



Cultural Representation and the Question of Identity in the Literary Works of Naomi Shibab Nye

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ABSTRACT

Naomi Nye is a prominent American poet of Palestinian heritage. Nye is a compelling personality pioneering the pace for ethnic and youthful poets. The researcher delves deep into Naomi's literary works to highlight how the poet reflects on the Palestinian social milieu and ethnic variety of her motherland. More emphasis is placed on Naomi's origins and how her multicultural background serves as a launching pad for the poet's current profession as a patriotic writer. The study highlights Naomi's knowledge about the Middle East that seems practically relevant in the present troubled political times. Her literary works become pertinent in these troubling geopolitical conditions. The researcher uses the analytical approach in discussing selected literary works of the writer that include: *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*, *Fuel*, and *Habibi*. Naomi's poetic lines reflect her upbringing as an Arab American. While analyzing the poetic lines, one is confronted with a very compassionate and genuine lady who has a keen understanding of the complications facing everyone and whose focal attention is to depict reality with the help of poetic lines. Naomi's upbringing as the daughter of Middle Eastern immigrants places her in a unique stance to build bonds among diverse communities that are being riven by miscommunication. Her literary production covers a wide range of topics: citizenship, racial problems, parenting, companionship, and geopolitical difficulties relating to her folks who reside in the colonized Palestinian territory and others who dwell in the United States. As a multi-cultural individual, she demonstrates empathy, racialization, and affiliation. She rejects traditional borders and mistaken identity because the main objective is to identify the intertwined components comprising ethnic history, culture, race, national origin, belief, and physical location.

Keywords: colonized territory; culture; *Fuel*; multiethnic; the Middle East.



1. INTRODUCTION

Naomi Shihab Nye is a Palestinian-American poet whose poems reflect a profound awareness of aspired human values (Gómez-Vega, 2010; Well, 2003). The poems she weaves describe her bonds to the ones who bequeath her with a compelling feeling that she has suffered and achieved as she identifies her status in the modern age (Majaj, 1999). She is an enticing character who is pioneering the pace for both indigenous poets and contemporary writers (Feldman, 2002). Although she was brought up in a place she calls home, she has traveled extensively (Johnston, 2002). She has conducted creative seminars and discussions about issues relevant to community members of different types around the homeland and worldwide. Nye utilizes poetry to affirm our reciprocal commonality, relying on her Palestinian origin, the cultural richness of her home in Texas, and her travels through different regions in the world (Amir, 2020; Hile, 1996). Her primary goal is to foster harmonious relationships amongst people from all cultures (Housden, 2006). In this connection, she asserts, *"I feel the need for connecting with young minds and hearts from country to country, which is becoming increasingly important by the second"* (Majaj, 2002). Nye's profound background emphasizes the notion of interconnections between individuals from various cultures (Johnston, 2002). She was raised in two worlds as the child of a Palestinian immigrant and an American mother. She stated in an interview that the environment in which she grew up was quite tolerant of self-expression as she grew up in a diverse community in St. Louis (Corrigan, 2019; Majaj, 2002). She had this feeling very early on that people speak for themselves. Her father was a speculator who told folktales from the Middle East. She and her brother used to fall asleep with her father's folktales and mother's lullabies. Nye's father was a journalist and her mother studied painting, so she never lacked verbal or visual stimuli. Nye states, *"I do not remember them being such an obsession in our home as they are for me now"* (Corrigan, 2019; Kavanagh, 2003). The reality that Naomi comes from a migratory and multicultural Arab American household served as a springboard for her eventual career as a writer. Her writings and fiction on the Arabian Peninsula, including undoubtedly her most world-renowned Middle Eastern, centered on religion, *"Different Ways to Pray,"* published in 1980, are noteworthy in this connection. Nye presents insight and understanding into the Middle East that appears pertinent in this current tumultuous critical moment (Loren, 2000).

