above mentioned book (62).

¹¹ Gluzman, *The Politics of Canonicity*, 62.

¹² *Ibid.*, 63.

¹³ Two other poems are called “Ejcaliptus” [eucalyptus] and “Kikajon” [castor-oil plant]. They are not related at all to the subject of the first poem.

The fact that this poem is written as a Petrarchian sonnet is crucial for its interpretation. As we remember, the Italian sonnet consists of octave and sestet. Octave introduces the problem, while the sestet should supply the solution.¹⁴

This is exactly what happens in a Goldberg sonnet. In the octave we read about the inner split, but the sestet suggests a solution. The remedy lies in the recognition of the duality of homeland and double roots. Even the rhymes in the poem illustrate the conflict and its suggested denouement. Goldberg sticks in the octave to the traditional rhyme a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a as well as in the first part of the sestet, where the rhyme is supposed to be c-d-c. But the second part of the sestet breaks the classical form. Instead of continuing the sonnet according to the scheme c-d-c, Goldberg creates a new rhyme, identical in all three lines-e-e-e. Thus, the rhythmic identity of the second part of the sestet supports the semantics of the last lines and stresses its importance.

But the fact that "Oren" is a sonnet is important not only because of the particular meaning the poem gains through it, but also because it refers to its own poetical source. The use of sonnet as a poetic form together with an opening line of the poem – "Here I will not hear the cuckoo's voice" – places it in the heart of the European lyric tradition.¹⁵ Thus, by writing a sonnet in Hebrew, Goldberg affirms the duality of homeland and of her ability to dwell in two separate homelands.

Moreover, the close reading of the poem will show that even the octave, while building a tension, not only provides various hints for the way out, but actually, makes the solution in the sestet possible. The anaphora "here" of the first two lines stresses the lack of a cuckoo's voice and snow, which belong to the first homeland and symbolize it in this poem. Nevertheless, the pines not only exist in both places, but also bring about a revival of the speaker's childhood. It becomes evident that thanks to the mediation of the pines, the lost and maybe forgotten childhood can be revived and relived, though paradoxically enough, in another country. In this sense, the second homeland appears not as an absence but a place which allows the representation of the lost world.

According to the traditional reading of the second part of the octave, in these lines the poet "defines 'homeland' in terms of the landscapes she feels close to, as well as in terms of her closeness to texts."¹⁶ According to this reading, "once upon a time" is related to Goldberg's recollection of her world in Lithuania. Thus, concludes Gluzman, "Russian poetry always remains a homeland." This part is written in a grammatical Hebraic form ("ekra") which can be read both in past and future tense. Usually, it has been read as related to the past, while the reading of these lines in the present tense suggests another interpretation.

¹⁴ For the detailed definition see under "sonnet" in Alex Preminger/T.V.F. Brogan (eds.), *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Princeton, N. J. 1993, 1167–1170.

¹⁵ Cf. Dan Diner's discussion in "Keine Nachtigall. Romantische Abspaltung im 19. Jahrhundert" on the representation of America in German Romantic poetry, in: Dan Diner, *Feinbild Amerika. Über die Beständigkeit eines Ressentiments*, München 2002, 42–66.

¹⁶ Gluzman, *The Politics of Canonicity*, 63.

The ending of the first line, “once upon a time,” which is a typical beginning of fairy tales, might indicate an entry into a magic world. It seems that even the number of things that are called homeland is not accidental, since three is a typological number in the fairy tales. In this fictive world, it is possible to find a homeland in different places, every time a new one.

In the world of fairy tales, speech acts can turn one thing into another and this is exactly the function of the performative in these lines. In his book *Problèmes de linguistique générale*¹⁷ Émile Benveniste defines speech as performative in such cases when it “names the action made by the utterance” (“un énoncé est performatif en ce qu’il dénomme l’acte performé”).¹⁸ He explains this further in the following way: “Ego prononce une formule contenant le verbe à la première personne du présent”,¹⁹ the speaking person (“I”) pronounces a particular formula, which contains a verb in first person of present tense. Benveniste shows as well that the performative utterance does not function as a description or instruction, but as a realization. – “L’énoncé est l’acte; celui qui le prononce accomplit l’acte en le dénommant.”²⁰

That means that the utterance is an action and the one who speaks, proceeds the action. According to this definition, Goldberg’s words “I will call homeland” could be seen as a performative utterance. The performative poetic utterance allows to the poet to name different things homeland, while they are acted out as such at the moment of their enunciation. At this particular moment they themselves exist as homeland.

