

The Shattered Identity in Elizabeth Bishop's *Questions of Travel*

¹ Asst. Lect. Huda H. Jassim	² Asst. Lect. Muhanned Rehaif Khorsheed
Islamic University	University of Kufa
College of Education	College of Arts
Dept. of English	Dept. of English
hudaaljassim91@gmail.com	alsultani.r@yahoo.com

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¹Asst. Lect. Huda H. Jassim
Islamic University
College of Education
Dept. of English
hudaaljassim91@gmail.com

² Asst. Lect. MuhannedRehaifKhorsheed
University of Kufa
College of Arts
Dept. of English
alsultani.r@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims at shedding light on the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop (1979-1991) who is considered as one of the most prominent American poets of the twentieth century. Elizabeth Bishop's poetry is characterized by themes of home, distance, self and other dichotomy and, of course, travel. The concept of travel covers a wide range of poems in her early and later poetry collections. For this reason, many critics look at her as a tourist more than a poet and it is not strange to consider that Bishop herself creates her suffering when preferring travelling on staying in one place or country and establishing an identity for her own, especially,

when being able to return back easily. My study, however, concentrates on this idea of identity that Bishop adopts and tries to answer certain doubts about her view-point of travel and living abroad. This paper is divided into two sections; the first section is an introduction which is by itself divided into two sub-sections. The first concerns Bishop's life and career and the second is about her being as a poet. Moreover, the second section addresses directly Bishop's "Shattered" identity throughout offering three poems from her 1965 poetry collection *Questions of Travel*, which are "Arrival at Santos", "Brazil, January 1, 1950" and "Questions of Travel" the

poem which has the same title of the collection. Finally, the study sums up with a conclusion which summarizes the main points of the subject.

Keywords: Shattered identity, Elizabeth Bishop, "Questions of Travel",

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979): Autobiography

Elizabeth Bishop was born in 1911 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her childhood was not that perfect and this may be one of the various things that attract the attention of the Public towards Bishop and her works. Bishop's father, William Thomas, died when she was only eight months and her mother, Gertrude Bulmer, suffered from mental problems and was sent to hospital leaving her five years daughter for her maternal grandparents. Bishop never met her mother again and the two never reunited till 1934 when the mother died (Matsukawa, 2008: 530).

Bishop stayed with her grandparents in Scotia Nova, Canada, till later when her wealthy paternal grandparents decided to get her back to Worcester but she was not happy of this step of

change in her life and the alienation from her maternal grandparents makes her feel alone. Bishop's life was not stable. She spent most of her childhood living between her maternal and paternal grandparents, then she was sent to her aunt, her mother's sister, who was married but without children. Later, Bishop starts to study music at the Walnut Hill School in Natick, Massachusetts, where her first attempts of poetry production appeared on the stage. Her friend Frani Blough helped her to publish her first poems in a student magazine. In 1929, she entered Vassar College and decided to give up music, since she was afraid of the performance, and turns to study English literature of the sixteen and seventeenth centuries and the novel. Bishop met Mary McCarthy, Margaret Miller, and the sisters Eunice and Eleanor Clark who were her contemporaries supporters and who had a great influence on her life as a poet. In 1934, Bishop graduated after making her first step or attempt of poetic writing. Shaw (1991: 81-83) narrates Bishop's life-story denoting the fact that After graduating from Vassar college in 1934 she lived in New York for a short time, during the period

between 1934-35. In this time, her poetic talent was not expected yet and she was not that famous. Then, she took a job for a short time with a correspondence school. Between 1935 and 1939 Bishop started her travels to different countries including France, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Morocco in order to find home and settlement. Sometimes, She travelled with friends, like her old school friend Louise Crane with whom she made her first trip, or travelled alone using the money left to her by her father. (Poem Hunter. Com. *The World's Poetry Archive*, 2012: 3). From 1939 to 1948 Bishop lived mostly in Key West, this place was very much admirable for her and she discovered it earlier during a fishing trip in 1938. This place which contributes mainly in adding a sense of pleasure and comfort for Bishop represents kind of love and peace since she bought a house there and stayed for a short time. Key West was a favorite place for Bishop, and saying that this place was a kind of love for her is not something strange or over-toned. There she met great writers like Ernest Hemingway, Charles Olson and John Dewey. Even the people there were special to her because she