Notwithstanding her prominent contribution, Nye has gained little scholarly scrutiny to illuminate her impact on the current writing. This research seeks to bridge that void by examining Nye's literary writings through the lens of literary studies. Nye's indigenous Middle Eastern writings will be studied as examples of minority literary works in the United States. As a consequence, Nye's *Fuel* (1998), *Habibi* (1997), and *19 Varieties of Gazelle Poems of the Middle East* (1994) are examined to show her portrayal of the Palestinian culture, as well as related issues of identity, coexistence, and ethnic conflict.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The complexity of identity problems at risk in a civilization troubled by racial divisions is demonstrated throughout Nye's poetry (Abdelrazek, 2005). Despite the reality that the writer has talked about how her Palestinian upbringing influenced the formation of her multitude of perspectives and awareness, she does not reject or discard herself from the influence of American literature legacy and culture (Hall, 2000). By fusing her Arab lineage mostly with her American background, she has created a multicultural identity that links the two nations. As a consequence, Nye's poems reveal how her Arab-American identity transforms into a multinational identity as she perceives herself as a "global citizenship" (Lowe, 2000). This global citizenship is crucial in a cross-cultural dialogue that is built on tolerance and understanding of differences. Her writing is a sentiment for everyone, together with hyphenated literary poets, to embrace their differences and use them to bridge the gap between cultures (Maalouf, 2000).

Despite being directly linked to the diverse spectrum of cultures, Nye loves to compose literary masterpieces about the subtle details of life that people frequently overlook. She intends to recall all of the nuances of her adventurous and successful life. Emphatically, Nye is keen to create poetry touching the reality of people especially those who are between their homeland and the land they immigrated to (Majaj, 2012). It is striking to mention that her first poem came to light at the age of seven. Naomi has published over 20 volumes of poetry that revolve around her travel experience. It's no surprise that Nye refers to herself as a "wandering poet" (Corrigan, 2019). She has spent more than three decades traveling from the western side to the eastern side, sharing her wise perspective on poetic writing with academics and learners of all levels. She has firsthand experience with the power of poetry. For her, poetry is the musical, worldwide language that lifts our brains and emotions into deeper regions than the shallow seas we play around all day long (Yousif, 2019). Poems, according to Nye, frequently provoke a relaxing response and comprehension, as if they were supporting us in dealing with daily conflicts. (Corrigan, 2019). Indeed, poetry is a source of immense and necessary rejuvenation for Nye. It's the real deal when it comes to taking a break from life. It is a kind of expression that allows us to convey something straightforward and accurate concerning our ordinary lives and culture (Al-Mahadin, 2017).

For Naomi, the core of poetry should focus on genuine issues, subjects, incidents, and protagonists. She believes that the primary component of poetry has always been an everyday reality, stochastic persons encountered on the roadways, and our actual genealogy trickling down to ourselves via necessary daily duties (Allani, 2017). As a result, she introduces her key ideas, all of which are relevant to the realities of contemporary experience. Nye uses a simple, raw vernacular to convey both complexity and ambiguity (Monaghan, 2002). She addressed poets and playwrights for youth persons in a statement saying that she composes poetry and narratives from real experience, with a healthy dose of inventiveness. Nye keeps an eye on and continues to exist among all of the world's inhabitants, regardless if they are separated by seas or time. Although she stays in Texas, she is simply ethnic in her perspective



as she possesses a profound feeling of belonging almost anywhere she is. Her writing reveals that she is global in breadth and inner in concentration. Nye's literary production has been founded on the foundations of such simple links as real experiences of people throughout the globe, or cultural backgrounds acted out in actual daily habits, more than a simple edge of the cap to trendy cultural diversity (Awajan, et al., 2019). Her dual cultural background is evident in several of her poems, particularly those that deal with the Arabian Peninsula. In her work, Nye gives voice to her experiences as an Arab American by composing poetry about history and tolerance brimming with an altruistic spirit. Her poetry blends extraordinary brightness and glitter with compassion and veritable awareness (Berrebbah, 2020; William, 1996). She is a strong supporter of encouraging and heartfelt reading. Reading her poetic production improves one's quality of life .

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher employs a qualitative research approach in conducting the study. An examination of literary texts will be undertaken to dissect how the writer emphasizes subjects related to identity and culture. The researcher concentrates on analyzing a few literary works, especially those that are related to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis.

IV. THE EMBODIMENT OF CULTURE IN *FUEL*

Naomi's poem *Fuel* is a poetic gem. It's a compendium of poetry that tries to uncover cultural significance in a globe where everything seems to have no value. *Fuel* explores everything from Southern Texas bordering communities to little foliage and lost literature to Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East. Nye is among few poets who inspire intellectuals to learn more from reading, provide a road map on how to survive, and guide people on how to create (Rachel, 2007). *Fuel* is precisely what it says it is: stuff to ingest and devour to propel anyone ahead.

