

**Middle East University**

**For Graduate Studies**

**An Examination of Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism and Hybridity in  
Naomi Shihab Nye 's *Sitti's Secrets*, *Habibi*, *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems  
of the Middle East* and *Red Suitcase*.**

**BY**

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requirements for the degree of Master in English  
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This thesis (**The Examination of Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism and Hybridity in Naomi Shihab Nye's *Sitti Secrets, Habibi, 19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East and Red Suitcase***) was successfully defended and approved on.

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## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband Mohamad for his support and patience, to my kids Zain, Leen, Dana and Omer. It is also dedicated to my father who believed in me all of the time and to the soul of my mother.*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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Wafa Yousef Al-Khatib

## Table of Contents

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
-Dedication.....	i
-Acknowledgement.....	ii
-Table of Contents.....	iii
-Abstract.....	iv
-Abstract in Arabic.....	v
 Chapter One	
Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	10
The Significance of the Study.....	11
Questions of the Study.....	12
Operational definition of terms.....	13
 Chapter Two	
Review of Related literature.....	15
 Chapter Three	
Methods.....	27
Procedures.....	29
 Chapter Four	
<i>Nye's Sitti's Secrets, Habibi, 19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East and Red Suitcase</i> and Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism and Hybridity.....	32
 Chapter Five	
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	77
References.....	83
Notes.....	90

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**ABSTRACT**

This study tries to define postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity which are variably used to describe groups of people from a non-white background, people of color, or people of all cultures regardless of race. Multicultural literature has often been used to show only positive images of minority cultures. The objectives of this thesis are to examine how Nye handles these themes by analyzing , *Sitti's Secrets* (1994), *Habibi* (1997), *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East* (1994) and *Red Suitcase* (1994).

The study, in particular, examines these works by analyzing the characters and events that are closely related to this theme. Such analysis of these works will be in reference to the theoretical perspective of post-colonialism as described by Edward Said's theories in *Orientalism*, and explain how those theories contradicted those of Nye.

The study is intended to answer the following questions:

1. Is multiculturalism seen in Nye's writings? Is this obviously seen in her writings only after her visit to her homeland or is it found in her works before that?

The study concluded that Nye had her own picture of Palestine from her father's talk about his homeland, but this picture appeared clearly after her visit to Palestine.

2. How will the study trace postcolonialism in Nye's works; and how will it give a depiction of the Palestinian diaspora?

As a poet of ethnic minorities, celebrating her multiculturalism and her cultural diversity is probably more intense as her experience of her old home is more immediate. This is because of her visit to her homeland and because of her close relationship with her father and her grandmother.

3. How do Nye's selected works discuss related themes of hybridity, identity, assimilation, marginalization and cultural conflict?

The study examines hybridized characters and tries to show how they are suffering from living all of the time the feeling of in-between-ness. Moreover, it proves that as a result of the suffering of suppression from the Israeli occupation, Palestinians were considered less assimilated than other Arab groups immigrated to the States.

4. To what extent did Nye succeed in advocating her message of building a sense of enlarged humanity through crossing racial, political, ideological and psychological boundaries among the young generation ?

The study asserted that Nye has succeeded in advocating her message to decrease the distance between Palestinians and Jews through her protagonist Liyana who has started a friendship with Omer.( the Jewish teenager) and through her poems in which she mentioned that we are wasting our time by killing each other instead of building our future.

Furthermore, the study revealed that Arab-Americans from different origins suffer from the loss of identity, hybridity and multiculturalism which have affected their thoughts and beliefs. Therefore, they can't assimilate an other cultures totally and they will always feel that they are not a pure origin. Nye, tried in all of her writings to overcome boundaries that separate us from each other. She believes that people can start good relationships even with the colonizer if they want so, and this appeared clearly in *Sitti's Secrets*, where she portrays a picture of her grandmother and how she believes in peace in spite of her sufferings from the occupation.

دراسة نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار والتعددية الثقافية واختلاط الأجناس على مجموعة من أعمال  
الكاتبة الأمريكية نعومي شهاب ناي وهي "أسرار ستي" "حبيبي" "مجموعة أشعار من الشرق  
الأوسط" و"الحقيبة الحمراء".

إعداد

وفاء يوسف الخطيب

إشراف

أ.د عبد الحافظ خريسات

الملخص

تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى التعريف بالمصطلحات كنظرية ما بعد الاستعمار والتعددية الثقافية  
واختلاط الأجناس. لقد ركزت الرسالة على مجموعة مختارة من أعمال الكاتبة الأمريكية ذات  
الأصول الفلسطينية نعومي شهاب ناي "أسرار ستي"، "حبيبي"، "مجموعة أشعار من الشرق  
الأوسط"، و"الحقيبة الحمراء" وعمدت هذه الرسالة إلى تحليل الشخصيات والأحداث بالرجوع إلى  
نصوص محددة والتي تبرز هذا الموضوع. كما وتهدف إلى التعرف على كيفية معالجة الكاتبة ناي  
لموضوع ادب ما بعد الاستعمار والتعددية الثقافية واختلاط الأجناس وأثرها على أعمال الكتاب  
الأمريكيين من أصول عربية وذلك من خلال تحليل بعض أعمال هذه الكاتبة. وعادة ما تستخدم عبارة  
التعددية الثقافية لتصنيف مجموعات من الناس من خلفيات غير بيضاء وملونين، أو أناس من جميع  
الثقافات، بغض النظر عن الجنس؛ وقد استخدم أدب هذه التعددية، في الغالب الصور الإيجابية لثقافات  
الأقلية

ستطبق هذه الرسالة آراء الكاتب ادوارد سعيد حول الاستعمار في كتابه "الاستشراق"  
"1978". اعتمدت الرسالة بشكل أساسي على تحليل أحداث وشخصيات الأعمال المختارة للكاتبة ناي  
والتي تخدم موضوع الرسالة.

ولتحقيق ذلك فقد سعت الرسالة للإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية:

1. هل ظهر تأثير تعدد الثقافات في كتابات ناي بعد زيارتها الأولى لفلسطين، أم ظهر هذا

التأثير قبل ذلك؟

أكدت الرسالة أن صورة فلسطين قد ظهرت جلية في أعمال الكاتبة نعومي شهاب ناي حتى قبل زيارتها لها للمرة الأولى وذلك من خلال حديث والدها الدائم عن فلسطين.

2. كيف ستتبع الرسالة تأثير ما بعد الاستعمار في أعمال ناي، وكيف يمكنها تتبع تأثير

الهجرة الفلسطينية القسرية في أعمالها المختلفة؟

ناي، كشاعرة أقليات تبرز التعددية الثقافية في أعمالها كجزء من معرفتها بوطنها الأم، وقد حدث هذا بسبب زيارتها إلى موطنها الأصلي وعلاقتها الوثيقة مع أبيها وجدتها.

3. هل ستمكن الأعمال المختارة للكاتبة ناي من مناقشة قضايا الهوية، استيعاب ثقافة الآخر،

التهميش وصراع الثقافات؟

بينت الرسالة انه ونتيجة للمعاناة والاضطهاد من قبل الاحتلال الإسرائيلي، فإن الفلسطينيين يعتبرون اقل العرب المهاجرين الذين اندمجوا في ثقافة الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية لأنهم لم يستطيعوا التخلص من المعاناة بسبب الاحتلال لوطنهم.

4. إلى أي مدى نجحت الكاتبة ناي في إيصال رسالتها التي تحث على بناء الجسور بين مختلف

الحضارات بغض النظر عن اللون والعرق والديانة وخاصة من الأجيال الشابة بغية تحقيق

السلام العالمي؟

توصلت الرسالة الى أن الكاتبة ناي قد نجحت في دفاعها عن رأيها بخصوص تقليص المسافة بين الفلسطينيين واليهود من خلال بطله روايتها "حبيبي" ليانا والتي بدأت صداقتها مع عمر.

وقد توصلت الرسالة إلى حقيقة أن الأشخاص الأمريكيين من أصول عربية مختلفة بغض النظر عن أصولهم يعانون من فقدان الهوية ومن اختلاط الأجناس وتعدد الثقافات مما اثر على فكرهم ومعتقداتهم، وانه مهما عاش هؤلاء خارج أوطانهم فإنهم لن يستطيعوا امتصاص ثقافة الآخر بشكل كامل، وبالتالي فهم لن يتمكنوا من التحرر من الشعور بعدم نقاء العرق، مهما حاولوا ذلك رغم أن الكاتبة ناي تؤكد في جميع كتاباتها عن إمكانية تخطي كافة الحواجز بين مختلف الثقافات وان الناس بإمكانهم بدء علاقات جيدة حتى مع المحتل لأرضهم إذا رغب الطرفان في ذلك..

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Postcolonial theory is useful because it raises a complicated question. It carries with it the implication that what we are talking about has to do with large scale historical phenomena, which involve shifting power relationships between different parts of the world, as well as between people within particular territories. Postcolonial refers to specific groups of oppressed or dissenting people (or individuals within them) rather than to a location or a social order, which may include such people but is not limited to them. The analysis of postcolonial societies works with the sense that colonialism is the only history of these societies (Loomba, 1998).

Postcolonial literary theory has been prompted by the need to deal with the diversity of postcolonial writings. (Walder, 1998). Postcolonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: immigration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourse of imperial Europe.

The impasse of postcolonial studies can best be understood historically by looking back at its emergence in the mid-1970s. Postcolonial studies are a product of changing social conditions.

Postcolonialism and its twin, postmodernism, achieved prominence during the 1980's, and postcolonial studies can be said to have achieved the status of a settled, field of academic inquiry through the 1990's. (Lowe, 2000).

Postcolonial critics often have a stake in postcolonialism as a political process in the context of specific national struggles. One thinks here of Fanon and Algeria, Said and Palestine. It is common for postcolonial critics to be exiles; their relationship with the colony in the act of becoming "post" is complex. A common criticism of postcolonial critics working in the west is that they cannot appreciate or understand the places they left behind, or those to which they have never belonged. The issue of location is a key theme. It is the whole question of belonging, and the status of insider/outsider, that postcolonialism serves to dislocate (Moore et al, 1997).

