

Battle Against Adversity In Lawrence Hill's *The Book Of Negroes*

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Abstract

Adversity means a worse situation of one person. Mostly, all face adversities to retrieve their life and reach the ambition. It may give the power of resilience. It is used to probe the one person's will power. At the same time, overcoming adversity is not easy for all the human beings. To overcome the adversity, one who must know the patience, be brave, use of opportunity and problem-handling. According to Barbara De Angelis, "We don't develop courage by being happy every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversities."

The novel, *The Book of Negroes*, contains a protagonist's adversity to lead a free life. Aminata Diallo is the protagonist of the novel. The Abolitionist Movement is organised by abolitionists in England, to raise the voice against slave trade. Aminata is selected by some abolitionists to speak in parliament about slave trade. The abolitionists strongly believe that Aminata can speak decisively. Because, she is involved into slave life in her early life. Aminata assumes that, "There must be a reason why I have lived in all these lands, survived all those water crossing, while others fell from bullets or shut their eyes and simply willed their lives to end" (13). Aminata has a great respect among abolitionists. They want Aminata to meet King George III. Aminata recalls her experiences and mentions that, "my life is a ghost story" (16).

Aminata has no problems until she lives with her parents. But, her life is changed after her abduction. Her parents are killed by abductors of her homeland. Aminata is not ready to accept her parent's death. Aminata creates the illusion herself that her parents have been living and waiting for her. She is trapped into slavery unwittingly.

Aminata's aim is return to her village, Bayo, and meets her neighbours. The captors whip their captives for disobedience. Aminata is just eleven years old girl. She obeys the orders of captors to rescue her life from beatings.

Aminata knows two languages, they are Fulfulde and Bamanankan. She learns these languages from her father. The captors of her homeland use Aminata to translate their orders to the captives. Through this communication skill, she gets a favour in slave vessel, ship, from the abductors.

In the article, "Muslim Women Hear the Call of a Storyteller", Barbara Crossette tells about a Arabian woman, Scheherazade. Scheherazade protects her life by telling the stories to her husband. Crossette states, "This woman gained the right to live by using the right words. It's fantastic material for talking about the extremely tragic problems society has. And it teaches how to fight violence with words".

Once, the ship popples in the wind, the captives of her homeland try to keep standing to protect their life. They shout because of fear. That time, Aminata creates illusion that her mother tries to calm down Aminata," do not fear" (73).The ship arrives in Sullivan Island of America where Aminata is sold by captors of homeland. The weather condition of America makes uncomfortable to Aminata. But, she never loses her hope and tries to lead a comfortable life through her determined hope.

After Aminata reaches Indigo plantation, she knows that Robinson Appleby buys her. Aminata decides to learn the toubabu language to survive her life. She thinks that learning the Toubabu language helps Aminata to lead her life without problem in new land, if she will be escaped from the plantation. Mamed is an overseer of plantation, who teaches her how to read and write, secretly. Aminata completes her daily task hurriedly to read the new books. She always searches the map of Africa in books, to know the way of Africa. Aminata strongly believes that education is the only way to find her homeland, "Education is very beneficial for everyone as we can upgrade or update ourselves through education" (168).

Aminata longs to get the information about her traveling companion, Chekura. Because, Aminata's conversation with Chekura gives a peace of mind to

Aminata. Slaves follow a trick to gather information of other slaves from other plantations. The trick is called fishnet. Later, Chekura meets Aminata, secretly. Chekura and Aminata have fear on the rules of slave owner, they spend time with unknowing of their owners. Thus, they keep their relationship.

Appleby gets the news about Aminata's secret meeting with Chekura. Appleby rapes her cruelly to give the penalty. Aminata marries Chekura without the knowledge of Appleby, to create the strong relationship between them. Aminata is pregnant with the baby of Chekura. When Appleby punishes Aminata, She does not expose the name of Chekura. She is ready to accept the pain and shame. Also, she has a strong determination in concealing the name of Chekura. Because, she does not like to lose the father of her baby. She knows the needs of guidance of father to the child. Aminata gives birth to a boy baby. According to property law, slaves cannot keep their own child. Aminata tries to forget her bitter experiences through the smile of her son. Soon, her happy is destroyed by Appleby who takes away the baby from Aminata and sells her baby. Aminata has no strength to fight against Appleby. But, she has a boldness to refuse to do work. Aminata's adamant against Appleby offers a better life to Aminata. Appleby sells Aminata to Solomon Lindo. Lindo takes her to Charles town where she has a house and job. Once, she reads the Bible in which Exodus impresses her. Exodus is a story of Israel people, how they get freedom from Egypt and how they have suffered in slavery, "What made the situation in Egypt unbearable was not only the slavery but also its extreme harness. The Egyptian masters work with the Israelites ruthlessly and make their lives bitter with hard service. As a result, Israel languished in misery and suffering and a broken spirit" (Exo.1:13-14).