The appearance of performative speech within the world of the fairy tale suggests a new point of view of the concept homeland. If anything can be turned into a homeland through a performative (magic) utterance, then the concept itself should be viewed in the frame of the fairy tale. In this case, homeland is not a transcendental concept but a fictive one. Homeland as fiction does not always have to obey the biographical or geographical rules. Since Leah Goldberg does not relate in any place specifically to the Russian language, we should not conclude automatically that in the last line of the octave “the language of poetry in a foreign land,” she is referring to Russian poetry. On the contrary, it appears that a poet says that a language of poetry (or even of a song, since in Hebrew the word “shir” has both meanings) in any foreign land can be called homeland. This poetic statement about the language of poetry is a meta-poetic statement at the same time. That is through the power of poetical language, which Goldberg acquires as a poet, that she can represent her ability to call a foreign poetry a homeland. This view of poetry should not mislead us to the conclusion that language is the only home for Leah Goldberg. It is rather that within the frames of the poetic language homeland can be imagined in different ways.

¹⁷ Émile Benveniste, *Problèmes de Linguistique Générale*, Paris 1996.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 274.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Goldberg and Mandelstam – a hidden intertextuality?

Since the Hebrew Modernism started its existence only at the end of the 1920s and became dominant in the 1930s in Palestine, Leah Goldberg and Ossip Mandelstam belong, in a certain way, to the same poetic generation, despite of the difference in age. It is hard to overestimate the importance of Mandelstam’s poetry not only for the Acmeist movement, but also for Russian modernist poetry on the whole. The latter played a central role for Goldberg’s poetry. In 1940, together with Abraham Shlonsky, Leah Goldberg edited an anthology of Russian poetry named *Shirat Rusia*. The fact that we find translations of Mandelstam poems in this book, bears an evidence for Goldberg’s familiarity with his poetry. One poem by Mandelstam, written in 1911 and re-written in 1935 is particularly interesting for the context of this article. It was not included in this anthology, but was, for no doubt, known to Goldberg, since one of the four poems she and Shlonsky translated was taken from the same volume “Kamen” (The Stone; 1908–1915):

Vozdukh pasmurnyi vlazhen i gulok;
Chorosho i nestrashno v lesu.
Legkii krest odinokikh progulok
Ja pokorno opiat’ ponesu.

I opiat’ k ravnodushnoi otchizne
Dikoi utkoi vzov’etsia uprek, –
Ja uchastvuiu v sumrachnoi zhizni,
Gde odin k odnomu odinok!

Vystrel grianul. Nad ozerom sonnym
Kryl’ia utok teper’ tiazhely,
I dvoynym bytiem otrazhennym
Odurmaneny sosen stvoly.

Nebo tuskloe s otsvetom strannym –
Mirovaia tumannaia bol’ –
O, pozvol’ mne byt’ takzhe tumannym
I tebia ne liubit’ mne pozvol’!²¹

The dull air is wet and loud;/ It is nice and not frightful in the forest./ The light cross of
the lonely walks/ I will humbly bear again.//

And again to the indifferent fatherland/ Will fly up the wild duck of blame, –/ I take part
in the gloomy life./ Where everyone is lonesome!//

²¹ Osip Mandel’shtam, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh*, Tom pervyi [Works in two volumes, vol. 1], Moskva 1990, 74.

The shot broke out. Above the sleepy lake/
The wings of ducks are already heavy./ And
the trunks of the pines are fuddled by/
The reflected double existence.//

The heaven is dim with a strange sheen –/
The foggy world pain –/ O, allow me to be
foggy, too/ And allow me not to love you, as well.

The following argument will suggest a re-reading of Goldberg's "Oren" in the light of possible intertextuality with Mandelstam's poem.