Postcolonialism does not imply sameness in the experiences of oppression or of a temporal position; it rather suggests shared features in marginalized groups positions of enunciation and perspectives. Postcolonial writing should be understood as a literature giving voice to oppressed people. It reached its peak in the post World War II period, a period marked by the beginning of the decolonization process, mass achievement of statehood by formerly colonized people, and progressive

liberation of people oppressed in the metropolitan area. These writings have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolization and diasporas with the mobility and cross overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism.

Bhabha (1983) extends his notion of hybridity to include the 'hybrid' moment of political change. Here the transformational value of change lies in the rearticulation, or translation of elements that are neither the one (unitary working class) nor the other (the politics and gender) but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both". (p.69) Therefore, hybridity includes a mixture of two different linguistic and political changes. Hybridity denotes a wide register of multiple identity, cross over boundary, crossing experiences and styles, matching a world of growing migration and diaspora lives, intensive intercultural communications.

Hybridity has come to mean philosophical acceptance of diversity beyond the traditional colonial-colonized divide. In a postcolonial scene where hybridity is so pervasive and where it exists indeed in all languages, what is not hybrid? One should admit that all languages and cultures are hybrid, since they are fashioned out of people's interaction with other people.

Hybridity is a notion associated with postcolonial work, such as Homi Bhabha's<sup>(1)</sup>, one of many theorists to whom Grobman cites her indebtedness. Used in the nineteenth century to justify colonialism in recent reformulations, hybridity is a contested, problematic, but ultimately generative, mixing of cultures, forms, and values: "an ambivalent and contradictory space in which the colonizer and colonized interrelate, deconstructing-and then reconstructing-subjectivities and cultural systems" (Bhabha, p. 21). Grobman's book (2001) sets out to theorize multicultural texts as literary hybrid spaces, texts located in the interstices. In five chapters, Grobman methodically lays out the terrain of multiculturalism in English studies, explains her theory of literary hybridity, describes a "hybrid aesthetics," specifies the political value of a theory of literary hybridity, and, finally, suggests a revisioning of U.S. literature as a whole.

During the last two decades, American multicultural literature has stood as an independent mode. This literature has emerged from the author's actual experience that reflects the nature of life of an ethnic group living in American society at large, with all its multifarious ethnic origins. In the past, different social and cultural aspects in the United States caused the delay of recognizing multicultural literature.

The importance of multicultural literature emerges from the fact that literature is the aspect which has a great power over the minds and the hearts of the readers. Walder, Loomba and Moore emphasize the fact that multicultural literature expands the knowledge not only of reader's culture, but also of other cultures. So these scholars believe that multicultural literature is an important trend in the American literature.

Naomi Shihab Nye is one of the Arab-American writers whose works reveal a deep understanding of our weakness, our humanity, as the stories she creates define her ties to the people who endow her with an appreciation for heritage and a strong sense of what she has lost and what she has gained as she defines her own place in the world. (Vega, pp. 245-52)

Nye is a poet, songwriter and a novelist. She was born to a Palestinian father and American mother. Although she regards herself as a "wandering poet", she refers to San Antonio as her home.

At the age of six, Nye began writing poems. She was influenced by her mother who read to her all the time. At first her early works were based on childish things such as cats, squirrels, friends, and teachers. It wasn't until she was fourteen that she visited her Palestinian grandmother; this would eventually become part of the messages in her many collections of poetry.

Said (1978) conceptualized orientalism as a system of knowledge that the West developed about the East as the Occident engaged in a colonizing project of the orient. Within this framework, the East historically has served as a contrasting and, not coincidentally, inferior image to the West. This polarization not only created the Orient in the Occidental imagination but also defined the west to itself. American scholars have used the concept of orientalism to examine the ways in which Americans perceive, imagine and understand Asia.

In *A Different Mirror*, Takaki (1993) explains:

Suddenly we both became uncomfortably conscious of a racial divide separating us. An awkward silence turned me from the mirror to the passing landscape, the shore where the English and the Powhatan Indians first encountered each other, at the eastern edge of the continent, I mused, was the site of the beginning of multicultural America (pp.1-2).

This means that Americans everywhere are anxiously asking, what does this diversity mean? And where is this diversity leading them? Certainly there is only one way for society's various ethnic groups to develop a greater understanding of each other. How can this happen unless they learn about each other's culture, history and social situations?

America has been racially diverse since the very beginning of Virginia shore. This emerging demographic diversity has raised fundamental questions about America's identity and multiculturalism. In 1990, *Time* published a cover story on America's changing colors. "Someday soon", the magazine announced, "white Americans will become a minority group". How soon? By 2065, most Americans will trace their descent to "Africa, Asia, The Pacific Islands, Arabia – almost anywhere but white Europe". (Takaki, 1993, p.2)

From these different definitions one discovers that multiculturalism basically means that no culture is perfect or represents the best life and that it can therefore benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures. In this sense, multiculturalism requires that all cultures should be open, self-critical, and interactive in their relations with other cultures. It sometimes means that different cultural communities should live their own way of life in a self-contained manner.

This term, which is now unanimously endorsed as the best to cover all the cultures affected by colonial practices, was preceded by some attempts made to describe these literatures which emerged out of the colonial experience. (Jones, 1969). Most post-colonial writing has concerned itself with the hybridized nature of postcolonial culture as

strength rather than a weakness. Such writing focuses on the fact that the transaction of the postcolonial world is not a one-way process on which oppression obliterates or the colonizer silences the colonized in absolute terms.

Robert Young (1995) reminds us that a hybrid is technically "a cross between two different species and that therefore the term 'hybridization' that evokes both the botanical notion of inter-species grafting and the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right which regarded different species" (p.8). In postcolonial theory, hybridity means all those ways in which this vocabulary was challenged and undermined. (Loomba, 1998)

Hybridity exists in postcolonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when invaders settler dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to assimilate new social patterns

The term hybridity has been sometimes misinterpreted as indicating something that denies the traditions from which it springs, or as an alternative and absolute category to which all postcolonial forms inevitably subscribe. But Brathwaite's early and influential account of Jamaican creolisation made it clear; the 'Creole ' is not predicated upon the idea of

the disappearance of independent cultural traditions but rather on their continual and mutual development (Aschcroft et al, 1999).

According to Bainbridge, et al, (1999), multicultural literature enhances social and cultural values. They assert, for instance, that through African folktales, the social and cultural values may pass to the readers who need to value themselves and their roots. Readers who read about their own culture and other cultures would raise their self-esteem and their self image as a race and culture and as individuals in their own eyes and in other cultures' eyes.

Over these two decades, ethnic literature dealing with the Middle East has gained importance as a prominent current of minority literatures in the United States. Arab-American writers have contributed to Middle Eastern ethnic literature. Their writings often epitomize a long going conflict between the two cultures marking their own identity and literature. Of these writers, Nye has won recognition as a poet, a writer and an anthologist of a number of award-winning multicultural works for American children and young adults.

Actually, Arab-American writers are quite conscious of their distorted image in America and how this picture is far from the reality. The attention that has been given to works by Arab American women reflect

both the larger volume of writing by women in the community and an interest in women's resistance to the orientalist assumptions that all Arab women are oppressed. Nye, an Arab-American writer, considers herself committed to refining this picture whenever she can through her writings. One can find how Nye tries to create a new type of literature which is a blend of Arabic culture and American culture.

### Statement of the Problem

This study attempts to reveal multicultural identity postcolonialism and hybridity in Nye's *Sitti's Secrets* (1994). Her first novel for young adults, *Habibi* (1997) *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East* (1994) and *Red Suitcase* (1994).

Nye has been the locus of many intriguing studies, but they have never investigated these aspects in her works.

The problem in specific tries to investigate the contradictions between Edward Said's ideas and those of Nye, it also shows how Arab-American writers are quite conscious of their distorted image in America and how this picture is far from reality. In *Orientalism* (1978), it tries to investigate how Nye thoughts are the opposite Said described the "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and

their culture."(p.14) He argued that a long tradition of false and romanticized images of Asia and the Middle East in Western culture had served as an implicit justification for Europe and America's colonial and imperial ambitions. This study will investigate how Nye considers herself committed to refining this picture whenever she can through her writings.

This study also examines how Nye handles the theme of multicultural identity and diaspora as presented in her *Sitti's Secrets* (1994). Her first novel for young adults, *Habibi* (1997) *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East* (1994) and *Red Suitcase* (1994).

Therefore, this study tries to define the term multicultural which has only recently come into usage and is variably used to describe groups of people from a non-white background, people of color, or people of all cultures regardless of race. Multicultural literature has often been used to show only positive images of minority cultures.

### The Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its deviation from other ones that examine the relation of the self and the other. This study will also show how within her works, Nye captures the rich experience of her life to give authentic representations of ethnic minorities. The setting of Nye's Middle Eastern works shifts between her native town in the States and different

parts of Palestine; the latter is, however, more prominent since it features as a backdrop of several poems and scenes in her fiction.

Despite her important contribution, Nye has not received critical attention to shed light on her achievement in contemporary literature. This study attempts to fill such a gap by analyzing Nye's works in the light of postcolonialism. The choice of theory is justifiably explained by prominent aspects of the works themselves. Nye's original works dealing with the Middle East will be discussed as representative of minority literature in the States. Hence her depiction of the Palestinian diaspora and related themes of identity, assimilation and cultural conflict are to be the basic issues of analysis in Nye's *Sitti's Secrets* (1994), *Habibi* (1997), *19 Varieties of Gazelle poems of the Middle East* (1994) and *Red Suitcase* (1994).

### Questions of the Study

This study tries to answer these questions:

1. How is multiculturalism obviously seen in Nye's writings? Is this obviously seen in her writings after her visit to her homeland or is it found in her works before that?
2. How will the study trace postcolonialism in Nye's works? and how will it give a depiction of the Palestinian diaspora?

3. How do Nye's selected works discuss related themes of hybridity, identity, assimilation, marginalization and cultural conflict?
4. To what extent does Nye succeed in advocating her message of building a sense of enlarged humanity through crossing racial, political, ideological and psychological boundaries among the young generation in order to achieve global peace?

### Operational Definition of Terms

#### Postcolonialism:

The term postcolonialism nowadays is used to include comprehensively all cultures affected by colonial rule from the moment of colonization to the present day.