With her artistic capacity to portray the meaning of what the average mind cannot fathom, Nye's poetry has had a tremendous influence throughout the 9-11 atrocity (Harb, 2012). Her writings gained a new significance to society throughout these terrible, bleak times. It's easy to see how reciting her verse "Kindness" is a form of devotional exercise. In its devastating but redeeming poem "Kindness," Nye digs down to the fundamentals of our existence, which reside in the vast emotional core where we all share the agony and utter sadness of that moment (Kutrieh, 2007). Nye's poetry has a substantial effect on the 9-11 act of terrorism due to her unique ability to depict the significance of what the simplest mentality cannot comprehend. Her poetry took on new value for the culture during these terrible, bleak circumstances. It's simple to understand how rehearsing her poem "Kindness" may be considered a religious practice. The poet touches on the roots of our humanity, which sit in the profound emotional center that people experience during these difficult moments (Semaan, 2014). Indeed, "Kindness," is sad yet redemptive poetry. The touching lines in the poem question people's notion of kindness as she says:



*Before you know what kindness is
You must lose things
Feeling the future dissolve in a moment
Like salt in a weakened broth.*

("Kindness" *Fuel*, 1998)

Nye is without a doubt the most well-known Palestinian-American writer. Her poetry explores a wide range of themes, such as identity, parenthood, companionship, and mortality. She sees multicultural beginnings as incredibly positive, and she feels lucky to have profited from her family's dual worldview oddity. Being culturally aware helped her to keep certain sensitivity, "otherness," or "disconnectedness," (Kevin, 1996). Nye's work questions fixed borders and identity, rather than emphasizing the various and frequently intersecting factors that make up identities, such as race, ethnicity, faith, and location (Semaan, 2014) .

Nye presents us with life advice while we're interpreting *Fuel*. She instructs us on how to survive and how to look at things. Nye is more understated. She is polite, even demure, yet she is also fearless in her thinking. Nye is elegant, but she is also fearless. The poem *Fuel* begins with "Muchas Gracias Por Todo:" and continues as the following:

*This plane has landed thanks to God and his mercy.
That's what they say in Jordan when the plane sets down.
What do they say in our country? Don't stand up till we tell you.
Stay in your seats. Things may have shifted.
This river has not disappeared thanks to that one big storm
when the water was almost finished.
We used to say thanks to the springs
but the springs dried up so we changed it.
This rumor tells no truth thanks to people.
This river walk used to be better when no one came.
What about the grapes? Thanks to the grapes
we have more than one story to tell.
Thanks to a soft place in the middle of the evening.
Thanks to three secret hours before dawn.
These deer are seldom seen because of their shyness.
If you see one you count yourselves among the lucky on the earth.*

(*Fuel* 1998)

One is entrenched in Nye's perspective after reading these verses. The gap separating the Arab and American perspectives has emerged. Together with it, the gap between both the Arab standpoint and what the majority of Americans believe the Arab position is has emerged. "Stay in your seats. Don't stand up until we tell you", has at least two interpretations; there's sociopolitical criticism hidden behind the lines we've all heard an air hostess utter. Don't stand up. "Stay in your seats. Things may have shifted." Naomi expertly crafts this opening to capture the essence of people's experience in the Middle Eastern .



The feminist phrase "the personal is political" is brought to life by Nye. Her verse is infused with her Arab identity and culture: if you would like to comprehend whatever she has to express, you must embrace her Arabic voice. It's unnerving, especially for a liberal American Jew who wishes to be impartial to all parties in the intricate Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The poetry about the Palestinian tragedy is probably her most powerful. Poems are reviewed over and over because there is the reality in words and they do not malign (Yousef, 2015). In the poem, "Jerusalem," Nye stated:

*I'm not interested in
who suffered the most.
I'm interested in
people getting over it.*

(" Jerusalem" 2000)

The philosophical discourse in Nye's poetry is particularly noteworthy since it possesses a rare force of reality. Readers respect and appreciate the other manner Nye shows these harsh truths or atrocities done to her people in her poems. In the poem "Wedding Cake," Nye often brings her disclosures into the tongues of others or even uses the voice of a baby to communicate her thoughts. This idea is reflected in the poem below:

*Once on a plane
a woman asked me to
hold her baby
and disappeared.
I figured it was safe,
our being on a plane and all.
How far could she go?
She returned one hour later,
having changed her clothes
and washed her hair.
I didn't recognize her.
By this time the baby
and I had examined
each other's necks.
We had cried a little.
I had a silver bracelet
and a watch.
Gold studs glittered
in the baby's ears.
She wore a tiny white dress
leafed with layers
like a wedding cake.*

("Wedding Cake", Fuel)

Nye shows us all the objects, sounds, and occurrences that surround us in the entire globe. Because they aren't directly stated, the emotion underlying them is even more evident.



