# The Book of Negroes Review

The main objective of this paper is to perform an analytical review of *The Book of Negroes.* The literary work was authored by a Canadian novelist and human rights activist by the name of Lawrence Hill. From reading the book, it can be observed that the circumstances in which the author was born added to his success in explicitly expressing his ideas. The author’s parents were of a multiracial relationship; where the father was of an African-American descent while the mother was white. Hill ancestry consisted of activists of human rights. For example, his father who was an ombudsman, also authored a work that detailed the background of the blacks living in Canada. Similarly, his mother was also involved in acts of civil rights activism during Hill’s early years, and helped in campaigning for the provision of equal rights for all the inhabitants of Ontario. Hence, this might be said to have had a huge impact on the book since the author was exposed to a background which helped set him up for works of activism. Furthermore, the historical aspects of the author also suggest that his works were the product of years of research in issues which were later presented in the book. Furthermore, his mastery and creativity in writing has been recognized by being awarded several honorary degrees from many reputable organizations. He has also participated in several activism programs, and may therefore be considered to be well versed in the issues relating to the black community.

The main theme presented in the work is slavery. The literary aspects that have been presented in the book can be related to the setting of the story. For instance, while the book features the biography of a fictional character, the concepts that are presented in the story are those that have been witnessed in real life. The protagonist, having been taken from Africa, is shipped into slavery in America. The story presents how she faces several challenges while working as a slave. Hope is then presented in the story as one of the main factors that led to her salvation. She also has optimism to life, and despite the fact that her master is mean, she manages to exude positivity about her personal affairs (Hill 2). The use of symbolism has formed a core aspect of the story, where the memory by the protagonist of attaining freedom is what keeps her going.

To complete the work, the author conducted a comprehensive research in various academic disciplines which enabled him to develop the ideas and the other important issues such as the setting. *The Book of Negroes* was initially used to refer to the document that highlighted the identities of about 3000 black Americans who had escaped slavery in the south and sought for assistance from the British in the course of the revolution (Green 52). The Individuals had then been considered as free. The use of this sources have been reflected in the book through the presentation of the main character as a slave who has to get into the list of freed individuals in order to be transported to freedom (Conlin 313). The story also highlights the issue of slavery, which has been one of the most controversial issues in the world throughout history.

Authors do not derive ideas to write books or any other literature genre out of nowhere (Stevenson 89). They obtain their ideas from what is happening or happened, the current issues facing society or the trends on a specific issue that has had an influence on the normal day to day activities of the people. Authors have the intelligence to communicate their opinions through writing without being offensive. They can use written language to criticize committed evil and highlight the wrongs done by for example the government against its people. Through books authors can raise concerns over the emerging behavior of a certain group of people and sensitize the people on the benefits or demerits of performing certain acts that could end up harming the society. Authors can incorporate universal ideas into writing and relate them to specific issues that are happening in the immediate society. They have the ability to make comparisons of different situations happening in different places and use them to create awareness and ideas of what can be done to ensure a challenge is resolved. In this way they give hope to the people on the possibility of transformations, new knowledge or advancement that can make a given society change its way of thinking or attitude towards a specific issue. Authors have been given immense responsibility and form part of the group in society that ensures creation of awareness regarding specific issues that are critical in the general well being of the people. They understand and play a critical role in highlighting themes such as love, transformation, issues associated with advancement in technology, benefits, slavery and disadvantages of revolution, freedom among others. They are also involved in teaching the audience on societal values such as sacrifice, commitment, love and transformations. However, despite deriving their inspiration of writing books or novels from their immediate environment, authors have the ability to generate different stories based on how they perceive issues in the society.

In the Book of Negroes it is possible that the author has generated his themes from the events happening either in his immediate environment or neighboring environment by highlighting issues resulting to discrimination and unfair treatment of people from the African race (Hill 7). He wants people to recognize the value of all people and consequences of engaging in discriminatory acts and the price that can be paid when one decides to take a specific course of action. The storyline will also reflect on the time and place when the book was set as it will describe the real environment of the events taking place. The Book of Negroes was set during a politically charged contention in fighting for the rights of the black people after the end of the American Revolution (Hill 12). The writer focuses on the events that were taking place and the motivation of the people behind their involvement to change their leadership and recognition of the rights of the black people. From the book, the author highlights the injustices committed by the reigning government that lead to protests against the leadership to recognize freedom against slavery (Hill 15). In the novel, he highlighted societal issues such as unjust laws, disregard of the black people in the society and unfair treatment of African Americans in social and political platforms. Through his novel, Lawrence Hill expressed his discontentment on the issue by writing a story which highlighted the people’s opinion regarding racial injustices. He was able to highlight other issues that are critical in achieving set goals and objectives when pursuing a specific task (Hill 17). Throughout his book he highlighted other issues such as secrecy and surveillance to be critical in organizing successful protests to curb injustices related to race and skin color. The theme of the novel was an international issue of concern extending up to neighboring Canada. For audiences outside the USA, he used his book to highlight the present political situation and how it disrupted the nation’s stability and the normal day to day lives of the people (Hill 18).

It is important to note that, apart from highlighting the political situation of the nation, he used the opportunity to portray the benefits of sacrifice in the society. Critical analysis of the book shows that the writer wanted his audience to understand the benefits of making sacrifices. He showed how people can forgo the things they value most for the sake of financing or meeting the requirements of preservation of the ideals they hold most strongly. In his book Lawrence Hill highlighted the truth that still happens in modern societies including the theme of blood and belonging that has been one of the major themes in the novel. He wanted to prove that, even in the most difficult conditions, it is critical to uphold the values and individual beliefs that are crucial in attainment of freedom. Therefore, it is important to understand that authors use the events and happenings in their environments to write stories that contain themes which could have a significant impact on people’s ways of thinking. To a great extent, Hill was able to change the people's attitude toward those coming from different cultural and historical backgrounds.

## **Works Cited**

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