#### Multiculturalism:

The term multiculturalism generally refers to an applied ideology of racial, cultural and ethnic diversity within the demographics of a specified place.

**Hybridity:**

It commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization.

**Orientalism :**

Orientalism refers to the imitation or depiction of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West by writers, designers and artists, and can also refer to a sympathetic stance towards the region by a writer or other person.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related literature

Jones (1969) explains that the study of postcolonial fiction must necessarily embrace and embody and, thus, deal with all the contradictions and complications semantically constitutive of the terms themselves. These contradictions are related to the bad relationships between the colonized and the colonizer.

Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) argue that “post-colonialism now celebrates 'crossculturality' and considers it a way to end 'the myth of group purity' which is believed to be reflected on the welfare of the society itself as well as between societies” (pp. 36-7). Bainbridge, et.al, (1999) also agrees with this view and define multicultural literature as “literature that depicts and explores the lives of individuals who belong to a wide range of diverse groups” (p. 183). Thus, multicultural literature deals with characters coming from various backgrounds and living in one community.

Griffiths and Tiffin and Brainbridge try to prove that postcolonial studies have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolisation, in-betweenness, diasporas and crossover of ideas and identities generated by

colonialism, and that Postcolonial literature, by its very hybridity, rejects cultural confinement and reaches out beyond established boundaries.

Tej (2003) argues that although postcolonial theory has come into its own only a few years ago, it has already made remarkable gains in its reach and influence. It starts with providing a reading strategy for literatures of the erstwhile colonies, which, in spite of differences in their provenance, bore common distinctive markers because of the shared experience of colonialism. In addition to absorbing the influences of imperial culture, such literatures also resist this influence and colonial control by asserting their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center. Since postcolonial theory helps us create a paradigm that promises a wider application, it has moved beyond the bounds of the actual historical experience of colonialism to embrace other kinds of colonialisms.

Charles (1994) sees that "multicultural literature should increase awareness and sensitivity to pluralism, celebrate diverse cultures and common bonds"(p. 10). Wong (1996) maintains in the "preface" to his book *Asian American literature* that the search for identity by ethnic groups living in the United States has taken place in the sixties. African-

Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Asian-Americans are the new recognized identities for the black, Chicanos and Orientals respectively.

Judith Martin and Thomas Nakayama (1999) define multiculturalism as an identity based on two or more cultural frames of reference. Writing literature which is defined as multicultural literary mode started with immigrants to the United States from Latin America and Asia, since then multicultural literature has appeared. Edward Said and Werner Sollers have the great impact on the appearance and the development of multicultural literature in America.

Peck (1992) ignores Arab-American literature as one of the main multicultural literature in America. Obviously he has abandoned one of the most major streams of ethnic American Literature. In his attempt not to mention Arab-Americans who are one of the many cultural groups that immigrated and settled in the United States of America, Peck forgets a significant part of American literature's mosaic of diversity.

In her review of the anthology *Food for our Grandmothers' Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists*, Wildman (1994) maintains that the writers of this anthology have experienced racism. All ethnic groups in the United States, including Arab-Americans, face the same problem of isolation, alienation, cultural oppression that have

rendered them somewhat invisible and forgotten. The result of this situation is the emergence of multicultural literature that embodies the culture, race and history of the group it represents. This shows how interaction between majority and minority group members may take the form of conflict, assimilation, accommodation and acculturation.

The concept of multicultural identity is a common theme in world literature that has been discussed in different literary texts, and those that pertain to ethnic or marginal groups in specific, including works such as Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982). Therefore, multiculturalism basically tries to prove that no culture is perfect, and all cultures should be open and benefit from each other.

For Bakhtin (1981) however, hybridity delineates the way in which language, even within a single sentence, can be double – voiced: "What is hybridization, it is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, between two different linguistic consciousness, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (p.385). Although Bakhtin emphasizes the mingling of the two languages, he points to the separation between them.

In fact hybridity gives people strength because hybridized people have an identity which has been shaped jointly by their own cultural history intertwined with that of the colonial power.

Talley (2007) examines different manifestations of hybridity in the novels of José Donoso, Severo Sarduy, Diamela Eltit, and Pedro Lemebel<sup>(2)</sup>. The hybrid notions focus on issues related to race, culture, religion, gender, class, and language. By employing hybrid language and/or hybrid subjects, the author challenges binary categories, erases established boundaries, and pushes the limits of what traditional societies consider “normal” and/or acceptable.

Talley’s theoretical study involved an interdisciplinary exploration of the increasingly prevalent experience of multiple cultural affiliation, termed cultural hybridity, with the explicit rationale of addressing the relevant gap in the psychological literature. Cultural hybrid phenomenology was explored, and its connection to related concepts including third culture kids, global nomads, transculturals, cosmopolitans, and people of “mixed race” was examined. Drawing from the life-stories and reflections of four prominent cultural hybrid writers as well as from relevant interdisciplinary research findings, five common themes of cultural hybrid experience emerged: cultural marginality, hidden diversity,

fluidity of identity, multidimensional worldview, and non-traditional ways of belonging.

So, the reader finds that the concept of hybridity in literature at the zone of contact between colonialism and native cultures has been the subject of major theoretical studies, some of which disagree with one another about the efficacy of hybridity in explaining the indigenous cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world.

Rosaldo (1995) provides a useful definition of hybridity. It can be understood as the ongoing condition of all human cultures, which contain no zones of purity because they undergo a continuous process of transculturation. This means that human cultures are on continual and mutual development.

Taylor (2007) shows that the narratives of and about mixed-race people have provided a varied and rich artistic canvas. Using various literary works as tools for investigation, Taylor's study explores a discourse for mixed-race people and determines to what extent that discourse shapes conceptions about them. In addition, it examines to what extent subjects of mixed-racial heritage and identity establish and form new cultures, struggle for the validity of their existence in spite of racial binaries, affirm their experiences and to some degree question the validity

of race itself. Issues of hybridity, creolizations have affected postcolonial subjects and Americans throughout the diaspora. Moreover, the study involves people of mixed Native American, African, Latin, Asian, European descent and others.

George (1994) is concerned with the Palestinian immigrants and topics related to their communities in the United States. The purpose of this study is to find the impact of homeland politics and other Middle Eastern political events on Palestinian immigrants in their new adopted country. One of the works which George's has examined is Diab Rabie's poetry, which represents the complex fusion of the Palestinian and American identity. His work is examined to contest the traditional theories of the assimilations of the "melting pot". These theorists claim that there is no link between the degree of assimilation and the kind of political behavior of an ethnic group such as the Palestinian-Americans.

In this aspect, Nye writes about crossing boundaries in the poem "strings",

Tonight it is possible to pull the long,

string and feel someone moving faraway,

to touch the fingers of one hand to the fingers of the other hand.

To be linked to every mother

every fathers father"(Fuel.II. 4-7).

Nye forges connections across boundaries of ethnicity, nationality, gender and class. Although these connections are most often personal rather than communal, they provide the basis for linkages that take on metaphorical resonance.

Nye also writes from a universal perspective in which she tries to take care of the inner lives of the people, which make her poetry very close to the way many people think and feel, utilizing her ethnic experience that reflects her attitude towards the world including the Middle Eastern culture. In "My Father and the Fig Tree", Shihab discovers that her father longing for the memory of the fig's taste shows the poets concern with her father's displacement and her own sense of a Palestinian who does not share her father's memory. (Melus, 2001)

Ajrouch (1997) implements the use of focus group discussions and life history interviews with Muslim Lebanese immigrants and their adolescent children in order to explore the process by which an Arab-American identity develops among the second generation. The major goal of this research is to ascertain the impact of both the American culture and the Arab culture upon the formation of personal and community identities

among these adolescents. Gender relations are a central theme to discover the process of ethnic identity formation in this study. Immigration also became a core theme. The experiences of the parents in Lebanon as well as the adolescents' perceptions of their experiences contribute to their understanding of Arab culture and an Arab identity.

This proves that traditional Arab culture faces a major threat from the American cultural value of freedom. The negotiation of these forces arises within each major theme of gender, religion, and immigration to produce the finding that ethnic identity formation is a gendered process among children of Lebanese Muslim immigrants living in the United States.

Abdelrazek (2005) focuses on Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage* (1999), Mohja Kahf's *E-mails from Scheherazad* (2003), Laila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* (2003), and Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent* (2003), examining how each of these works uniquely tackles the idea of having a hyphenated Arab-American identity and living in the border zone. These Arab-American women writers use their writings as a form of resistance; explore what it means to belong to a nation as it wages war against their Arab homelands, support the elimination of Palestine, and racializes Arab men as terrorists and Arab women as oppressed victims; and study the

Eurocentric racialization of Arab culture as inherently backward, uncivilized, and patriarchal.

It is clear that these authors use their writings as a form of resistance not only to orientalist and Arab fundamental regimes and construction of identities but also as a means to explore and express their feelings about their hyphenated identities, exile, doubleness, and difference.

Marie (2006) examined the literary works of three Arab American women writers Mohja Kahf, Suheir Hammad, and Naomi Shihab Nye, in connection with their personal reflections, reviewers' and educators' receptions, and one approach to teaching their texts in an undergraduate class on women writers of Arab descent. These writers identify themselves as Arab American, each comes from a different background, has a distinct style, and is concerned with specific stereotypes affecting intercultural relationships among Americans, Arabs, and Muslims in local and global contexts. Though the works discussed are creative in nature, reviews indicate a tendency to conflate the Arab-Americans author with her text, especially if the author engages first-person voices. It examines how distancing the "I" of the literary text from the author's identity is difficult in general, but even more so in the case of "Other" women's literature.

Masri (2001) investigates two main dimensions in Nye's poetry, the cultural dimension and the political dimension. In the first group of her poems appears Nye's attempt to search for identity, viewing herself as a blend of her Arabic origin and her American background. In the second group appears Nye's concern with the politics of the Middle East.

Therefore, the reader notices that all of the researchers and critics are occupied with the complex phenomenon of postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity. One can also notice that Americans from different origins and Arab-American writers are very worried about their identity and also about their home lands which appear clearly in their writings. Arab-Americans have been active socially and politically throughout the twentieth century, but after 1967 emphasis on cultural preservation and political activity not simply as American citizens but as Arab citizens of America lead to some recognition of an Arab entity by mainstream America. Later, the appearance of different writings of authors from different origins, lead to the study of this kind of literature.