Fuel, like other collections, is overly lengthy and sometimes confusing. This inclination to dilute things by talking too much is an outcome of our time, but this does not make us wise. Her very excellent poems compensate for the mediocre ones, but a closer examination reveals that a more focused book, either geopolitically or aesthetically, would've been preferable. In the broad sense, these poems depict the battle between actions and appearance, in which only the breeze is "the one full sentence," while the majority of people exist like dreamers with their ears to the floor, listening for instructions on which one to accomplish and how to execute something.

V. Harmony and humanity in *19 Varieties of Gazelle*

Nye's collection of poetry, *19 Varieties of Gazelle*, is a priceless gem. The voice given in this anthology is possibly one of the most genuine vessels of harmony and humanity in today's current literary community if not all ways of life. Even though she has written it in reaction to September 11th, much of her older work reflects a broad appreciation for all people. Her art is ageless, and it vibrates in the same way it did in the years leading up to September 11th (Harb, 2012). Such ubiquity produces literature that will be cherished and cited for future years. Naomi expertly explores broader topics in *19 Varieties of Gazelle*, concerning the unstable Arabian Peninsula. One learns how to explain oneself accurately while reading *19 Varieties of Gazelle*. More significantly, how to articulate what counts, which may already be deposited someplace deep within everybody, in a fashion that everyone could be pleased with. Naomi renders it apparent that *19 Varieties of Gazelle* is a reaction to the September 11th tragedy, which sparked a profound, perhaps nagging drive on her own to portray her Arab countrymen in a somewhat more full glory than that given by the general public. "A response to September 11th is probably to produce a durable influence on tendencies in literary works (Michael, 2003). The majority of the poetry in this anthology is concerned with the Middle East conflict. "Spark" is a breathtaking verse about the poet's close friendship with gypsies. The poem "Arabic" is about her engagement with a language she never fully grasped. "Holy Land" is a poem about her grandmother who composes soothing melodies evoking an affectionate remembrance. "Staying Close" talks about Naomi's relationship with people and the language they use for everyday interaction. With its initial statement, "Staying Close," immediately establishes confidence with us:

Wore small caps of snow

("Staying Close", *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

Most of the lyrics in *19 Varieties of Gazelle* assert the vocabulary of today's mainstream press, the language to which we have all grown speechless:

innocent children killed

homes destroyed

politicians hedging their bets.

("Staying Close", *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

Naomi appears to be aiming to take us all into her community so that we may perceive Arabs for who they truly are and to shed light on Arab culture, particularly



Palestinian culture, in an intimate fashion (Allani, 2017). Anyone who reads the lines believes that it is a challenging stage to negotiate in the narrative of significant and intimate events. Anyone who looks between the lines feels that it is a difficult stage to navigate in the story of major and personal events. Although it is very satisfying to tell the complete tale to communicate our thoughts clearly on subjects vital to us, it is often enough to understand and attract the audience. Eventually, the story becomes mundane, and the poem's fire is lost. For example, "Jerusalem" opens irrationally :

*I'm not interested in
who suffered the most
I'm interested in
people getting over it.*

(“ Jerusalem”, *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

The poet utilizes her father's hairless patch itself as a metaphor, she proceeds on to illustrate (instead of telling) us the genuine ramifications of this curiosity in a quite intriguing manner. This type of on-the-nose declaration frequently appears, undercutting our faith in her trust in us as readers. Naomi is attempting to convey how she subtly feels about others. The poet explores a geopolitical gesture in *19 Varieties of Gazelle*, which aims to depict, cherish, and construct a national capital city for a certain group of people from a cultural context. That culture, according to Nye, seems to be nearly Palestinian, as she brilliantly illustrates in the collection. Nye's poetry collects ordinary components of Palestinian existence so that her readers might connect with, and feel their compassion. In doing so, Nye hopes to gain sympathy from people all over the world for their suffering. Poetry, she believes, is a powerful tool for encouraging tolerance. In Nye's poem, one would anticipate a sensitive, empathetic depiction of those who are suffering :

*Even on a sorrowing day
the little white cups without handles
would appear
in a circle on a tray
and whatever we were able
to say or not say,
the tray would be passed,
we would sip
in silence,
it was another way
lies could be speaking together.*

(“ Jerusalem”, *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

The poem "Jerusalem" emphasizes the need of safeguarding people's rights and welfare to live in a community free of harm or danger. This notion appears in nearly all of Nye's poetry. The poet is focused on issues that call attention to our common humanity. Nye's poetry typically has a comparable impact when describing the minutiae of Arab American and Middle Eastern existence, eliciting sympathy and empathy in the reader. The protagonists throughout Nye's poetry feel sharper, even if



they don't require our sympathies and seek human attention; they are offered as a desirable challenge to traditional American dominant ideologies (Kutrieh, 2007) .