mentioned them as characters in her well-known works, like Faustina, the lottery-ticket seller, mentioned in her "Faustina or Rock Roses". In 1943, however, Bishop travelled to Mexico and stayed there for nine months to meet and befriended Pablo Neruda, then she continued travelling to Nova Scotia and consequently to New York. Despite the fact that Bishop lived travelling between various places her attitude towards life was not that satisfactory. Having lived between different environments in her childhood makes it difficult for her to have a peaceful home in future. In most, if not all, of her works allusions of Bishop's memory seem to have the biggest place of her being resulting in a sort of shattered or disordered portrait on life in general. Bishop's life was unique to some extent, she lived travelling between New York, Europe, Key West and Mexico. When she was forty, Bishop made a travel to Brazil which represented an important step of her life. There she met Lota de MacedoSoares to become her friend and lover. Firstly, she intended to stay for only three days in Brazil then this short period lasted for about eighteen years of artistic production taking

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inspiration from Brazilian community around (Boruch: 1990, 113).

Elizabeth Bishop used her poetic talent as a meaning for expressing her longing for home and comfort. *Questions of identity* and settlement are essential for her to achieve personal fulfillment. Between 1949 to 1950, Bishop was Consultant in Poetry for the Library of Congress and in 1946, her friend Marianne Moore makes Bishop win the Houghton Mifflin Prize for poetry by producing her as a poet. Moreover, Bishop won many prizes like the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award two Guggenheim Fellowships and an Ingram Merrill Foundation grant. In 1976, Bishop received the Neustadt International Prize for Literature to become the first woman to have such an honor, and be the only American to be awarded that prize. Further, during the 1970s Bishop was giving lectures in higher education and she also lectured at the University of Washington, before teaching at Harvard University for more than six years in addition to her work at New York University, before finishing at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (Poemhunter.com/*The World's Poetry Archive*: 2012, 4).

During her life time, Bishop's publications were not huge. She wrote four volumes of poetry only in about forty years and translated prose as well as writing some short stories printed in the *New Yorker* magazine though most of them remained unpublished in her lifetime. In 1946, Bishop produced her first poetry collection entitled *North and South*, in 1955 her second collection entitled *A Cold Spring*, after this she produced *Questions of Travel* in 1965 and the last poetry collection is *Geography III* in 1976. Bishop's reputation as a poet was not very well-known. Her works and publications came to the light after her death and honestly these works enforce critics to regard her as one of the most prolific American poets of the Twentieth century. Having produced such valuable works she became more famous for the public and this makes her very win a considerable position among contemporary writers. Since her death in 1979, Bishop became very popular and many critical books were produced about her but most of these books concentrated on biographical references to her life. (Anderson, 2007:1). Among the

most important critical books written about Bishop's life and work were, Anne Stevenson's book *Elizabeth Bishop* from 1966, this book was the first work on Bishop's life and poetry. The second one was produced in 1988 by Travisano about her artistic development, after this (in the same month) Robert Dale Parker wrote his book which is entitled *The Unbeliever* was actually concerned with Bishop's life and works during twenty-two years. Since that time, books on Bishop's life came one by one like David Kalstone (1989), Bonnie Costello (1991), Lorrie Goldensohn (1992), Victoria Harrison (1993), Brett Millier (1993), and, more recently, by Camille Roman (2001), Kim Fortuny (2003), Cheryl Walker (2005), and Jonathan Ellis (2006) (Anderson, 4).

