Preface

The very fact of being oppressed, of having fundamental rights denied or diminished, elicits attempts to remediate the situation. Despite all the negative impositions of ideology, the situation of oppressed people is also characterized by resistance and resilience. In resilience, there is the potential for an enhanced, reclaimed and reinvented identity. The writings of Maya Angelou and Bama become a verbal exposure of the human document to help society to transform and transcribe its ways. In their crusade for social justice, they not only portray their hopes and aspirations but also their fight for survival. The resistance undertaken by these writers is indirectly directed to the social system which ignores the voices of the marginalized. Through an active process of discourse, the marginalized tend to change their reality. In this process, there is a gradual decoding of the world as people grasp the mechanisms of oppression and exploitation. This reveals new possibilities for action. The knowledge of the surrounding social reality leads to new self understanding for the voiced and the voiceless. The optimistic realism in the literary works of Angelou and Bama becomes the ‘strategic essentialism’ as they speak on behalf of their community and simultaneously resist their adversities. To oppose and survive is the only solution to regain their identity and self worth.

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