Nye's collection of poetry, *19 Varieties of Gazelle*, typically attempts to console, providing an enlarged picture towards the narrative's end to relate pain to a wider solidity. Nye argues that hatred is not the remedy throughout her poetry, as well as in her powerful epistle "To Any Would-Be Terrorists," in which she utilizes private details to convey that we are all individuals so that we ought to acknowledge this and cease killing one another. Nye argues that understanding will lead to tolerance. Undoubtedly, Nye's poetry employs the concluding method, attempting to find some sliver of solace or compassion in the horrific events she depicts in the Arabian Peninsula. The players are nonetheless able to propose an exquisite toast to "you" in Nye's depiction of lunch in a park in a war-ravaged town:

.....who believe true love can find you
amidst this atlas of tears.....
People moved here, believing
and someone with sky and birds in his heart
said this would be a good place for a park.

("To Any Would-Be Terrorists", *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*) Although the poem doesn't somehow imply that the issues of conflict can be solved by a quick and kind meeting at a parkland around lunch, Nye focuses on the positive aspects of a luminous existence for the Palestinian community. In a beautifully written poem on the present situation in Palestine and the crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people, Nye describes the suffering of people residing under occupation. She examines what goes through Israeli troops' heads when they assault Palestinians along the following lines:

*On the steps of the National Palace Hotel
soldiers peel oranges
throwing back their heads so the juice
runs down their throats
This must be their coffee break
guns slung sideways
They are laughing
stripping lustily
They know what sweetness lives within
How can they know this and forget
so many other things?*

("Jerusalem", *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

The feeling that it is invariably clear that those people who refer to the Israeli soldiers are violent. This is fundamental to Nye's Middle Eastern perspective. She questions the present reality in Palestine saying, "Whose explosives, were they? "Do you recognize who makes them?" It is because soldiers were already supplied with killing weapons to reluctant sufferers. Aggression is inflicted on the majority of people in the country. Nye's poetry does not depict victims who become violent; instead, she focuses on the discerning majority who refuses to commit acts of violence (Kutrieh,



2007). Her poems show a society divided between terrible assassins and harmless civilians, in which bloodshed is an inconceivable wicked and its victims are invariably individuals who hold a dream to live peacefully with their families in the stolen homeland. Nye's portrayal of the Middle East is a gallant attempt to urge us all to connect with what she regards as fair, an endeavor that is supposed perplexingly up smoothing the lines between virtue and malevolent. She feels a sense of responsibility for her Palestinian American identity as well as the millions of Palestinians who have had their freedoms denied. She has made it clear that she will act as their representative lady in America, and this sense of obligation confines her in specific ways. When everything else goes badly, poets may well be able to come to the rescue:

We will take this word in our arms.

It will be small and breathing.

We will not wish to scare it.

Pressing lips to the edge of each syllable.

Nothing else will save us now.

(“To Any Would-Be Terrorists”, *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*) Undoubtedly, Nye is a staunch believer in the ability of language artists to bridge divides and preserve a solid feeling of belonging and understanding of Arab culture, particularly Palestinian culture. "My Father and the Fig Tree" is one of *19 Varieties of Gazelle's* most famous poems. It's a lovely lyric wherein the author paints a portrait of her adored father, but Nye is also investigating her inner personality and identity in a truly poetic sense. The poem develops and finishes with her father expressing thoughts and showcasing his identity. Nevertheless, he is presented through the poet's eyes. The objective of this lyric is to change the speaker's awareness. The author opens the poem by revealing the father's strong yearning for figs, a craving that distinguishes him from the others :

For other fruits my father was indifferent.

He'd point at the cherry trees and say‘

‘See those? I wish they were figs.