Nye, as an Arab-American writer, has been influenced very much with what is happening in the Middle East in general and in Palestine in particular which has appeared clearly in all of her writings. Yet, she tried in

all of her writings to build bridges that connect different cultures with each other.

The researcher concluded that Nye's bicultural background has left an important impact on her poems particularly in terms of their themes and their general outlook.

## Chapter Three

### Methods and procedures

This chapter follows the method of describing and analyzing the aspects and views of Edward Said giving examples from Nye's works to reveal the contradictions between Edward Said's views and those of Nye. This chapter presents the methods that the researcher follows in order to reach the results and the answers to the questions of the study. In the procedures, the researcher presents the approach to be followed in order to examine texts from the novel.

### Methods

Many studies have conveyed the theme of multiculturalism, postcolonialism and hybridity in most of the writings of Arab-Americans. This study chooses Edward Said and applies his views to the selected works of Naomi Shihab Nye.

The study depends on *Sitti's Secrets*, *Habibi*, *19 Varieties of Gazelle poems of the Middle East* and *Red Suitcase*; these works reveal the themes of multiculturalism, postcolonialism and hybridity and achieve the purpose of this study that will prove how Nye's writings often optimize a long-

going conflict between the two cultures marking their own identity and literature through her protagonists.

To achieve this purpose, the study intends to analyze in detail many situations and events of *Sitti's Secrets*, *Habibi*, *19 Varieties of Gazelle* *Poems of the Middle East* and *Red Suitcase*, that show the internal conflict of her protagonists between two different cultures, and how these characters try to assimilate the other culture. One can see that some of the characters have succeeded in this assimilation while others have failed to achieve it.

Edward Said's views to which the researcher refers are:

1. Said's study is not of marginality, nor even of marginalization. It is the study of the construction of an object, for investigation and control.
2. Said has blossomed into a garden where the marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for.
3. Said is chiefly concerned with establishing the textual nature of the space of East in the Western thought.
4. Said wonders about the ability of one society sympathetically to understand the conditions and concerns of another.

## Procedures

This study follows the analytical approach by which the researcher intends to examine texts of Nye's works that are relevant to the theme of postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity. The researcher follows these steps:

- 1- Collecting citations that are relevant to the study.
2. Reading about postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity as an introduction to the study.
- 3- Stating the theoretical perspectives of Edward Said that are relevant to the analysis of the study.
- 4- Nye's *Sitti's Secrets*, *Habibi*, *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East* and *Red Suitcase* are selected as samples that depict the themes of postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity.
- 5- Stating questions to solve the problems of the study.
- 2- Choosing many texts as an example for the actions and events that describe the main theme of the conflict between different cultures and the effect of the colonizer on the colonized land.

- 3- Using the theoretical views to analyze the real relationship between East and West through analyzing the behaviors of different characters in these works.

To achieve best results, the researcher discusses in detail Said's perspectives and finds out through applying these perspectives to the selected works of Nye to show that the relationship between the East and the West carries a lot of boundaries that prevent them from crossing these boundaries, and due to these facts different characters (that has been used in Nye's writings) suffer from the feeling of displacement. Then the researcher presents Said's views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the relation between the colonized and the colonizer.

The researcher also makes use of Said's views that orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "Us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "Them"). (*Orientalism*, p.43) Furthermore, Said argues that Orientalism has produced a false description of Arabs and the Islamic culture.

The researcher intends to use certain quotations from Nye's works which show the conflict that goes inside the minds of different characters that reveal the idea of postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity.

Throughout the works, the contradiction between Nye's thoughts and Said's thoughts appears clearly. These works try to reveal the barriers that stand between the East and the West and the barriers between Palestinians and Jews.

## Chapter four

*Nye's Sitti's Secrets, Habibi, 19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East and Red Suitcase* and postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity

This chapter examines the application of Said's view to the selected works of Nye. So, this chapter as a whole is intended to discuss many issues related to postcolonialism, multiculturalism and hybridity. The ideas of Said will be applied to some texts of these works.

Cultural and literary theorists argue increasingly against identity politics and formulate mutable, hybrid, or borderland identities that allow ethnic people to negotiate diverse social and cultural terrain. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues that the "hybrid counter-energies" of exiles, immigrants, and the marginalized offer a genuine potential for an emergent non-coercive culture. (pp. 334-35)

Edward Said, has tackled the issue of orientalism and how this discourse has been played out in the west to dehumanize the East; one thing that was not focused on is how the Orient displays itself when it is uprooted or displaced and what happens when the Orient attempts to move from the "Them" side of the paradigm to the "Us" side.

According to Said (1978), Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the west, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them") (p. 43). In *Orientalism*, Said argues that Orientalist literature is both derived from and supports colonizing power. Said's theory is also based on the binary opposition between the East and the West. Firstly, Said focuses on the Orientalism of major colonial powers, Britain, France and later the United States.

Although Gayatri Spivak <sup>(3)</sup> has called it the source book in the discipline of Postcolonialism, she explains that Said's book was not a study of marginality, not even of marginalization. It was the study of the construction of an object, for investigation and control. Said's concerns were, he always insisted, far more to do with western ways of thinking and imagining the self than anything specifically to do with the recovery of the actual imperial object. To analyze the phenomenon of Orientalism, in Said's contention, is to explain how "diverse human beings fit themselves together in a pattern of social interaction that is new and alert to the vitality of individualism but in which the subjective experience often feels peculiarly alienated and lonely". (Cited in Young, 2003, p. 122)

Orientalist knowledge is political knowledge; it is tainted by the political situation in which it emerged, Europe's and America's colonialism and imperialism. Said (1978) explains:

It will be clear to the reader that by Orientalism I mean several things, all of them in my opinion, interdependent. It is true that the term Orientalism is less preferred by specialists today, both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism. (p. 2)

This means that all of the critics try to avoid the term orientalism , because they think that it refers all of the time to the colonization of the Arab World by Europeans and Americans , so they try to ignore this term in all of their writings .

The Arab Muslim has become a figure in American popular culture after World War11. This symbolizes a major change in the international configuration of forces. Moreover, the vastly expanded American political and economic role in the Middle East makes great claims of understanding that orient.

Arab American writers from the 1980's to the present time reflect the second major wave of Arab immigration to the United States between

1940 and the Israeli Arab War in 1967. Many of these writers were born in the United States or immigrated to it when they were young children. Though not all Arab American writers are Muslims or speak Arabic, Arab American writers and scholars argue that they shared socio-political, historical and economic experiences from a collective memory that binds the past, present, and future across continents. In other words, Arab American writers draw on traditions, events and situations that they have in common with Arabs and Muslims in other parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East. Contemporary Arab American writings have been concerned with images of people in Arab and American cultures, as well as the articulation of hybrid identities in the space between both cultures.

What are some of the challenges that Arabs have faced in their new homelands (the United States)? And how they have coped with building a new future. Among the most important issues with which Arabs in America have had to wrestle is the definition of who they are; their sense of identity as a people, especially as they have continually encountered and continue to encounter bias and discrimination in their new homeland. Their new identity has been shaped by many factors but especially by continuing interactions between conditions in the old and new homelands and by the interplay between their perceptions of themselves and how others see them.

Palestinians were prominently represented among the new waves of Arab additions to the ethnic communities of the United States. The process of delivery of Orientalist knowledge to Europe and America consists of three components: the Orientalist, the Orientalist knowledge and the consumer of this knowledge. Orientalist literature has been produced only for readers in Europe or America.

Said (1978) describes the relationship between the Orient and the Occident as a relationship of power and domination. The Orientalist always represents the occident as superior to the orient so the westerner comes up against the Orient as an American first and as individual second. Thus the Orient is what exists in the eye of Orientalist. Said believes that orientalists have imposed their own definitions and stereotypes on the Orient. Orientals are presented as passive and non participant. To control the Orient, the west preferred to speak for it and created an image and a body about it. Giving a voice to the Orient means giving them power and authority.

Therefore, Said says that there are two factors that helped to make the situation as a kind of triumph of Orientalism. First, all of the literary writings in the Middle East were an imitation of American and European models; second, when Said continues in his book "*Orientalism*" that Taha Hussein said about Arab culture that it was European, he considered this

description to be a proof of superiority of Arabic literature. Till now, we still feel that our culture is less than European and American culture; in fact, we cannot say that we possess challenging places like Oxford, Harvard or University of California, Los Angeles in the study of the Arab world.

Said's book demonstrates how Orientalism has helped the west dominate and control the Orient. He criticizes the unequal relationship between the West and the East. In the introduction of his book, Said acknowledges the limitations of his book that it focuses on the Middle Eastern and the Islamic orient. Orientalism exposed the ugly face of power. Said creates a broad framework within which all aspects of power were defined: the relationship between the powerful and the powerless.

According to Said (1978), Orientalism is an "ethnocentric phenomena, as Orientalists are not interested in correctly representing the nations of Asia or in being true to an original", Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the west". (p. 20) Orientalist works, therefore, reflect the author's social, political, economic, religious and cultural environment as well as his personal background and interests more than they reflect the subject matter. In addition, orientalist works not only mirror the orientalists

identity, they significantly shape it. Orientalists are interested in Asians' and Middle East phenomena only as far as the representation of these phenomena contributes to their identity as superior to Asians and Middle Eastern people.

Said is interested in the relationship between the West and the East and in particular the discourse which due to him has mediated that relationship, which he calls orientalism. For Said, the pursuit of knowledge in the colonial domain cannot be 'disinterested' in the relationship between cultures on which it depends as an unequal one; such knowledge whether of the language, customs or religions of the colonized, is consistently put at the service of the colonial administration. In Said's view, orientalism operates in the service of western hegemony over the East principally by producing the East discursively as the West's inferior "other" which strengthens the west's self image as a superior civilization. (Moore, et al.1997)

Nye as well as other Arab-American writers has contributed to Middle Eastern ethnic literature. Nye has won recognition as a poet, a writer and an anthologist for producing a number of awards such as winning multicultural works for American children and young adults.

In studying her poetry, one discovers that she speaks in quite universal terms revealing the sorrow, sadness and injustice in the world, incorporating her Middle Eastern experience with her mother tongue acquired in America. One also will see how Nye draws her images and metaphors from the social conditions of the Arab-American existence and the Palestinian conditions.