1.2 Elizabeth Bishop: The Poet

Many critics agree on the view that Elizabeth Bishop is an autobiographical poet (Almeida, 2010: 195). This is due to the fact that she used to make references to memories of her childhood in her writings. She tries in a way or another to recall certain situations from old days in Nova Scotia or Boston. And because of the great effect of early life on her future, the reader of Bishop's poetry will

absolutely find some pictures of difficult childhood. Her being as a child travelling between relatives among different places justifies the reason why Bishop focuses on place and home in most of her works. Even in later successful poems she adds that sense of distance and displacement as reference to her deep pain or her endless search for home. (Boschman, 1999: 49-50). To some extent, Bishop's poetry of travel can be interpreted in terms of mixture between desire and distance. This may indicate her inner search for fulfillment of something personal inside and may be the need of a modernist to travel to different places in the hope of finding what answers her inner soul. Whatever reasons are, the idea of travel seems to occupy an essential part of her poetry. This can be shown easily in her early poems "The Map" and "Santarem" which were published in 1979 (Boschman, 50).

Bishop's poems, attentively, come across the idea of travelling between Nova Scotia and Brazil. These two main places were of great importance or effect on her whole life since the first reminds her of her maternal grandparents and the second stands for the place where she finds her love (

lota de MacedoSoares) and also Brazil represents the place of peace she searches and that is why she spent the most fruitful moments of her poetic life (Vendler, 2014: 827). As a result of long travels and different cultures she met, Bishop's poetry is obviously clarified by description of the environment around her. The reader of her poetry can easily recognize the views and scenes she writes about and thus the reader can know what ideology she has about the relationship of humans and nature. In other words, Bishop's poetry reveals some sort of attachment towards nature and natural views. She used to mention natural landscapes, animals, churches, harbors and plants. But her presentation of natural elements does not refer to romantic adaptation of nature or the natural view of transcendentalism. She prefers to use natural things without any addition of idealism or abstract perfection that accompany the romantic theory of romanticism (Huang, 2010: 4-6). The way Bishop looks at nature differs from that of Byron and Shelley as romantic poets. For them, nature represents that abstract thing that can give them comfort and make

them forget their tragedy. But Bishop seems to think differently, she looks at nature with a simpler overview. She likes to travel and seeks observation from everything around taking objects from the outside world.(Huang, 8-9). During her lifetime, Bishop met many famous writers and poets who influenced her very much. Beginning with Marianne Moore at the College of Vassar when she was still under-graduated. The effect of Moore was evident since she was the first one who encouraged Bishop to produce her poetry to the public. In her poem "At the Fish houses" in 1955, Bishop made a reference to her relationship with Marianne Moore and also a reference to Moore's 1924 poem "A Grave". In addition to Marianne Moore, Bishop became a best friend for Robert Lowell in 1947. Their friendship appears in their poetry since they both affect each other poetically. After Lowell's death in 1977, Bishop wrote him "our friendship, [which was] often kept alive through years of separation only by letters, remained constant and affectionate, and I shall always be deeply grateful for it". (qtd.in Poemhunter.com/ *The World's Poetry Archive*: 2012, 2). People like Moore and Lowell have a

considerable influence in the name of Bishop as a poet. These two persons, of course there are others, contribute in producing Bishop to the public and consequently they add a great importance on her future. Marianne Moore, for example, was the main reason why Bishop wrote her poem "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore", Robert Lowell also was the main cause of her "The Armadillo". After them she did not write any poem for friends. For Bishop, Moore was like a "mother" (Shaw, 76) since she was the first important supporter of Bishop's talent. Their first meeting was arranged by Fany Borden, the librarian in the College of Vassar and an old friend of Moore. This meeting was the starting point of the relationship between Bishop and Moore and the first step in Bishop's way as a poet as Emerald Ku (2008: 3) considers Bishop as different from her contemporary American poets in being a modernist poet who writes about the place she lives in as a kind of artistic existence. In other words, she mythologizes the place artistically in her poetry. For many reasons, Bishop feels that any place that offers a wide space for poetry production and artistic talent is her own home. She used