(“My Father and the Fig tree”, *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*) The father favors figs that are contrary to what his daughter chooses. His daughter favors attractive and tasty cherry that is in line with American taste. The poem begins with a childhood experience: as a small kid, the narrator realizes that her father's fondness is too powerful to be a matter of personal taste and that the fruit is more than simply a tree. The fig tree loses its literal value in the father's grasp, who is a skilled yarn spinner. His daughter's nighttime tales usually included a fig tree. Even if it doesn't fit, the cautious host swears he'll work it in. Via the personality of Joha, he is eager to connect his preferred tree to the folklore of his ancestral land, thereby building a link between his daughter's environment and the old nation of Palestine. As a result, the speaker develops an emotive affinity to a tree she has never seen. The tree develops in the mind of the kid as she grows. Up to this point, the dad's plan has come to fruition.

The second verse reflects the father's notion at an early age, the narrator eats a dried fig, and she just giggles. The father grew enraged. His response is warranted. He is



afraid of his predicted fig tree sign falling because he is worried about it breaking—a collapse represented by the speaker's indifference to the dried fig's flavor. In an attempt to keep the fruit's connections alive in the daughter's mind, he connects it to motherland and existence:

*I'm talking about a fig straight from the earth-
gift of Allah!*

on a branch so heavy it touches the ground.

(“ My Father and the Fig tree”, *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*)

Although the presenter is unmoved by the father's response, she doesn't at all respond or adjust her viewpoint. Indeed, the father who planted the figurative tree in his daughter's mind in the first verse and strove to save the seedling from the breeze of apathy in the second verse has no visible representation in the third verse, in which he is the topic. As the line begins with "years past," the incident of this stanza occurred in the speaker's adolescence. The mother is introduced here, but just to show how she sees the father: "What a dreamer he is." She offers the most apparent example to illustrate the realistic perspective. "Go ahead and plant one!" The mother entirely misjudges the objective of the father's endeavor. Imprinting the significance of the fig tree, which represents a planet, in his daughter's mind and psyche is more important than establishing an actual fruit tree. The mother was allowed to explain herself in her own words, and the speaker seemed to comprehend her mother's viewpoint. But she understands her father's point of view. These are the words of someone who understands how passionately her father cares for the symbolic trees that have surrounded her since she was a toddler and has distinguished him as an unrivaled expert in such gardening things are still fresh in her mind and memories. The father is unable to reply to the mother's sensible suggestion to plant trees because he has limited time. But it is necessary to state his place: to grow a metaphorical tree until it is robust, sturdy, and most importantly, free of indifference or rejection .

In the last verse, the dad triumphantly emerges. He contacts his older daughter, who now lives with his mom, to notify her how he has discovered an authentic fig tree in the center of Dallas, Texas. His manner of announcing his huge discovery is remarkable. The skilled narrator of fig tree nighttime stories is now a performer of fig tree hymns. He breaks into melody as his daughter arrives to notice, and truly recognize, the actual fig tree, which he had preserved just for this special moment. The actual tree and its fruit, which appear to originate straight from the metaphorical realm her father has devoted a long time setting up, are instantly recognized by the girl. More crucially, she realizes what all the fruits represent for her dad: not simply figs to devour, but "tokens, symbols, confirmation of a reality that was always his" after witnessing him collect them. This planet has become hers as well. She not only shares her father's excitement at the time of his success, but she also embraces his unique, long a period viewpoint on figs by characterizing the fruits using his terms.

Nevertheless, her paraphrasing his statements phrase for phrase is far more than a consequence of embracing his perspective. It is the culmination of the poem's discourse: as a baby and kid, she simply embraced what her dad claimed; as a girl, and as a direct consequence of her observation, she irrationally conveyed a loss of



enthusiasm; as an adult, she demonstrated awareness for her mom's opposing viewpoint; and eventually, in a symbolic of stance, she restored to her preliminary early life stance. This translates to her accepting her father's perspective; nonetheless, which is the natural outcome of an adult's expertise. She agrees, but with a huge variance. He swiftly uttered his repeated descriptive words throughout his impassioned outburst, not even hesitating to exhale. For the father, the "largest, richest, tastiest" fruits became the "biggest, heaviest, loveliest" fruits for the daughter. The commas indicate a big shift in mood rather than a minor adjustment in style. The calm, authoritative tone of the speaker contrasts with the father's angry, protective tone. Her father's love for fig trees isn't that strange and besides: she's discovered that she shares his taste.