Nye describes herself as a "wandering poet" who has spent 33 years traveling the country and the world to lead writing work shops and inspiring students of all ages. Drawing on her Palestinian-American heritage, the cultural diversity of her home in Texas, and her experiences traveling in Asia, Europe, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America and the Middle East, Nye uses her writings to attest to our shared humanity.

Nye's poetry is accessible without being trivial. According to Nye, her poetry is in fact a kind of conversation with the world, and she is very concerned about the reader on the other side of her poems. She views writing as a way to connect with the larger world, and as an ambition, that allows us to come closer to each other as human being. (Naomi Shihab Nye: A Bill Moyers Interview)

This study will examine each of these works and analyze them to show that postcolonial writings involve a mixture of two sets of values and that individuals and communities must resolve the conflict inherent to this situation. Through her writings, Nye tries to present a range of resolutions to the conflict with characters that represent the prevailing attitudes of different groups within a community; therefore, conflicts and their resolutions enable the author to create, and the reader to discover the nature of the evolving postcolonial.

Nye, declares that the writing itself was the power, the daily declaration of independence, saying, that she is part of all this magnificent diversity and intricate texture, but she is not this. She says yes it is more than this. So are you (she addresses the reader) . Everything was possible on the page. Nye reminds us that she would stand outside the circle to see what went on. She assures that freedom of speech is the greatest gift America has given them all and she will treasure it forever and continue to remind people about it because sometimes if you have had it forever, you don't realize you have it. Nye draws on her Arab-American ethnicity in her writings not simply to celebrate her heritage, but because this identity has serious implications in the contemporary context in which Arab-Americans may begin to join (writers on America) .

Nye writes of the "gravities of ancestry" the sense of "rapturous homecoming" that she experienced on meeting Arab-American writers although "all writers are engaged in the building of bridges" she observes "maybe bicultural writers who are actively conscious of or interested in heritage build another kind of bridge as well, this one between worlds. But it is not like a bridge; really it is closer like a pulse"(Orfalea and Elmusa, 1988, p. 38). In such a passage Nye draws on ethnicity as a foundation for the self. They declare that although Nye: "is the outstanding American poet of Palestinian origin, and one of the premier voices of her generation...of 155 poems in her three published collections, only fourteen have Arab or Palestinian content-less than nine percent". ( p. 34)

Nye clearly evokes her Palestinian Muslim background in "Different Ways to Pray". This is not simply an ethnic poem. Rather, it uses the imagery of an Arab landscape to make a larger point about diversity and commonality. Prayers here are not just a kind of worship but generally a reverential approach toward life.

Philip Booth (1989) writes about Nye:

All her questions suggest to me an unstated question which seems to inform her best work: how do we come to terms with this world we cannot bear not to be part of?...Nye may not know any more than

the rest of us what to do, but she knows more than most of us how many people live; how variously and how similarly all people live. (pp. 162-163)

This statement shows how Nye due to her mixed background knows very well how those in the States live and at the same time knows how those people in the other parts of this world live. She tries all the time to cross boundaries and to join people in these two different parts of the world in order to come close to each other. She is engaged in the building of bridges. Therefore, the contradiction between her views and those of Said appears clearly here.

Nye, as many other American Palestinian writers, needs to come to terms with Palestinian history, and with a legacy of occupation, injustice and exile. Given this history, Palestinian American writers carry the burden of using their talents for Palestinian causes. In her poem "The man who makes brooms" from her collection *19 Varieties of Gazelle poems of The Middle East*, the speaker says:

So you come with these maps on your head,

and I come with voices chiding me to,

"speak for my people"

and we march around like guardians of memory. (ll.1-4)

The speaker acts as a representative for her people to speak out.

An essay about Nye's grandmother's home in Palestine, "One Village", clarifies the sense of ethnicity as a movement not only backward and inward, but also forward and outward. Describing her return to her Palestinian grandmother's village, Nye (1996) at first tries to locate herself: "The village smells familiar" she writes. "Whole scenes unfold like recent landscapes. However, the village not only affirms who she is, but also shows her how to listen to differences" (pp. 49-50). It smells familiar because Nye used to listen thousands of times to her father telling her about his village in Palestine, as he seemed all the time occupied by the image of his homeland.

The point to be emphasized is that this truth about the distinctive difference between races, civilizations and languages was radical and incredible. It asserted that there was no escape from origins and the types these origins enabled; as it set the real boundaries between different human beings, on which, races and civilizations were constructed, forcing attention in the downward and backward directions of immutable origins. (Said, 1978).

Nye offers insights into the Middle East that seem particularly relevant in these troubled times. It is impossible from the poems themselves to determine if Nye is a Christian or Muslim, but it is quite clear that she is a loving, caring person with great insight into the complexities that await all who venture into this area. One can hear the speaker in "*Half and Half*" says:

This morning we lit the slim white candles,  
 which bend over at the waist by noon.  
 For once the priests weren't fighting,  
 in the church for the best spots to stand.  
 As a boy, my father listened to them fight.  
 This is partly why he prays in no language,  
 but his own. Why I press my lips,  
 to every exception.(ll. 11-18).

Nye tries to prove that everyone has his own religion but this makes no difference, because she believes that the relationship between the human beings and their God is a special relation, and no body should interfere the way every body prays to his God. The reader here feels a little bit confused because he cannot guess either she is a Muslim or a Christian.

The reader also hears her protagonist Liyana reminds herself:

Jesus had a real body. Jesus had baby's breath. And Jesus did not write the list of rules posted on the stone wall. There were many, but Liyana's eyes caught on the first: NO ARMS ALLOWED INSIDE THIS CHURCH".(Habibi, p. 174)

This proves that she wants every body to pray in the way he wants, and she does not want to tell the readers her religion, because all of the time she believed that every body has the right to choose the religion he believes in, and to pray in his own way.

In her works, she tries to connect different ethnicities within her work's ethnic borderland. Nye's works pave the way for wider investigations in Arab-American literature and criticism of ethnic borderlands. The intersection of ethnic concerns becomes a positive realm from which ethnic communities can defy the binary oppositions that exist between them and can work together to break down the stereotypes that transform all ethnic subjectivities into faceless and indistinguishable suspects.

As a daughter of a European Arab American Christian mother and a Muslim Palestinian father, Nye has a particular interest in challenging boundaries of identification. In a poem titled "Half and Half" that evokes

her mixed background, Nye draws on all parts of her identity, background and experience for a wholeness that eschews artificial unity.

The poem "Half and Half" from her collection *19 Varieties of Gazelle poems of The Middle East* is a great place to start looking at her insights since she is certainly half -and-half herself:

You can't be, says a Palestinian Christian

on the first feast after Ramadan.

So, half-and-half and half- and –half.

He sells glass, he knows about broken bits,

chips. If you love Jesus you can't love

anyone else says he. (ll.1-6)

In the same poem the speaker, adds:

A woman opens a window – here and here and here,

placing a vase of blue flowers,

on an orange cloth. I follow her.

She is making a soup from what she had left ,

in the bowl, she shriveled garlic and bent bean.(ll. 19-24)

She says which of us doesn't know about "broken bits, chips?" whose life is whole? She continues, "If you love Jesus, you have to love someone else?" Don't you? Isn't that the essence of Jesus? At this point, the Palestinian Muslims reflect a feeble affinity towards each other. How many Christians can manage more than half and half? And is soup the ultimate comfort food, anything but half-and-half," leaving nothing out"?. Most of us live our lives "from what has been left in the bowl".

Her Poem ' *How Palestinians Keep Warm*' from her collection "*Red Suitcase*" expresses her own feelings about how close we are and at the same time how far from each other, the speaker says:

The stars were named by people like us.

Each night they line up on the long path between worlds.

They nod and blink no right or wrong

In their yellow eyes, Dirah little house.(ll 4-7)

When reading these lines, one cannot help but notice that Nye believes that all of the people in this world share the same knowledge, the same sky, the same stars and the same feelings toward different issues.

A major theme in Arab-American literature is the relationship between parents and children. In her poems that include the poet's father, Nye presents her father as a symbol of her Arabic roots and origin. She talks about her father's yearning for his Palestinian roots through dreaming of the fig tree in "My Father and the Fig Tree" (*Words Under the Words*, p. 20) which reminds him of his homeland. Nye talks about her father who came to the United States as a college student in 1948. He is 74 years old now and still homesick. He has planted fig trees and has invited all the Ethiopians in his neighborhood to fill their little paper sacks with figs. She also places him in a poem to tell a story from his childhood in Palestine. This helped her very much to find herself a place in her father's culture. According to Nye, it is an advantage to be of a multicultural background where she obtains immunity and freedom to place herself everywhere.

Palestinian literature in particular and Arabic literature in general, were created and defined by their historical moments. Said talks about Arabic Literature saying that there was "emphasis on scenes" in the literature that followed the defeat of 1948. The reader can see this clearly in the works of Nye when we hear the speaker describing the death of a Palestinian teenager in her poem ' *For the 500th Dead Palestinians, Ibtisam Bozieh* ' "Dead at 13, for staring through/ the window into a gun barrel" (ll 4-5), and in the same aspect Said adds:

A scene formally translates the critical issues at stake in the Arab World. This is not a matter of proving how literature or writing reflects life, nor is it confirmation of an allegorical interpretation of an Arab Reality...What is of greater interest is how the scene is itself the very problem of Arabic literature and writing after the disaster of 1948; the scene does not merely reflect the crises, or historical duration, or the paradox of the present (Introduction to Kanafani, 2000)

There is an apparent fascinating relationship and similarity between the black's man struggle for freedom and that of the Palestinian people. People, one in the East and one in the West, suffered from the legacy of colonialism and slavery and their consequences: suppression, repression, oppression and other socio-psycho indelible scars. It is not surprising that Nye focuses her attention on one major theme-liberation.

In Nye's *Habibi*, one can see clearly how Nye tries to cross boundaries between different cultures, when Liyana Aboud told the Armenian priest that she is looking forward to learning more about Armenian literature. The priest answers her that she will be the only (outsider), a term that makes her father Poppy flinch, where he has spoken

heartily, "let's believe together in a world where no one is inside or outside" (p. 78).