Mandelstam raises the question of relation with a fatherland and with a world in general, within the lyrical situation of a nature walk. A lyrical speaker describes the ease of the loneliness he feels during his walks in the forest. This sense of ease is opposed to the unbearable loneliness of walking through life, where everyone is alone. Mandelstam blames his "indifferent fatherland" for this. The third stanza of this poem functions on two levels: a literal and a metaphorical one. On a literal level, it can be read as a description of the lake. Using the literal interpretation, the "double existence" of the pines is a simple optical fact of reflection of the trunks in the water.

But on the metaphorical level, using the mirroring effect, Mandelstam creates a double for the existing world. Through the realization of a metaphor, the wild duck from the previous stanza, where it was used as a metaphor for indicating the speed of blame's flight to the fatherland's sky, appears as a real being in the third stanza. In this case, the "double existence" of the pines seems to be not merely a reflection in the lake. The pines might serve, actually, as a metonymy or analogy for the lyric "I" of Mandelstam. In fact, the lyric "I" is, of course, a kind of a double as well. The lyric "I" exists as an independent being within the poem itself, in this sense, if put metaphorically, he is a lonely walker in the forest. At the same time, however, the lyric "I" is a poetic construct that represents in one way or another the poet himself and depends on him. Through his dependency on a poet, he needs to face a real life, which is beyond the borders of the forest in the poem. Thus, entering the world is for the lyric "I" a great responsibility he must assume.

The final stanza of this poem continues the mirror-effect that was created in the third one. Now, the apostrophic speech of the lyric "I", whose addressee is a "world pain", is acting out the doubling, using the principle of analogy. On the semantic level, the analogy is drawn by the speaker announcing his will to be foggy like the world pain, while using the double meaning of the word "foggy," which in Russian also means "obscure." On the poetic level, the lyric "I" draws an analogy between the fatherland and the World. Since the fatherland is indifferent to the life of the poet, represented by a lyric "I", the latter wants to pay back the world pain. The lyric "I" asks permission to stay indifferent like a fatherland to him and not to represent the pain of others.

In this poem, the acknowledgment of the double existence of a poet – within a poem and in real life – does not provide the lyric "I" with a new poetic power. Quite on the contrary, the double existence is experienced as a split. This split can be used poetically on account of the negation of the outer world. Only within the borders of the poem is the loneliness, the indifference of the fatherland is bearable.

We can see now what an important aspect Mandelstam’s poem adds to the understanding of Goldberg’s “Oren.” Few elements in the poem seem to hint at its intertextual character: the thematic frame, a direct mentioning of a homeland, the metaphor of the birds and above all the notion of the pines, of course. In both of the poems, the pines are not simply a symbolic detail in the poem, but metaphoric evidence or even a participant in the double existence of a poet. The big difference between the two poems lies in the self-positioning of the poets. Mandelstam’s lyric “I” takes upon himself the role of the passive participant in “gloomy life” and the lonely observer. For his loneliness, as already mentioned before, he blames his fatherland. The pines in this poem serve as a static reflection for the speaker.

We should not forget that Goldberg’s poem is written from another geographical and biographical point of view. Her lyric “I” is in a situation of “here” and “there”, her double existence is not limited to the borders of a poem. The lyric “I” takes an active role in building the relation with the homeland. It is important to notice that Goldberg’s homeland does not pass through the process of personification. To Mandelstam’s romantization of the inner exile and his notion of world pain, through the poetic imagination, Goldberg opposes the negation of the exile on the one hand, and her private pain of the two homelands, on the other.

Another strategy, which suggests perceiving Europe as the “other” place, not home, not exile, will be discussed in the following pages.

Europe as heterotopia

Leah Goldberg used to travel to Europe from her early youth. There was almost no European country that she did not visit during her academic or pleasure trips. In her novels and poems, we find interesting remarks and descriptions of different countries before and after the Second World War. She dedicates her poems and prose to Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Denmark. In some of her poems about Europe, Goldberg represents an experience of another space, the European one. The function of this space as it appears in the poems is not to serve as “home,” nor to turn to exile. For Goldberg, Europe (the “other place”) exists as a place which allows a certain freedom by challenging the ontological frame of home, or, to use Michel Foucault’s concept, as heterotopia. This poetic experience of Goldberg will be explored here using the example of the cycle of poems called “Mas’a le-lo shem” (A Journey without a Name), which was written by Goldberg during her stay in Copenhagen in 1960.