The creative aspect of the poem's topic is at the pinnacle of this proof, of identity, of the Arab family's continuing in his Arab-American daughter, and of the poem's dialectic's fulfillment. The poem itself proves the strong connection between father and daughter: she weaves wonderful stories and performs wonderful melodies, much as her father. As if she were her father! She performs a better job than he did; she doesn't cram the fig tree in as he did. It's her song's fundamental soul that creates harmony between them. The fig tree, however, is more than a tree; it represents her father's family house. Both sing songs in English and Arabic that stand for languages that connect people.

VI. UNIFIED WORLD IN HABIBI

Nye's novel *Habibi* is a masterwork of romance. This is a work of genuine fiction. It was written in the year 1996. Nye has stayed in both America and Palestine, so she is well-versed in the views of the region's varied cultures. This expertise contributes to the story's authenticity. The narrative seems to have some romance as well as many nice contemplative sections. Liyana's ethnicity is "half-and-half," which means she is half Arab and half-American. Her Arab side is not being disclosed, and it will be when her family moves from Saint Louis to Jerusalem. Her father's Arab family and townspeople have welcomed them with open arms. When Liyana adjusts to life as a young emigrant, she learns about her origins, family, and herself. There are times when she feels out of place in this strange and foreign world, but this progressively transforms over the story. Liyana's understanding of herself and the family grows as the feeling of belonging develops. As Liyana tries to make acquaintances in this strange new environment, she realizes that she, like everyone else, should develop her skills to compose a tale for herself and for the Middle East, which is ripped apart by conflict.

Habibi is a powerful and important novel. The manner Nye has created the protagonists is one of the book's highlights. The audience may be experts about life in Jerusalem, living as that an Arab, and living as being an expatriate through Liyana's perspective. Liyana is wonderfully conjured up, and the reader's connection with others and their sympathy might move the reader onward through the fairly nuanced and at point's slow-moving novel, keeping the reader's attention.



Liyana Abboud's transition into femininity is hampered by the premise that she lives on the border of diverse communities. Her whole upbringing has been spent in the US, and she has developed a Western mindset. However, Liyana's world is irrevocably started changing when her father declares that the whole family will be going to return to Palestine. The declaration and the ultimate destination appear to be the culmination of all significant to Liyana. She is being urged to depart the safety of the United States and relocate to military conflict in Palestine, wherein army personnel with weapons are a regular scene on the roads. The transfer to Palestine is of a high cost for her as she has to leave her love who endowed the first experience of love. Liyana knows nearly nothing about her Palestinian ancestors and much less about their native tongue. She travels to her father's hometown and is forced to gain knowledge on how to be a part of her society. It looks that life in Palestine is bleak, but all changes when she meets Omer. She finds a companion in Omar and a second chance at affection in a society full of unfamiliar people. However, the gentleman with whom she finds love is Jewish which is against the norms of the society to have an affair with a Jewish man. This inspires her to examine the reasons for hatred between Palestinians and Jews via episodes throughout the work. She ultimately fits into her new adventure in Jerusalem and learns that she doesn't miss anything about America.

Many words from Arab culture are used in this work. It contains the feelings and anxieties of a freshly arrived adolescent. Compassion, conflict, tranquility, and religious customs are all topics that come up frequently in the novel. The reader gets a sense of the religious rituals of the Muslim community by hearing the voice of the muezzin calling for prayer over speakers from the Masjid in the area of Sitti (grandmother). They took their colored prayer rugs from a rack and then say their prayers as they bowed, rose, and bent down again, pressing their heads to the earth and whispering their prayers. This was in marked contradiction to Liyana's Parents' informal ideas. The mother claims that they are a spiritual community rather than a religious family. Liyana had not been brought up in any specific religious tradition. The entire family believed in resurrection because it made sense to them. They didn't believe in the demon, but they believed in those who committed nasty things. She experienced her first kiss shortly before leaving America, which is not uncommon for a fourteen-year-old in the United States. However, when she returned to Jerusalem, her father was keen to illustrate and point out specific aspects of the culture of his home which is quite unfamiliar to his daughter. He says in these lines:

“Public kissing – I mean, kissing on the mouth, like romantic kissing – is not okay here. It is simply not done”.