And this appears clearly when one hears Liyana talking to her brother Rafik while they were in the airplane:

Somewhere over the Mediterranean she whispered to her brother: too bad the country namers couldn't have made some awful combo word from the beginning like Is-Pal or Pal-Is to make every body happy. (Habibi, P. 37)

Nye believes that all of the people can live peacefully with each other, and she does not believe that people can stay forever hate each other, so the reader finds her protagonist Liyana talking to her father:

Didn't you say before you went in jail that it would be great if people never described each other as the Jew or the Arab or the black guy or the white guy didn't you just SAY? (p.241)

And one finds her using capitalization to assure her point of view, that she knows very well those we who can ignore all of these differences that separate us from each other, because we remember them when we want and forget them in other times.

In all of her selected works, Nye shifts between her native town in the States and different parts of Palestine; the latter, however, has more scenes in her fiction. Her settings shift between the refugee campus, Jerusalem and Ramallah, where she introduces her reader to the different customs, different traditions and daily life. Most of her works concentrate on the conflict between two cultures marking their own identity and literature. And this appears clearly when we hear Liyana's mother talking to her when she knew that she is going to meet her friend Omer (the Jewish teenager):

Liyana this is a country. It is a very conservative country. Haven't you noticed? Remember the shorts? Remember this story about someone getting in trouble because he talked to a woman in the street. I realize you are not a villager and you don't have to live by their old fashioned codes. Just remember your father won't like it.  
(Habibi, p. 160)

Being an Arab-American writer is not surprising to see that Nye feels the pressure to speak for her people. However, being a guardian of memory suggests the task of defending borders. And she means all kinds of borders either religious, cultural, political, color, or nationality. Through her character Poppy in *Habibi*, one discovers her trying to cross the boundaries

between the two different cultures as she talks about the protagonist's anxiety about his children, and the confrontation between their father's native culture that has been newly introduced to them and the American culture that has shaped their identity.

Thus Nye's works raise an important question about the overriding ethnic ambiguities that often engulf people of color in the United States. They, moreover, create a physical and psychological ethnic borderland in which different ethnic communities coexist and communicate.

These works will lead their readers to the secrets of the Arab world and Western world and will help them discover the invisible problems. They will also try to reveal how complicated the relationship between the East and The West, and the one between Palestinians and Jews (means Israeli people who occupied Palestine).

Nye has a special relationship with her grandmother "Sitti Khadra"; this relationship shows the reader how Nye is very close to her grandmother, Nye considers her as a bridge that connects two different cultures with each other. The theme of the relationships between children and older people is found in multicultural literature. It is through this theme that the old generation transfers their memories about their lost homelands to their children and grand children. Those people were afraid that their

children will never see their homelands and that's why they try all of the time to draw them a picture of the country which they have never seen.

In *Sitti's Secrets*, Nye's narrator says:

My grandmother lives on the other side of the earth. When I have day light, she has night. When our sky grows dark, the sun is peeking through her window and brushing the bright lemons on her lemon tree. Between us are many miles of land and water; between us are fish and cities and buses and fields. (p.1)

According to this narration, Nye thinks of her grandmother's world and hers as two different ones, which are separated from each other. She feels that there is a harmony between her soul and her grandmother's. She considers her grandmother as a source of inspiration for her. In other parts of *Sitti's Secrets*, the reader sees her describing the physical features of her grandmother:

A few curls of dark hair peeked out of her scarf on one side, and a white curl peeked out on her other side. I wanted her to take off the scarf so, I could see if her hair was striped. Soon we had invented our own language together. (p. 6)

So, Nye shows the reader how she has invented a bridge of understanding between her and her grandmother; they don't speak the same language, but they have invented their own language. Here she tries to emphasize the fact that even when people don't speak the same language, they can understand each other, therefore, they can cross the boundaries which keep them away from each other.

*Sitti's Secrets* is considered as a character study of Nye's grandmother and a review of her life. It describes clearly the Palestinian life of a country woman. Nye's narrator says:

She eats cucumbers for breakfast, with yogurt and bread. She bakes the big flat bread in a round old oven next to her house. A fire burns in the middle. She pats the dough between her hands and presses it out to bake on a flat rock (pp. 12-13).

Undoubtedly Nye tries to draw a picture of a Palestinian daily life which is too different from the American life, and that's why she talks about the other side of the globe, in which everything is different, even the sun shines when it is night in the U.S.A and the night comes when the sun shines there. So they are two different worlds, yet they share the same natural objects, same sky, same sun and same stars, which means that the East and the West can build bridges between these two cultures.

The selected works of Nye shift between her native town in the States and different parts of Palestine. In her novel *Habibi*, Nye talks about two types of characters involved in the diasporic experience: Poppy, an American immigrant to the U.S.A and his daughter Liyana, a second generation of Arab -American. Liyana and Rafik (her brother) feel as hybrids uniting two conflicting cultures that arise with their father's decision to go back to his homeland. This shows clearly that Nye considers hybridity as a kind of weakness where the person can not recognize his real identity. In this novel, the writer reveals different types of characters. Liyana says:

I am just a half-half, woman-girl, Arab-American; a mixed breed like those wild characters that ride up on ponies in the cowboy movies Rafik likes to watch. The half breeds are always villains or rescuers, never anybody normal in between". (*Habibi*, p. 20)

Thus, Liyana lives the in-betweenness, which is considered as a main theme in hybridity, where the hybrid feels himself all of the time as an abnormal person. Her potential space in the hyphen between Arab and American, makes her into a constant state of border crossing with her ethnic, racial and indeterminacy. Liyana's saying reveals deep cultural conflicts between East and West; it shows clearly that those multicultural

characters suffer from being all the time in-between living the feeling of half and half, so they can never be sure to which culture they belong. They live all the time torn between two cultures. Liyana feels that, unlike other ethnic groups, Arab-Americans have had to suffer directly as well as indirectly the effects of an ideology that intended to defame the character of all Arabs. Therefore, Nye's protagonist Liyana feels the weakness of being a mixed person which makes her all of the time lost in between as we hear her talking to herself: "In Jerusalem she was just a blur, going on by the streets. The half American with Arab eyes in the blue Armenian school uniform" (preface to Habibi)

In her poem, "Arabic", from her collection *Red Suitcase*, the speaker says:

The man with laughing eyes stopped smiling,

to say "until you speak Arabic-

-you will not understand pain".

Something to do with the back of the head,

an Arab carries sorrow in the back of the head

that only language cracks, the thrum of stones. (ll. 1-5)

When reading these lines, one cannot help but notice that Arabs are sure that speaking Arabic is the key to understanding pain. However, the speaker responds by holding that pain is universal and all people can understand it. So all people share the same feelings that make them able to cross all the boundaries between different cultures and different minorities.

Said (1978) states that the orientalist's knowledge of the Oriental is not a true knowledge, "it is not the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes. It is a campaign of self affirmation" (preface to *Orientalism*, p. 2). Despite their passion for each other, both Liyana and Omer (failed to understand each other. The reader finds Liyana's father asking when he knew about Omer "what, who, where?" (p. 171) and Liyana tries to remind him of what he has told her about their Jewish neighbors and friends when he was growing up there, Liyana says. "Remember how we had plenty of Jewish friends back in the United States". (p.171) According to Said, the relationship between Omer (Jewish teenager, and he is one of the characters in *Habibi*) and Liyana is a sort of normal relationship, but Omer tries in his relationship with Liyana to practice the essence of Orientalist discourse, namely that the Oriental is an object that can be described, judged and conceptualized and not a free thinking one.

Furthermore, the Palestinian characters of Nye seem to escape away from the diasporic embrace; these characters try all the time to assimilate the new culture they suddenly find themselves involved in. It is the same that happened first of all to the Palestinian character who has immigrated to the United States after “Alnakba (3)”; his family's house was almost blown up so they left Jerusalem to find refuge in a small village, but when they got back, their house was "occupied" by Jewish soldiers and their belongings were ravished, so they moved to Ramallah, after his immigration to the States. Suddenly this character Poppy found himself in a strange atmosphere and that he should assimilate the new culture immediately. At the same time, the reader discovers that his assimilation of the new culture also affects his choice of the names of his kids.

Moreover, it appears clearly that Liyana, the one who carries a western name finds it very difficult to accept her new life in Palestine. Therefore; we hear her asking her father:

Will we ever goes home (she means the United States)? She asked poppy after an evening walk up to the small grocery to smell the air. He paused.” I would hope,” he said” that you felt comfortable here”. “Oh I do” she said” I feel more comfortable every day...sometimes

I get incredibly homesick for....” What was she really missing anymore”? (Habibi, p. 244)

While one finds the character carrying Arabic name has been involved in the new life easily and once he announced that he would prefer to live in Palestine forever. As we hear Liyana asking her brother:” Do you like it here?” She asked Rafik. To her greatest surprise, he answered, “Yes”. He hoped they would stay here forever”( *Habibi* p. 99).

The return home, a major feature in Arab American literature, seems as one of the major ideas of the writings of Nye. The relationships between territory, displacement and resistance are complicated. It is in the process that requires a sense of place left behind. And yet again, for diasporas “territory and “land” may be more metaphorical and symbolic than “real”.

It is obvious that the new generation of Arab American writers born in the United States show their interest in their ancestral homeland through visiting it or hearing their parents talking about it. One sees how Nye is very much attached to her homeland (sometimes the characters refer to the States as homeland and in other places they refer to Palestine) especially after paying her first visit for the first time in (1966). Nye has traveled to Palestine frequently and has given readings at all major Palestinian

universities. She all the time thinks that as a Palestinian-American it is part of her job to tell the stories that the news does not take the time to tell.

Nye's *Habibi* talks about Liyana who is reluctant to leave behind her life in the United States because she is afraid she will not fit in when she moves to the Middle East. She says:

When she was younger, before she went to middle school and her arms seemed to grow longer in the night, she knew the easy latitude and longitude of her world. Now she was moving away to a land she knew little of, except the skillet of olive oil which crumbles of garlic and pine nuts browning on the stove. (p. 2)

*Habibi* focuses on the psychological difficulties involved in the protagonist's adjustment to the Arab side of her identity which means the assimilation of a new family, country, language and customs. These psychological difficulties appear clearly when Liyana tries to express her feelings:

When Liyana went to bed after their arrival to Palestine feels that the pillow smelled very different from the pillow in their ST.louis house, which smelled more like fresh air, like good loose breeze. This pillow smelled like long lonely years full of bleach. (*Habibi*, 107).