In his programmatic article, “Des espaces autres” (1967),²² Michel Foucault suggests that a Western culture at the present time is much more concerned about the meaning of space than about the meaning of time. He mentions as well, that we still take for granted the oppositions between different places, such as a contrast between public and private place, family and social space – “entre l’espace privé et l’espace

²² Michel Foucault, *Dits et Écrits*, 4 vols., Paris 1994, vol. 4, 752–762.

public, entre l'espace de la famille et l'espace social."²³ His main concern is in such places – that are related to others, namely utopia and heterotopia – that they suspend, neutralize or invert the relation, which is designed, reflected or mirrored by themselves – “mais sur un mode tel qui’ls suspendent, neutralisent ou inversent l’ensemble des rapports qui se trouvent, par eux, désignés, reflétés ou réfléchis.”²⁴ Foucault defines heterotopia as effectively realized utopia, in which “les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l’on peut trouver à l’intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés.”²⁵ These places, which are the “absolutely *other* ones” – “absolument autres,”²⁶ claims Foucault, exist in every culture and have different functions within it. Foucault describes these functions while pointing out six principles.

In order to describe Europe as heterotopia in Leah Goldberg’s poems, the following of these principles will be applied: the principle of juxtaposition, the principle of opening and closing and the principle of the two opposite poles. The other ones can be applied as well, but would add little to the interpretation of the poem.

Mas’ a le-lo shem

1.

Heihan ani? Eh lehasbir hehan ani?
E’nai enan nishkafot mishum halon.
Panay enam mishtakfim be-shum rei,
kol ha-hashmaliyot ha-rabot she-ba-i’r nos’ot bila’dai.

Ve-ha-geshem yored ve-eneno martiv et yadai.
Ve ani po, kuli po –
be-ir nohriya
be-lev moledet ha gdola shel nehar.

2.

Hadri kol-kah katan
she-ha-yamim bo nizharim u-mitnamhim,
ve-gam ani haya bo bi-zehirut
ba-reah a’shan ve-tapuhim.
Ba-layla ha-shenim yadliku or:
me’ever le-hatser gdola mi-ba’ad le-anpey livne gavoha,
dolek halon be-sheket mi-muli.
Ba-layla le-prakim kashe lizkor,
ki pa’am
Ei-ba-ze –
haya halon sheli.

²³ Ibid., 754.

²⁴ Ibid., 755.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 756.

3.

Ze shavuot she-ish eno pone –
 elay bi-shmi, ve-ze pashut meod:
 ha-tukim she-be-mitbah beti
 o'd lo lamdu oto,
 ha-anashim be-kol rehavey ha-ir
 enam yodi'm oto.
 Ve hu kayam rak a'l neyar, bi-htav,
 ve-en lo tsilil va-tav.

Yamim ani holehet le-lo shem
 ba-rhov she-ani yoda'at et shmo.
 Shaot ani yoshevet le-lo shem
 mul ets she-ani yoda'at et shmo.
 Ve li-prakim ani hoshevet le-lo shem
 al mi she eneni yoda'at et shmo.

4.

Halahti i'm ha-spinot ve-amadti i'm ha-gsharim
 ve-hayiti mutelet ba-rhov
 im a'ley ha-tidhar ha-noshrim,
 haya li stav
 ve-haya li ana muar leyad aruba shora.
 Ve haya li shem muzar
 asher ish lo yahol lenahesh.

(Copenhagen, Elul tashah)

A Journey without a Name

1.

Where am I? How to explain where am I?/ My eyes are not reflected in any window./ My
 face is not reflected in any mirror./ all the numerous trams in the city drive without me.//
 And the rain falls and does not wet my hands./ And I am here, all here –/ In the foreign
 city/ in the heart of the big homeland of the foreign country.//

2.