to travel to many countries in order to accept her nostalgia for the home that enables her to give art and poetry. Bishop travels very much but her concept of travelling is not something tragic like the concept of other modern writers. Instead, she lets these travels lead her to find that sense which satisfy her need for the exotic. (Fortman, 2010: 1) discusses Bishop's need for home in terms of discomfort. In that many themes of her works talk about otherness and exploration of other places, exactly the dichotomy of self and the other or "home" and "away". These ideas about travels interpret her being as a poet and as tourist gets beauty and impressions from foreign cultures. According to Bishop, one's identity or home is not restricted to one place or country but to where this person can product more art. Bishop herself makes her definition of home clear as declaring "I've never felt particularly homeless, but then, I've never felt particularly at home. I guess that's a pretty good description of a poet's sense of home. He carries it with him" (quoted in Thomas Travisano's *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Artistic Development* 131). She creates the idea that home is existed in one's imagination, in

that the place which perfectly fits one's mind is itself home. That is why she chose Brazil to be the place from which Bishop produced her best literary production. Along with Lota de MacedoSoares, Bishop finds Brazil as the finest environment which gives her more liberty and space to write poetry. For Bishop, finding home is linked to the way one can make a relationship between his imagination and the materialistic world around. (Besner, 2001:58).The home, then according to Bishop, is characterized personally. From early childhood, Bishop expresses her need for home and place due to family disorders. She suffers lack of passions from early age but her need for home does not go negatively despite her great pain. On the contrary, Bishop continues her search for home depending on her extreme love for travel and for exploration. (Fortman, 19).Bishop was considered as writing personalized poetry because of the way she puts a connection to her past in most of her poems. But this does not mean that Bishop makes a quick sudden transformation to her childhood, in the contrary, she writes poems which reflect her feeling of the present moment with a sense of attachment to

previous memories. Bishop's personal poems about early childhood affect her friend and fellow poet Robert Lowell who started writing in the same style of biographical stories like these of Bishop. During 1950s, Lowell's parents died and this event evokes the sense of psychological pain that needs personal writings. Satisfied with doing autobiographical stories, Bishop inspired Robert Lowell, who started in writing verse for nearly a decade and had published just a few poems to do the same. Under quite different pressures, he started writing childhood memoirs in prose and prose accounts of his mental illness and through this work he found a new way of writing poetry. His way of writing poetry was personal up to the extent that his poetry was usually referred to as "confessional poetry". In 1959, Lowell produced his *Life Studies*, the book which narrates Lowell's personal life. This book influenced Bishop greatly and critics believe that Bishop's poetry collection *Question of Travel* (1965). Critics say that Lowell's effect on Bishop's poetry makes her different in the style of writing. Even Victoria Harrison's study of Bishop's affirms that Bishop wrote something about her

early life as biographical but never intent to declare it as biography of her personal life. In other words, Bishop mentioned certain details of her life without deliberate intention of revealing her past (Anderson, 2007: 24-5).

Elizabeth Bishop's poetry causes a wide range of critical attention. This is because she came across different themes and views in her life while travelling among different countries. She is known transforming the concepts or ideas of the culture she visits into her poetry and consequently these results in showing a more personal overview. High descriptions are usually contained in her poems, she likes to speak about the details of everything around and her portraits of objects in the external world seem to add a sense of reality to the scene. As any person lived in the forties and fifties in the twentieth century, Bishops faced Second World War scene in both her native identity and on her various travels to different countries. This fact was one of the reasons why Bishop remained unstable and suffered from the lack of a permanent identity (Battacharya, 2011: 340). For a postmodern conception, principles of "now" and "then" as well as "self" and "other" are

important for showing essentials to one's identity. The way people think about themselves in relation to others interprets why they like or dislike to stay in certain place and consider that place as home. That is why Bishop adopts the view that home is when art is existed, regardless of other issues of distance and limits. In most of her poems written in Brazil, Bishop tries to make the reader feel that there is a relationship of "observer/ narrator" between the poet and the outside objects (Battacharya, 352). The acceptance of that difference is what seems to remove the sense of alienation and void that may control the poet's mentality. Bishop makes herself familiar with the culture she lived in for many years and thus, the reader of her poetry can feel positive attitudes towards the place she lived in instead of negative impulses. For many years after her death, Bishop remained an important name which deserves high deal of study and enormous number of scholarly written papers to discuss her poetry. Over the years of her life, Bishop creates a place for herself among the most prominent American postmodern poets. Her unique style of narrating her life – story depending on poetic texts

results in a new way of mingling the difficult past with the satisfying present making herself a perfect example for fellow poets (ibid).