Moreover, we can feel the conflict inside Liyana's mind that happens to her even in her dreams; she feels the conflict that goes inside her mind in her dreams:

That night Liyana dreamed a cake fell off its plate into the sea and floated away from her. She reached wildly with both her arms, standing knee deep in the pull powerful waves. And it was Omer she was calling to "save it! Can you reach it?" but he was swimming too far out. Then she was shouting and waving, "I am sorry! I wanted to share it with you, but he could not hear her. He was swimming the other direction. And the cake was drowning. (*Habibi*, p. 189)

This scene shows clearly that she was afraid of being the only one who wants all of the people to come close to each other, and her mind could not understand why all of the people do their best to keep away from each other. Therefore one can see how she does not want to confess this truth, yet her fears appear clearly in her dreams.

In all of her poems Nye tries to show her sympathy of every one in this world regardless of his religion, ethnicity, color or culture. In "Those Whom We Do Not Know" Nye expresses these feelings through the lines of this poem, as her speaker says:

I support all people on Earth,  
who have bodies like and unlike my body,  
skins and moles and old scars,  
secret and public hair,  
crooked toes. I support  
those who have done nothing large,"(ll. 26-31)

The conflicts between different cultures and the confrontations between Palestinians and the Jews were reflected in the Arab-American literature, in particular poetry. It was the way poets communicated their thoughts and sufferings to their families and friends in their native countries. This is obvious when one notices that Nye is concerned very much with people beyond Americans, people whom she does not know. She is sympathetic towards people's suffering from the barrier of race, color or ideology.

As Nye believes that we should cross all of the boundaries, she thinks that the United States and according to her political policy with others increase the distance between people instead of decreasing it .In the next poem, Nye seems to criticize America for entering war with Iraq; she accuses the Americans of worsening the situation over there in Iraq:

Because our country has entered  
into war, we can have  
no pleasant pauses any more-  
instead, the nervous turning,  
one side to another,  
each corner crowded by the far  
but utterly particular  
voices of the dead. (ll. 1-8)

She says that now death is everywhere in Iraq, and America is responsible for what is happening there. She feels that there is no reason for this war and the only result was that this war caused the death of innocents. In a "Letter from Naomi Shihab Nye to any would be terrorists she says:

Many people, thousands of people, perhaps even millions of people, in the United States are very aware of the long unfairness of our country's policies regarding Israel and Palestine. We talk about this all the time. It exhausts us and we keep talking, we write letters to politicians, to each other. We are extremely worried about military

actions killing innocent people. We didn't like this in Iraq, we never liked it anywhere. (p. 2)

One of the major themes in Arab-American literature is the discrimination in which skin color, become significant. Nevertheless erroneous and slippery, racial and ethnic marker, is portrayed in the underlying assumption: "darkness" as a designation of Arab identity and "whiteness" as a staple of main stream of American identity. But nowadays one can see that there is no pure origin, which means that you can't find pure American in the States.

To Palestinian Americans, the offspring of the exiles and refugees who have surrendered their land and have seen it washed away under the wheels of tanks and truck home becomes as a deceptively intangible phenomenon always a little further on, constantly beyond reach.

This appears clearly in Poppy's words:

You know Poppy said, I never planned to be an immigrant forever. I never thought I'd become a citizen. I planned to return home after medical school. Poppy wanted Liyana and Rafik to know *Sitti*, their grandmother. He would transfer to Al-Makased hospital in Jerusalem. (*Habibi*, p.3).

Nye can understand the nostalgic pain of her father, the kind of pain that persists and is glaringly visible, and the kind of pain Nye's father carries. Therefore, one finds that Nye's writing awakens the senses to the suffering of others. Nye tries to end all of these conflicts between different cultures and to cross the borders which separate people from each other.

Mojahid Daoud (2000) emphasizes the political context that has determined in the last two decades the conditions of Arab-Americans as a specific ethnic group: "Unlike other ethnic groups. Arab-Americans have had to suffer directly as well as indirectly the effects of an ideology, namely Zionism, intended to defame the character of all Arabs". (p.173)

In Nye's other poem, "What Kind of Fool Am I?" it seems that the character doesn't speak Arabic but only in the bath when he is alone; he tries to go back to his homeland by using Arabic songs:

He sang with abandon,

combing his black, black hair.

Each morning in the shower,

first in Arabic, rivery ripples

of sang carrying him back

to his first beloved land,

then in English"(ll. 1-7)

According to this poem, Arab-Americans are not quite white enough, not quite American enough, and not quite whole. Nye makes it clear the need to focus on Arab –American ethnicity in relation to their issues and groups and to situate ethnic expression within a context of committed activism. Although their writings may be read as an affirmation of Arab-American identity, they also should be read as an exploration of how to situate that identity within a contemporary multicultural context in which Arab-Americans have a great deal to lose by isolation. (Sulieman, 1999)

In *Habibi*, food is a crucial medium that connects the novel's different ethnicities while highlighting the internal distinctions that exist within and between them. The use of food symbolism in the novel reflects Poppy's attachment to his native culture. It is mentioned that Poppy insists on drinking Arabic coffee and eating olive oil, and when he smells garlic and olive oil, it takes him back to his homeland, Palestine. So, food in *Habibi* serves also as an important distinguishing tool between one national and ethnic affiliation and another. The more obvious shifts between Middle Eastern and American way of having food:

But the extra visitors left just as a huge tray of dinner appeared, hunks of baked lamb surrounded by lamb and pine nuts. The remaining family members gathered around to dig into it with their forks. Poppy asked if his family could have individual plates since they weren't used to eating communally. (*Habibi*, p. 54)

Undoubtedly, contemporary Arab–American literature increasingly reflects the awareness of the need to forge connections beyond the insular boundaries of group identity. Nye's works particularly make clear that Arab- American identity is not an end goal to be celebrated, but, a starting point from which to redefine and resituate concepts of identity, relationship and community, her poetry and prose demonstrate the extent to which ethnicity may provide a foundation for new kinds of relationships across cultural divides. (Suleiman, 1999) Nye wants us to start thinking about all of the different ethnicities that are involved in this matter, and who suffer from different discrimination according to their color, religion or culture.

Nye tries in her works to reveal the tragedy of Palestinians living in the refugees in camps, whether inside Palestine or outside Palestine. This is explained when she introduces her readers to Khalid and Nadine who live in the refugee camps inside Palestine; she talks about their sufferings and

about how they are deprived of the very basic human privileges. One hears Khalid talking:

The Israeli soldiers-exploded a house. You know, like they do when they think you are bad. And the house fell on my grandparents. It was not their house." And then what? Did your family fight back?" Khalid said haltingly, my family doesn't like to fight."(p. 207).

In *Habibi*, Nye records how people live under such circumstances; she portrays life as a kind of horrible one where people expect death every where and every time. Yet Nye is convinced that both of Palestinians and Jews can live with each other peacefully if they succeed to reach a solution that will convince both of them.

Said, on the other hand, is convinced that Arabs were perceived as subjects who don't know what is in their best interest, and the colonial powers often spoke for them.

Said (1978) adopts a different view from Nye's; since the distinction between the Orient and the Occident is ontological and epistemological, the Orient (or the East) will always be inferior and the Occident (or the West) will always be superior. East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, thus through orientalist discourse, the West was (is) able

to concoct a relationship with the East that was always based on superiority.

In "Praying for Wind", Nye talks about the sense of loss that immigrants endure, a strong feeling they can never get rid of despite the success they have achieved in their new countries. Immigrants always pass their nostalgia to their children and grandchildren. They live in their own dreams and try to transfer these dreams to them. In the poem, the grandfather talks:

Tell me about my father

and the one spot on his head

that hair would never grow from. Tell me

about the days of old Palestine. (ll. 60-63)

Like Nye, the African-American writer Du Bois (1868-1963) who talks about the sense of "twoness", talks about it as two cultures two ideals in one dark body; so the sense of conflict appears here clearly when you can't be pure American or pure African. This shows how those Arab Americans could never feel pure Americans or pure Arabs. In fact, they are torn between two cultures and they feel how they can't assimilate any of these cultures. They live the feeling of in-betweens all the time. They

suffer from the feeling of hybridity, the hybrid notions here are related to culture, religion and language. The protagonist's hybrid qualities become evident through her mixture of Arabic and American traditions. For example, Liyana never feels that they are from pure origin. They live in an American place but with other identity. Obviously this feeling of being torn between these two identities is expressed when Liyana talks about her father after his returning home: "Sometimes she heard her father say, 'we are American' to his relatives. Americans? Even Poppy, who was always an Arab before?" (p.124). When they moved from the States to Palestine, Liyana felt that she tipped from one side to the other, and now she realizes that her father even after his returning home still suffers from the feeling of in between. Now she discovers that her father feels exactly as she does.

*Habibi* is a novel which draws a portrait of Arab American people, and it shows the reader their relationship with both the Western and Eastern cultures. The characters in the novel represent various players in Arab society and the omnipresent Western Orientalist. It tries to show the conflict inside these characters, and to explore how they suffer from multiculturalism, and from hybridity. This is embodied in the character of Liyana when one hears her talking about herself once as being American when she is talking to her friend, Omer; "I am an American", she said "mostly" but that sounded ridiculous. He hadn't asked for her passport".

(p.165). Liyana's talk to Omer reveals that she doesn't know exactly who she is, Palestinian or American, now she feels hybridity, where she is neither American, nor Palestinian. She feels as being a mix of different cultures, languages and religions.

Nye talks about this multicultural world, in which we live. In "My Grandmother in the Stars", the reader could hear the speaker saying:

Where we live in the world  
is never one place. Our hearts,  
those dogged mirrors, keep flashing us  
moons before we are ready for them  
you and I on a roof at sunset  
our two languages adrift  
heart saying, Take this home with you,  
never again  
and only memory,( ll.12-19)

Nye was very close to her grandmother, and when she died she couldn't help but feel great sorrow for losing her. Nye believed that her

grandmother wanted all the people to speak and to worship in whatever ways they felt comfortable. She was sure that her grandmother has succeeded to overcome all of the language and religion borders. Nye kept seeing her grandmother after her death in her dreams as if she was pushing her to do something that will help others to cross all of the cultural, religion and language boundaries.

