Border Shifting in Naomi Nye’s *Habibi*

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World civilization has always been concerned with the idea of borders. Geographic, political, ethnic, racial and ideological divides were created to distinguish one group from another and to designate or classify them as being superior or inferior. In our postmodern times there has been a growing trend to deconstruct such concepts with an attempt to show that such borders are only flimsy, inconstant and malleable imaginaries. One of the most prominent Arab-American writers who have dealt with the issue of border shifting is Naomi Nye. In Nye’s novel *Habibi* (1997), the subject of border shifting is brought to the fore by re-writing geographic, racial and religious frontiers. The novel rejects the idea of domination and superiority and embraces a new ideology of equality, understanding and even assimilation. In this novel, border crossing encompasses the geographic-political tripartite of America, Israel and Palestine with the implied suggestion of the possibility of integration between divergent cultures and different political entities. The heroine’s father Poppy is an Arab-American who left his original homeland Palestine in 1948 but is now on his way back to Palestine which is now modern Israel. Throughout the novel, characters have to adjust to new and changing situations. Liyana and her parents have to cope with the issue of Liana’s befriending of a Jewish boy whose name is a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic (Omer). Poppy finds it difficult to call this place home even though it was his original homeland. Finally, Liyana settles in Israel which used to be her father’s homeland. It is this crossing of borders that brings about this sharing of feelings from both sides of the divide. The presentation will concentrate on the concept of border shifting as reflected in this novel.