2. Shattered Identity in Elizabeth Bishop's *Question of Travel*

Questions of Travel is Bishop's collection which includes travel poems and poems set in Nova Scotia, and it is divided in two sections: "Brazil" and "Elsewhere." In this collection Elizabeth Bishop reveals the travel subject as critics believe that "the travel genre is, for Bishop, closely tied to themes of memory" (Anderson, 2007: 9). In other words, the idea of travel in poetry collection is clearly related to more personal experiences. Critics regards that Bishop is a traveler and in spite of her wide variety of descriptions in later poems, she never describes places that she passes quickly. Instead, Bishop used to give detailed descriptions of places that she stays in as an inhabitant. Travel, for Bishop, is an essential concept in her poetry and this is evident from her beginning with the collection *North & South* which is related to travel and distance. Bishop's questions of travel are dedicated to Brazilian poems and

she, deliberately, makes such unanswered questions not only for the sake of creating a quest but creating a questioning. *Questions of Travel* contains a group of introductory poems describing the country from the point of view of the outsider. These poems are characterized by a disordered way of presentation. This means that the poems are not mentioned according the date of publication but as responses to certain scenes. (Anderson, 40-3). In this poetry collection *Questions of Travel*, poems produced during Bishop's years in Brazil. The book contains a trio, "Arrival at Santos," "Brazil, January 1, 1952" and "Question of Travel" the poem which carries the title of collection. "Arrival at Santos" concentrates on themes of travel and identity, "Brazil, January 1, 1952" elaborates the idea of comparing between January in 1952 and January in the sixteen century when nature welcomes visitors and how beautiful colors are and how exotic places in the journey. The third poem of the trio is "Questions of Travel" concerns with the most important question why one travels. In this poem, Bishop explores the tourist/traveler view-point by raising certain questions that

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address the aspects of nature as early European colonizers did with great love towards exoticism and natural beauty. She starts the

poem with a description of the natural and beautiful scenes around, as these lines taken from the poem "Questions of Travel":

There are too many waterfalls here; the crowded streams
hurry too rapidly down to the sea,
and the pressure of so many clouds on the mountaintops
makes them spill over the sides in soft slow-motion,
turning to waterfalls under our very eyes.

(Poem Hunter.com. *The World's Poetry Archive* 71)

The speaker of the poem does not appear very real in her annoyance, because the beauty of the landscape rises through her descriptions of the waterfalls. Meanwhile, the beauty is juxtaposed with the image of mountains like "hulls of capsized ships, slime-hung and barnacled." The horrific nature of this imagery may illustrate that the narrator is disturbed to some extent. However, the differentiation between the mountains and "hulls

of capsized ships" as well as elucidate settlement and stability, as contrasted to the streams and clouds which "keep travelling, travelling." Capsized ships have on motions, and thus appear covered with slime and barnacle. In the second stanza, the narrator speaks to a collective "we" with a guilty air, and invites the reader into her conceptions: "Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?" (Anderson, 46-7):

The mountains look like the hulls of capsized ships,
slime-hung and barnacled.
Think of the long trip home.
Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?
Where should we be today?
Is it right to be watching strangers in a play
in this strangest of theatres? (P H, 73)

The idea of living in a new country is viewed as a moral

problem. The poetic persona decides that childishness enforces

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us to "rush to see the sun the other way around," and she jokingly wanders "Oh, must we dream our dreams / and have them, too?" She doubts if it is possible to achieve all things we dream. "And have we room / for one more folded sunset, still quite warm?" Here Bishop mingles two everyday things, "folded" (sheets, for example) and

"sunset" in an up-normal image. The speaker seems to be surprised that people rush to admire something as ordinary as a sunset, when the same sun can be seen when sitting at home. Later on in the poem she wanders: "Is it lack of imagination that makes us come / to imagined places, not just stay at home?". (Anderson, 49):

What childishness is it that while there's a breath of life
in our bodies, we are determined to rush
to see the sun the other way around?
The tiniest green hummingbird in the world?
To stare at some inexplicable old stonework,
inexplicable and impenetrable,
at any view,
instantly seen and always, always delightful?
Oh, must we dream our dreams
and have them, too?
And have we room
for one more folded sunset, still quite warm? (P H, 73).