(Habibi 1997)

Liyana found the adjustment to the two different cultures quite challenging. There was an occasional blending of Arabic and Jewish language, such as when Jews in yarmulkes prayed and inserted messages in the Wailing Wall. Omer, Liyana's friend, informs her about the Shiva which is a Jewish ceremony in which families take off their shoes, refuse to go out, and cover mirrors to lament the dead person. The title of the novel is appealing because the word HABIBA means sweetheart, a greatly adored



individual who has been selected. In this way, the narrative portrays the sacrifices made by one character for the benefit of the other. The most crucial is to comprehend and appreciate the spiritual practices of each other, which is a difficult task for the two partners. The tale shows the cultural disparities between Palestinians and Jews. The conflict between the Palestinians and Jews resulted in the killing and imprisonment of innocent people. Jews were not accepted in some parts of the city because of their antipathy for Palestinians. A band of military personnel accused Khalid of being involved in the killing of a young Jewish boy who was shot, and Liyana's father was jailed for a day being suspected of this act. The scene of hatred between both parties added to the complexity of Liyana's affair with Omer. In one episode, Israeli soldiers entered by force her grandmother's home searching for a relative and destroyed everything in that house. Liyana had a tough time understanding what was going on. Her father disapproved of her making a bond with a young Jewish youngster. However, it was because of this friendship that both parties were able to vent their thoughts, indicating that within that small circle of individuals, peaceful coexistence was conceivable.

The novel, *Habibi*, is engaging and enjoyable to read. The story's setup, with an American relocating to another nation and the reality of the immigrants upon their homecoming, is fascinating (Levanon, 2021). The novel provides insight into the backgrounds of the Palestinians all nations know and speak about regularly in the media. It provides the impression of being in one of the nation's undergoing an upheaval. The majority usually hear about such events and then forget about them, but the inhabitants of the Middle East never forget — it is their lives (Ruth, 2002).

The narrative of this novel is unique because it concentrates on the protagonists' development. The main plot of this novel involves Liyana and her relatives as they develop their own identities. As a result, *Habibi* is particularly well-suited to character-based work. Liyana is a multifaceted figure that embodies the complexities of adolescence. The book follows her journey from confined questions and responses to a more flexible and inquisitive mindset. Liyana is shown as a compassionate and knowledgeable adolescent throughout the novel, reading enthusiastically and writing in her notebook. She also goes through her journal and considers the contents as well as her life. There are italicized phrases at the beginning of each chapter that is from Liyana's perspective, even though they are presented in the third person. These lines are worth paying attention to. They can aid readers in focusing on the occurrences of the next chapter and understanding Liyana's shifting perspectives .

Nye has utilized fiction and the grandeur of the environment in Jerusalem to juxtapose Liyana's prior existence in America (in a range of methods). Jerusalem is an old city steeped in mystery and history, which Liyana eventually absorbs. The setting might be seen as a metaphor for Israel's and Palestine's cultural contrasts. The setting and Liyana's inner growth are intertwined in the book's central themes. As a result, *Habibi* has emerged as a stunning example of the interconnectedness of all story elements. That is a knowledge of the story's narrative, topic, and protagonists. The environment, narrative, and all other aspects of this (and most) narratives must be viewed as a tangled strand, with each part impacting the others.



VII. CONCLUSION

Nye is a multi-award-winning author who has written children's stories, poetry collections, graphic novels, and young adult fiction that all cope with the concept of interconnections. Nye has not only rendered poetry appealing to a different generation, but he has also exposed younger audiences to a reality beyond their classroom boundaries. She has endeavored to create windows on the globe, to establish connections between "us" and "them," by writing up poetry, short tales, and art pieces about resourceful individuals all over the globe. Nye is in an unusual situation: she has to create bridges between two cultures that have a history of extreme bilateral distrust. Nye's anthologies, *Habibi* (1997), *19 Varieties of Gazelle* (2000), and *Fuel* (1998) endeavor to avoid conflict and concerns in the hopes that embracing art would lead to greater unity. Cultural differences, according to Nye, are as simple as the poet's temperament. Nye transcends cultural and ethnic divisions to investigate reality. Nye's developing realization that life in the world may be challenging is reflected in her tolerance of many means to worship. Reading Nye's poetry reveals the genuine hardship that individuals experience in a multicultural society, particularly in the situation of Arab migrants in the United States. Reviewing her poetry is a spiritual practice because it elevates the soul. She pierces the essence of humanity through the profound topics she exposes in her literary works.

Nye's primary objective is to emphasize Palestinian values, which is evident throughout her writings. Aside from identification, individuals over this vast region embrace a spectrum of tendencies and values, which may have provided the framework for a shared culture with a presumed ancestral relationship to the Arab World. Residents of the Arab Peninsula may not have been exposed to such ideals of shared multiculturalism based primarily on identity.

RECOMMENDATION

There has to be more investigation done on Nye's representation of Israel's colonization of Palestine.

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