

Breaking the Silence of Caged Birds: Multiculturalism in the Poetry of Elmaz Abinader and Maya Angelou

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Abstract:

Multiculturalism is frequently used to denote a society with multiple and diverse cultures that co-exist within this society. As claimed by Stuart Hall, the “multicultural question” is concerned with “how we are to envisage the futures of those many different societies now composed of peoples from very different backgrounds, cultures, contexts, experiences and positions in the ranking order of the world; societies where difference refuses to disappear” (Hall, 2000: 209). The American society is a typical example of such type of multicultural societies where minorities from different origins suffer oppression and inequality. Here lies the importance of the multicultural literature to express the sufferings and dreams of these minorities as represented, for example, through the poetry of Maya Angelou and Elmaz Abinader; two poets from different cultural origins but they belong to the minorities in the American society. Thus, this paper attempts to show how the poetry of these two poets is a collective process of recognition and exposure of colonialism that denies and represses the identity of the minorities and

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how they achieve the restoration and reconstruction of cultural identity in terms of political and literary contexts. Both writers represent a different experience as Angelou represents suffering of Black Americans while Abinader depicts feelings of hatred and racism practiced against Arab immigrants due to the belief that Arabs, especially Muslims, have terrorism tendencies. Though they depict different experiences, the poems of both writers can be described as a sincere call for equality and castigation of all forms of discrimination.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Maya Angelou, Elmaz Abinader, discrimination, segregation, terrorism.