In this collection, Bishop discusses themes of distance and home, self and other dichotomy and familiarity, of course, with a clear attention towards the viewpoint of the poet as a traveler. Among the three introductory poems, "Questions of Travel" offers several attitudes about the way westerners think in foreign countries and their personal views. This poem, however, reveals Bishop's intention of

showing the "home" and "away" as the main concern of the poet /traveler mentality concluding in the view that home is something related to one's conception and belief. (Fortman, 2010:1). Bishop illustrates her concept of home during an interview with Alexandra Johnson in 1978, declaring "I've never felt particularly homeless, but then, I've never felt particularly at home. I guess that's a pretty good

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description of a poet's sense of home. He carries it with him" (quoted in Thomas Travisano's *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Artistic Development* 131). However, the first introductory poem in *Question of Travel* is "Arrival at Santos", which deals with preconceptions about Brazil as restricted to the ideas she carries

with her. The speaker in "Arrival at Santos" attempts to raise certain questions which show inquiry about travelling. It begins with "you" addressing the landscape using personification. The opening passage of the poem starts with the speaker's own suggestion that the surrounding environment is the personified addressee "you":

Oh, tourist,
is this how this country is going to answer you
and your immodest demands for a different world,
and a better life, and complete comprehension
of both at last, and immediately,
after eighteen days of suspension?
(From Bishop's *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979*, 1980).

In "Arrival at Santos," the speaker spends eighteen days on a ship and wants to see the land. As soon as she arrives, she realized that the places are hesitated and less perfect. "Who knows?—self-pitying mountains, sad and harsh beneath their frivolous greenery, with a little church on top of one" such declaration carries with it the inquiry that seems to evoke feelings and of disappointment and attitudes

about churches and surrounding landscapes. Whatever made for the poet to be charmed went useless, since she is not obsessed with all details of beauty around. The view of the church, which is the best representative of the Portuguese Catholic colonization is now "little" even the paint on the ware houses is without sense and very cold. (MacArthur, 2010: 106). As indicated in the lines:

with a little church on top of one. And warehouses,
some of them painted a feeble pink,
and some tall, uncertain palms. Oh, tourist,
is this how this country is going to answer you

and your immodest demands for a different world,
and a better life, and complete comprehension
of both at last, and immediately,
after eighteen days of suspension?
Finish your breakfast.

(From Bishop's *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979*, 1980).

These lines show the way Bishop's ironic inquiry brings the tourist to think and wander. She asks the tourist if this is the perfect place that supposes to answer the tourist's demands. The need for a different place that a tourist searches after eighteen days of waiting, "Finish your breakfast". This line, then, shifts her attention from imagination to near immediate behaviors of everyday activities, having the breakfast and boarding the boat to the land (MacArthur, 107). Bishop's intention of showing disappointment and dissatisfaction becomes clear when she describes how hopeless a tourist is when noticing the place around in the journey. In this way her opinion about tourism and colonization comes to the ground. She knows that in a post-colonial American environment, tourism replaces colonization and it

becomes a central way of communication among the states of America and European tourists who come to America. But her journey does not come as she likes, since the place was not as she likes to see. In other words, her tourism does not answer perfection and demands she dreamed of (MacArthur, 110).