Said states that the orientalist knowledge of the oriental is not a true knowledge; it is not the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes. This proves according to Said that orientalism and colonialism continue, largely unchanged, and form the troubled relationship between the Western world and Arab world. Although the works of Nye claim to be directed towards improving the status in the Arab world and bettering the relationship with the West, but in fact they continue orientalist discourse and aim to achieve colonialist goals. We hear Liyana asking her friend Omer:

"Do you hope to live here in Jerusalem"? Liyana asked him and he said, "always-forever and ever-from the time of –infinite sorrows-till now."" But it is a place inside you-like a part of your body, don't you think? Like a liver or a kidney? So how could you leave it? It sounds like big trouble to me."(*Habibi*, p. 154)

Moreover, one can clearly realize the reasons for the tension of the relations between the East and the West, different religions, languages, cultures, traditions, and different ways of life and above all, none of both sides try to understand each other. And when she refers to the Palestinian Israeli conflict she considers both of the parties responsible of this separation, the reader hears Liyana talking to her father:

With so much holiness bumping up against other holiness, doesn't it seem strange Jerusalem would have had so much fighting? She said. "Yeah," said Rafik, "if you didn't love someone, why would you even bother to fight with him?. Do you think the Arab and Jews secretly love one another? Liyana asked. (*Habibi*, p. 73)

Nye works are very keen and demonstrative those show these different and repeated misunderstandings between these two opposite parties. They are full of situations that really describe this tension between the colonizer and the colonized and the difficulty in dealing properly with each other.

Her poem "*Words Under the Words*" expresses these complicated situation between people living in Palestine, the speaker says:

My grandmother's voice says

nothing can surprise her.

Take her the shotgun wound and the crippled baby.

She knows the space we travel through,

The messages we cannot send-our voices are short

and would get lost on the journey.(ll. 17-22)

Also the speaker in the same poem adds:

"Answer if you hear the words under the words-

other wise it is just a world

with a lot of rough edges,

difficult to get through, and our pockets

full of stones. (ll. 35-39)

Nye makes clear her opposition to Israel's occupation policies and to the exchange of violence that have defined life in Palestine . Equally, in a poem like "Olive Jar" she denies the way Israeli soldiers behave:

At the border an Israeli crossing-guard asked

where I was going in Israel.

To the West Bank, I said. To a village of

olives and almond.

To see my people.

What kind of people? Arab people?

Uncles and aunts, grandmother, first and

second cousins. Olive-gatherers.

Do you plan to speak with anyone? He said

His voice was harder

and harder, bitten between the teeth. ( ll. 14-24)

It seems that Nye lives in her own dreams about borderless land which does not exist but in her imagination. And in a situation like this, she feels that her dreams will never come true unless we change the way we look to each other. She expresses her deep sorrow for the way the soldiers behave which will enlarge the gap between Palestinians and Israeli people.

The remaining question then is there any space for an escape from differentiation between different races? It is unlikely that human beings will ever escape the need to hierarchize one another in some way. As Michael Foucault (Dumm, 2002) suggest, such hierarchizing, a

result of the change in the way food and other goods are produced and distributed, has become a persistent thorn in the side of humanity.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the results of the study and answers the questions that were proposed in the introduction of this study. It also presents some recommendations to the future researches that may reveal the same theme of postcolonialism and multiculturalism.

1. How is multiculturalism obviously seen in Nye's writings? And is this obviously seen in her writings after her visit to her homeland or is it found in her works before that?

The study concluded that Nye had her own picture about Palestine from her father's talking about his homeland, but this picture appeared clearly after her first visit to Palestine. We discover this as we hear the conversation between Liyana and her mother: "It is not how I pictured it. What about you? Her mother said. Liyana answered softly, "Nothing is ever as I picture it." (*Habibi*. P. 51) Nye uses the protagonist Liyana to represent the case of multiculturalism which the main character lives in after her return to her homeland, and even this conflict appears clearly in the character of her father Poppy, as she thought that when he goes back to his home he will stop the feeling of homesickness. Liyana discovered that

her father is not very much different from her and he has the same feeling of multiculturalism.

As for a poet of the ethnic minorities, celebrating her multiculturalism and her cultural diversity, Nye is probably more intense as her experience of her old home is more immediate. This is because of her visit to her homeland or because of her close relationship with her father and her grandmother. Nye, as many as other Arab-American poets, tries to find common things between Arabs and Americans and she tries in all of her writings to prove that it is possible to maintain a good relationship between the West and the East. She knows very well that in Palestine the Israeli people created a wide gap that has separated them from each other that even the idea of having a friendship between them is impossible. This appeared clearly in *Habibi*, when all of Liyana's relatives rejected her friendship with Omer, they regarded it as a kind of forbidden relationship.

The study also concluded that even Poppy, who was against violence and war all of the time, has been forced to use violence against Israeli soldiers when they tried to shoot Khalid, the boy from a refugee campus. This proves that it is impossible for the Palestinians and Israelis to live in harmony with each other.

2. How will the study trace the postcolonialism in Nye's works; and how will it give a depiction of the Palestinian's diaspora?

The works of Nye succeeded in showing the life of people who are considered as the second generation of Arab-American living in the States and the Middle East through the speakers of her poems and through the different characters she has introduced to her readers. The sense of hybridity appears clearly in the behavior of those people, sometimes the reader can feel how they suffer from being half and half, how they feel that they are not from pure origin. Those people try all the time to assimilate the other culture, sometimes they succeed and sometimes they fail. When Liyana tried on when she was in Palestine to comb her hair on the balcony, her father told her to remember that "when you are in Rome behave as the Romans behave".

3. How do Nye's selected works discuss related themes of identity, assimilation, marginalization and cultural conflict?

The study proved that as a result of the suffering of suppression from the Israeli occupation, Palestinians were considered less assimilated than other Arab groups that immigrated to the States, as they kept suffering from the occupation of their country. Palestinians who came from their country seeking refuge from a society dominated by a foreign rule which caused

their political and economic problems, they suffered a lot from suppression after 1948 and 1967 when part of Palestine became the State of Israel, and the rest of Palestine was occupied by Israel. And the memory of their countries keep alive inside their minds. In "*Words under the Words*" we hear the speaker say:

For other fruits my father was indifferent.

He'd point at the cherry trees and say,

"See those? I wish they were figs."

In the evenings he sat by our beds

Weaving folktales like vivid little scarves.

They always involved a fig tree.

Even when it didn't fit, he'd stick it in.(ll. 1-7)

As a result of the suffering and suppression from the Israeli occupation, Palestinians were considered less assimilated than other Arab groups that immigrated to the States. And this appears clearly when Poppy Aboud insisted on drinking tea with mint and on using olive oil rather than butter. This proves that he has failed to assimilate totally the new culture in which he lives. He continued his dream of his homeland, and when he had the

chance he went back home. However, and due to the continuous occupation of Palestine, Poppy didn't succeed to get rid of his homesickness. He discovered that he has lost his identity, and he is now neither pure Palestinian nor pure American.

4. To what extent does Nye succeed in advocating her message of building a sense of enlarged humanity through crossing racial, political, ideological and psychological boundaries among the young generation in order to achieve global peace?

The study suggested that Nye has succeeded to decrease the distance between the Palestinians and the Jews due to her protagonist's (Liyana) friendship with Omer (the Jewish boy). She tries to prove that the relationship between different cultures and religions is possible, despite culture, race and religion boundaries. She even tries to show that even the old generation, who has suffered most from the colonizer, believes that they can decrease the wide gap that has separated them from each other. This appears clearly in the character of *Sitti* who believes of peace and this appears clearly when she tells Omer "we have been waiting for you a very long time". (*Habibi*, p. 258). Therefore, she sends her message through her different characters, even she tries to draw a pessimistic view when she tells her readers that even those who live in a refugee camps never lost

hope of peace. The study shows clearly how these ideas are the opposite of what Edward Said has believed. He considered that it is impossible to create that kind of relationship between the West and the East, between the powerful and the powerless, the language used in these relationships, the utilization of the discourse of power to affect control over the other. Said regards Orientalism as the wing of colonialism.

This study is new and different from other relevant studies since Edward Said's thoughts about colonialism are different from those of Arab American writers. The importance of this study was that it made sure that a forced and unnatural blend of cultures can exist together although Said's thought say the opposite. The study proved that the writings of Nye have shown very clearly how the American culture affected the immigrants to the States regardless of their origins.

This study encourages the following:

1. Future studies about American minorities can contribute to the existing literature of ethnicity and ethnic groups with emphasis on the different historical and geographical backgrounds of these minorities.
2. There should be an attempt to examine some of the writings of different Palestinian immigrants, to reveal what themes, attitudes and

concerns the immigrants dealt with while they are experiencing new life in a new culture.

3. Future studies should explore whether there is any difference in the manner in which authors of mixed-race and authors who are not mixed create their characters.

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End notes:

(1). Jose Donoso Yanez was a Chilean writer. He lived most of his life in Chile, although he spent some years in self-imposed exile in Mexico, the United States (Iowa) and Spain. After 1973, he claimed his exile was a form of protest against the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Severo Sarduy ( Camaguey, Cuba; February25,1937- Paris; June 8, 1993) was Cuban poet, author , playwright and critic of Cuban literature and art.

Diamela Eltit ( born in 1949, Santiago de Chile) is a writer and Spanish teacher from Chile. She got a bachelor degree in literature and works in the Universidad Tecnologica Metropolitana. She was culture attache during Patricio Aylwin's government at the Chilean Embassy in Mexico.

Pedro Lembel is a Chilean essayist, chronicler, and novelist. He is known for his cutting critique of authoritarianism and for his humorous depiction of Chilean popular culture, from a queer perspective.

2). Homi K. Bhabha (born 1949) is an Indian-American postcolonial theorist. He currently teaches at Harvard University where he is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language and Director of the Humanities Center.

(3). Spivak: She is best known as a postcolonial theorist, Gayatri Chackravorty was born in Calcutta, West Bengal, 24 February 1942 to "solidly metropolitan middle class parents".