My room is so small/ that the days are careful and becoming shorter in it,/ and I, as well,
 live carefully in it/ in the smell of smoke and apples.//
 At night the neighbours will switch on the light:/ beyond the big yard, beyond the
 branches of the tall birch,/ burns the window quietly opposite to me,/ at night it is
 sometimes hard to remember./ that once//
 somewhere –/ there was my window.//

3.

For weeks nobody uses/ my name and it is very simple:/ the parrots that are in the
 kitchen of my house/ did not learn it yet./ the people in town/ do not know it./ And it
 exists only on the paper, written./ and it has no voice, no sound, and no score.

For days I walk without a name/ in the street which name I know./ For hours I sit without a name/ in front of the tree which name I know./ And sometimes I think without a name/ about somebody whose name I don't know.//

4.

I went with the ships and I stood with the bridges/ and I was dropped on the street/ with the falling leaves of trees./ I had an autumn/ and I had a lighted cloud near the black chimney./ And I had a strange name/ that nobody can guess.//

The following interpretation of the cycle will use Foucault's characterisations of heterotopias:

According to Foucault's principle of juxtaposing, the heterotopia has the power of putting aside in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other.²⁷ And this is exactly what we find in the first poem – Goldberg juxtaposes two incompatible spaces: "be-ir nohriya/ be-lev moledet ha gdola shel nehar" ("In the foreign city/ in the heart of the big homeland of the foreign country"). Aside the space of Copenhagen, the foreign city, where her presence is anonymous, she puts another space, the homeland, a space that she carries with herself from abroad: The homeland of homelessness and a no-name. The use of metaphor creates a new space – the homeland of the foreign. Heterotopia allows Goldberg to bring both spaces to a form of co-existence, without necessarily choosing one. This new space has a double function. First, it creates a sort of glass through which the poet can see but not be seen, thus protecting her from the intervention by strangers into her privacy. Its second function is to protect the lyric speaker from loneliness by keeping the element of the homeland that gives her a feeling of safety. Despite the fact the lyric speaker is invisible for her environment, or maybe even thanks to this fact, she is free to map herself on this other space. What is important, at the moment of the self-positioning in the town, is that the poet also places herself within the text – "Ve ani po, kuli po –" ("And I am here, all here –"). The deixis "here" means for the reader the space of the poem and literally on the page of the book.

We can see that the second poem continues dealing with the self-placement of the poet. But this time it represents the relation of a personal place, her own room, to the space of the others, the neighbours. This characteristic of heterotopia can be described with the fifth principle – "Les hétérotopies supposent toujours un système d'ouverture et de fermeture qui, à la fois, les isole et les rend pénétrables."²⁸

In the first part of the poem, the relation of opening and closing is more abstract, but the metaphoric language is very concrete and visual. This relation is between space (the small room where she lives) and time (the days). The small dimensions of the room do not only affect its owner, but also the days in it. The smell of the smoke and of the apples penetrates the private space, while the days are isolated by the space of the room.

²⁷ Ibid., 758.

²⁸ Ibid., 760.

In the second part of the poem we can find another type of closing-opening relation. On the one hand, the lyric speaker has neighbours, whose life can be observed through the window. The closeness of the light in the window gives an illusion of immediacy of a possible contact. On the other hand, the same light in the opposite window stresses the isolation of the poet's small room from the other people.

A Name as a Lyrical Heterotopia

The third poem in the cycle turns a name into heterotopia. In a metaphorical way, a name, or more exactly, a no-name, is represented here as a sort of a spatial construct which was created inside the space of the town.

This kind of heterotopia can be described with the last characteristic in Foucault's article. It's function is to oppose to the rest of the space in a dual way. On one hand it creates a space of illusion that exposes the real space as more illusory – "un espace d'illusion qui dénonce comme plus illusoire encore tout l'espace réel."²⁹ On the other hand it has a contrary function, it creates other place as a real place – "créant un autre espace, un autre espace réel, aussi parfait, aussi méticuleux, aussie bien arrangé que le nôtre est désordonné."³⁰

The no-name in this poem can be understood as a space of illusion, while the no-name in the last poem will be interpreted as real space.