In the third introductory poem in the book "Brazil, January 1, 1502", Bishop chooses another corner of speaking about Brazil. This time she chooses comparison to indicate the view of Brazil in 1952, the year of the publication of the poem, and Brazil in the sixteenth century. And it is not strange if this poem compared with "Arrival at Santos" especially in the opening lines where the reader finds excellent welcome in comparison to that in "Arrival at Santos":

Januaries, Nature greets our eyes
exactly as she must have greeted theirs:
every square inch filling in with foliage—

big leaves, little leaves, and giant leaves.
blue, blue-green, and olive...
monster ferns...
...and flowers too...
fresh as if just finished
and taken off the frame. (P H, 73).

This time Bishop starts the welcome with nature in capital "N" showing that this powerful nature is made by the hand of God. Such welcome inspired her to have a different view about Brazil from that in "Arrival at Santos" and thus she finds a much free atmosphere for expressing her hopeful feelings. Describing the small details like colors, fresh flowers, and different leaves are all representatives of the happiness she feels while witnessing such magical view of the beauty of the landscape in Brazil particularly in January. She tries to evoke the greatness of fertility and vegetation of the view as her eyes as a tourist are being greeted by Nature and how they are fascinated by such scene. However, Bishop still wonders whether her feelings about the scene are similar to those of a colonist as European visitors do when seeing the view (MacArther, 111). After all comparing the views of Bishop as a tourist or a colonist is not the aim of this

study. The study aims, attentively, to focus on the way Bishop sees identity in places she visits and her view-point of home in her poems. So that the study comes across the three introductory poems in the collection *Question of Travel* "Arrival in Santos", "Brazil, January 1, 1502" and "Question of Travel" in order to discuss the theme of shattered identity in Bishop's poetry in Brazil. In "Question of Travel", the poem carries the same title as the collection. This poem is distinctive since it illuminates themes of identity and self-discovering through the perception Bishop gets from recognizing the variety of the world around her. The speaker adopts an internal interest in trying to answer the questions immediate to her situation before ending with an answer as ambiguous as the questions she creates in the beginning. By making use of imagery, diction, allusions, and shifts within the structure of the poem, Bishop concludes how

human experiences are limited and how essentially significant it is to open the way by which one evaluate others in order to achieve understanding and satisfaction. Throughout the poem, Bishop portrays sensory details that require a careful attention from readers.. This way enables her to offer human experiences clearly and express her personal view she concludes about the

world. The first half of the poem is highly creative of sight. Phrases such as “watching strangers”, “to see the sun..”, “to stare at”, and “at any view” are all references to the scene around. She tries to make the reader overwhelmed by the strange and wonderful pictures. Here Bishop confronts the way foreign visitor sees and discover in a new place (Omnia in Caritate, 2014).

Think of the long trip home.
Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?
Where should we be today?
Is it right to be watching strangers in a play
in this strangest of theatres?
What childishness is it that while there's a breath of life
in our bodies, we are determined to rush
to see the sun the other way around?
The tiniest green hummingbird in the world?
To stare at some inexplicable old stonework,
inexplicable and impenetrable,
at any view,
instantly seen and always, always delightful?
Oh, must we dream our dreams
and have them, too?
And have we room
for one more folded sunset, still quite warm?
“Is it lack of imagination that makes us come
to imagined places, not just stay at home?
Or could Pascal have been not entirely right
about just sitting quietly in one's room?
Continent, city, country, society:
the choice is never wide and never free.
And here, or there . . . No. Should we have stayed at home,
wherever that may be?” (P H, 72).

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This question related to the title of the poem depicts the narrator and the reader inquiry about the value of travel. On a wider level, questions of connect to questions of self-identity by which one decides his opinion of self through an interaction with a place and culture away from his own. These questions which summarize Bishop's own quest for stable identity and recognized home for herself. She thinks that the world would be a closed room for her if she had stayed in the same place or country as if travelling is best choice for her to be opened to the outside free world. In other words, Bishop makes readers think of the hesitated nature of one's way answering questions concerning life and viewing the exotic. The poem starts with questions taking the tradition of the common question-and-answer structure and closing with one as well. Then the speaker answers herself in lists, arranging the beginning of each line by dashes. These dashes constitute the split between each reason, each answer to her "questions of travel". This format forms a continuous dialogue between the speaker and herself. However, the speaker's inability to find to a final conclusion causes that the question itself may be as

crucial as the answers she searches. Bishop determines to provide insight into the mind of the traveler when she gives a sample of the tourist's writing by which readers completely conquer the mind of the traveler. Then, these questions stop wondering and guessing the feelings of a traveler. This increasing the importance of connections made by self and other relationships (Omnia in Caritate, 2014).