Aminata feels that Israel people's life have applicability with Aminata's life. Chekura has gathered information about his son through the fishnet that Solomon Lindo has helped Appleby to sell Aminata's son, and Aminata's son is died. Chekura informs the news about her son to Aminata. After Aminata knows the truth, she dislikes Lindo. When Lindo raises the questions towards Aminata. Solomon Lindo arranges the travel with Aminta instead of hurting her, to repentance her.

Aminata and Solomon Lindo move to New York City where Aminata gets some peace of mind in her life. Sam Frances is a Negro who runs a hotel, The Frances Tavern, in New York city. Sam suggests Aminata to escape from Lindo. After Aminata spends two more days and nights in wooded area, she returns to Sam's hotel. And she becomes a teacher through teaching the Negroes in church. Negroes come to learn willingly because they want to break the rule of white people who could not allow Negroes to learn or study. Due to the escalation of the atrocities of rebels, white people does not allow negroes to work for them. So, Aminata could not earn the money.

Aminata participates in the war through enlisting the name of Negroes who are worked for British Army. Finally, she gets a paper which is to prove that she becomes free from slavery. She believes that her adversities come to end. When she enters into the ship, Appleby accuses her that she is a runaway slave. Later, she is released by Justice after the investigation. Although she gets released, she worries that the ship is departed with Chekura. After some days, she gets a chance to sail to Nova Scotia. In Birch town, Aminata continues her midwifery work to earn the money to fulfil her needs. The Negroes undergoes many problems in Nova Scotia to survive their life.

Negroes become indentured servants of white people for three years to earn the money. Aminata is named her daughter, May. When May is three years old, the riots start in Birch town, where white people could not accept the racial equality of Negroes. After some days, the riots become blow over. But, rebels do not give up riots. Aminata leaves her daughter in Witherspoon's house, where she works as a house-keeper.

Aminata goes to meet her acquaintances in Birch town. When Aminata returns to Witherspoon's house, she is shocked. Mr. Witherspon takes May without Aminata's person to somewhere. Aminata loses her another child. She wants to find out whereabouts of Witherspoon family. Aminata could not accept the lose of her daughter, she assumes that, "My children were like phantom limbs, lost but still attached to me, gone but still painful" (366). She passes her life with the memories of her husband and children. When Negroes long for good life, John Clarkson, the lieutenant of British Army, arrives and announces about Sierra Leone Company. The company wants to abolish the slavery by help the Negroes to return to Africa. John calls Negroes, 'Adventures'. The

word, 'Adventures' exposes the adversities of Negroes in leading the life. Some of the Negroes argue with John, because of their past experience with Philipsburg Proclamation. But, Aminata finds out the truth in John's eyes.

Thomas peters visits Aminata to inform about the death of Chekura. The death news of Chekura stimulates Aminata to relocate from America. She starts her travel with John Clarkson and other Negroes to Sierra Leone. One her way, she sees slave vessel which is carried Negroes. The ship arrives in West Africa where Aminata and other Negroes build shelters to stay. Aninata could not go to her village. Because, safety is incertitude in Africa. Alassane tries to push Aminata again into slavery. She is escaped from Alassane.

Bethany veney acknowledges the same situation of Aminata, in her Book, *The Narrative of Bethany Vaney, A Slave Women*. Veney is escaped from her master to rescue herself. Veney recalls that:

By the time I reached the woods.....I crowded my head under the alder bushes, while my shoulders and body were dripping wet. All night I crouched in this way: and, when morning came, I was afraid to show myself, and all day kept concealed by the trees and bushes as best I could. As night came on, I was very hungry, having eaten nothing for more than thirty-six hours. (120)

Aminata gives speech in church as well as schools about her past experience. Also, she illustrates the sufferings of the Negroes. Aminata participates in Abolitionist Movement to stop the slave trade. She decides to narrate her own story to people. Later, she could not involve in the actions against slave trade because of her old age.

In the novel, *The Book of Negroes*, Hill explains the importance of courage to over tuning the problems, through the character of Aminata. Great adversities are hidden Aminata's respects. She could obtain a great placethrough she has a mental capacity to face the problems. The character, Aminata, teaches the reader to be brave, lion-hearted and virile.

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