

**LOCALITY, TRANS-LOCALITY AND LANGUAGE**  
**IN RONIT MATALON'S *THE ONE FACING US*, AB YEHOSHUA *THE LIBERATED BRIDE* AND**  
**ORLY CASTEL BLOOM'S *UMMI FI SHURL***

Vered Shemtov  
Stanford University

The tension between territorialization and deterritorialization acquires a special meaning when it comes to contemporary Israeli literature. Israeli perspectives of space are confronted with two opposite experiences. On the one hand, Israeli culture is part of postmodern life of translocality, globalization and de-territorialization. On the other hand the Jewish community in Israel is moving in a completely opposite direction, in which the notion of wandering is replaced with territorialism, sovereignty and nativeness. Moreover, as much as globalization is part of the postmodern world for Israelis it also includes a return or a re-examination of the pre-Zionist existence. This moment becomes an opportunity for new narratives on Israeli/Jewish space, place and identity. The tension between multiple places, place and no-place are reflected, among other things, in the multilingual text either as a new way to return to the notion of metaphorical spaces (the past, the language, texts as metaphors for space) or in order to create new relations between the literary space, conceptual spaces and the physical space. In this paper I will look at three multilingual texts: Ronit Matalon's *The One Facing Us*, AB Yehoshua *The liberated Bride* and Orly Castel-Bloom *Ummi Fi Shurl*. Each of these texts describes a different complex relations between locality, trans-locality and language. I will read these texts as three examples of Barnavi's<sup>3</sup> argument that "the present protagonist in the mental drama created by a differential and discontinuous [Jewish] space is no longer the Diaspora Jew but the Israeli.

---

<sup>3</sup>. Eli Barnavi, *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People* (New York:1992), vi and ix.