In the foreign town, the anonymity of the poet reaches such a level that she obtains a new ontological status – that of a person without a name. This is, of course, an illusory situation, since she still has a name, even though nobody knows it. But through the creation of this space of no-name, the real space of the city, full of different names, starts to fade. Even more than that, it seems that through the asymmetrical relation with the space of the city, in which the knowledge of different names in the town is opposed to the "ignorance" of the city to her existence, the lyric speaker gains a poetic power. The statement at the first part of the poem that the lyric speaker's name still exists on paper, in the written form – "al neyar, be ktav," can be perceived not only as literal, but also as a poetical one. Just like in daily life when the poets who are walking incognito in the streets among the people do not stop being poets because of their anonymity, the lyric speaker is still aware of her ability to write. Being unnoticed in the city allows to Goldberg to obscure different things and to represent them in her poems, without naming them. Paradoxically, the absence of any names within the poem itself that could have led to generalization effects, in this case is an encounter with personal and even intimate experience. Thus, the poetic space of no-name through the non-mentioning (non-naming) of the historical reality of Copenhagen reveals the illusory of its space, as well as its dependence on the mode of representation.

²⁹ Ibid., 761.

³⁰ Ibid.

One could think that the cycle that talks about a journey should represent some sort of movement from one place to another. The three first poems, however, are almost static. But the last poem concentrates in it various kinds of actions within urban space: going with the ships, standing with the bridges and lying with the leaves. The last poem returns to the urban spaces of the first poem. This time, instead of being a passive part of an urban space, the lyric speaker 'accompanies' ships and bridges, which were for Foucault typical heterotopias. What is central to the last poem is the creation of a new real private space. Through the identification with different objects, the lyric speaker appropriates a new name, "a strange name that nobody can guess." If in the previous poems the gap between the speaker and her environment was caused by anonymity, here the gap is already of an epistemological character. At the beginning there was something liberating in the fact that no one knew her name, but at the same time, this fact was an obvious evidence of loneliness. But after the appropriation of a private space, the impossibility to guess the poet's new name is perceived as an advantage.

This heterotopia, says Foucault, is not one of illusion but of compensation – "*Ça serait l'hétérotopie non pas d'illusion mais de compensation.*"³¹ And this is one of the possible interpretations of the enigmatic end of the poem. The new other name, which was appropriated in Europe is not an illusion, but a poetic compensation. The last poem represents a poetic metamorphosis of a lyrical speaker, who achieves new images: leaves, autumn, cloud – through the use of metaphors. The new name is, actually, a poem itself. The presence in the foreign city allowed the poet to create a new private space, where the solitude was transformed into poetic freedom and within which the biographical name was changed to a unique name. This poetical cycle is a result of the poetic juxtaposition of two heterotopias.

We should not forget that the cycle is called "*Mas'a le-lo shem*" – "A Journey without a Name." The Hebrew title might have a second meaning: "Le" would indicate a preposition of movement towards, so that the title will be "A journey to no-name". According to it, a journey turns to a teleological one, while its final goal is a no-name place. Goldberg represents in this cycle a process of transformation of the lyrical speaker during her journey. It was not only a journey from Jerusalem to Copenhagen, but it was also a journey from no-name to the new name.

Conclusion

One of the aims of this article was to question the monolithic structure of the home/exile binary by exploring several poems by Leah Goldberg. Using the poetic imagination, Goldberg transforms her personal, biographical experience to forms of multiple existence in her historical chronotopos. Her poems suggest modes of resistance to the bonds of one homeland, by doubling it or by putting other places

³¹ *Ibid.*, 761.

aside. Goldberg re-writes the opposition home/exile into a form of belonging in non-belonging, which is a nomadic poetic mode.

Down to the present, the historic poetics of modern Hebrew literature, written mostly from a Zionist point of view, connects immigration almost automatically with the notion of exile. It might be that taking into account the possibility of the existence of lyric heterotopias inside Hebrew poetry can add a new dimension to research on Gabriel Prail, Yehuda Amichai, Dan Pagis, Israel Pinkas and all the other poet-immigrants who experienced various kinds of cultural-biographical connections with other places.