Bishop's exploration of Brazil represented her great chance of discovering a new world. Brazilian environment with all details like geography, history and customs and styles of living affect the mentality and psychology of the poet very highly. Her Brazilian critical poetry crystalizes the injustices of the world. Her poems show her attempts to find her inner demands for home and identity (deFreitas, 2013: 12). Thus, for Bishop, even the exact meaning of the term "Shattered identity" does not limit to one place or country since she was able to return to the United States whenever she likes. Instead, she chooses to stay for longer period in Brazil and never be restricted to one identity (Nesme, A. "The Ballad Revisited : Elizabeth Bishop's 'The Burglar of

Babylon", *Cercles* 12 (2005) : 94). This term, however, stands for Bishop's disordered life as being a traveler more than inhabitant. So that one can be sure that Bishop's identity is shattered in the way she herself never been convinced with the idea of taking the permanent identity of the country she lives in. For her identity is existed only in one's mind and conception of life and never controlled by the community one belongs to. Her extremely famous phrase "Home is when Art is" summarizes her belief of identity and suggests her profound longing for an exotic and fantastic world of imagination which could answer her unfinished questions of identity (Grieve, 2015: 36).

Conclusions

When reading Elizabeth Bishop's poetry, one can easily recognize her profound dreams of finding an imaginative place that could satisfy her ambitions. Bishop's identity is obviously related to what one may define

identity according to his understanding and experience but not to particular place or country. The "shattered" identity in her poetry, thus, refers to her conception of home and identity since she spent her life travelling among different countries searching for a place that can address her personal view about the world. Being affected by memories of her childhood, Bishop's poetry enables critics and fellow poets to gain opportunity to link her future with past memories. The shadows of her early childhood are still presented in her later poems but these shadows never prevent her from producing poetry that intends to find home and settlement. Instead, these shadows were best motivations for creating her own perception about identity and belonging. Bishop does not deal with the idea of exile as a problem but as a matter of discovery and exploration.

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الخلاصة

على التساؤلات حول مفهوم الهوية عند الشاعرة. تقسم الدراسة الى مبحثين، المبحث الاول بدوره يقسم الى قسمين الاول يعنى بحياة الشاعرة ووظيفتها والثاني يعنى بدور بايشوب كشاعرة. اما المبحث الثاني فيبدأ مباشرة بشرح معنى الهوية المشتتة في مجموعة بايشوب الشعرية المعنونة " أسئلة السفر" لعام ١٩٦٥. وبالأخص القصائد الثلاثة الأولى وهي "الوصول الى سانتوس" عام ١٩٥٢، " برازيل، كانون الثاني ١٩٥٢، و " أسئلة السفر" القصيدة التي تحمل نفس عنوان المجموعة الشعرية. تنتهي الدراسة الى خلاصة تلخص اهم نقاط البحث.

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى تسليط الضوء على شعر اليزابيث بايشوب (١٩١١-١٩٧٩) والتي تعد أحد أهم الشعراء الأمريكيين في القرن العشرين. يتميز شعر إيزابيث بايشوب بشموله لمواضيع مثل الوطن، ثنائية الفرد والآخر و طبعاً السفر. فمبدأ السفر يغطي نسبة واسعة من شعر بايشوب المبكر والمتأخر لهذا السبب فإن العديد من النقاد يعتبروا أن بايشوب مسافرة أو سائحة أكثر من كونها شاعرة وليس من الغريب اعتبار أن بايشوب ذاتها خلقت المعاناة لنفسها عندما فضلت التجوال والسفر على الهوية والاستقرار في بلد واحد. على أي حال، تركز هذه الدراسة على معنى الهوية وتحاول أن تجيب