

The motif of the moon in Ishmael's A Long Way Gone

[Science](#), [Astrology](#)



Ishmael, a former Sierra Leonean child soldier, uses nature motifs in his memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, and the moon is one of them. *A Long Way Gone* is about his difficult times as a boy soldier in Sierra Leone. It is written based on facts, yet his poetic words and insightful description of nature enable the readers to see dramatic setting that goes together with specific events and atmospheres. Ishmael uses the motif of the moon as a figurative language as well as the setting to describe his situations and emotions in a poetic way.

Ishmael uses the moon motif as a simile to describe the situations he is faced with. "...I looked in the sky and saw how the thick clouds kept trying to cover the moon, yet it would reappear again and again to shine all night long. In some way my journey was like that of the moon. " (Ishmael, 70) In this passage, he thinks that he is similar with the moon in that he is confronted with obstacles continuously and has to keep managing to survive. The moon motif here helps readers not only to understand his situations but also to feel his gloomy emotion about the situations.

The moon motif is also used for setting and to emphasize the mood in his memoir. " The moon disappeared and took the stars with it, making the sky weep. Its tears saved us from the red bullets. " In this passage he makes his memoir more poetic and dramatic by personalizing the moon and the sky. Using the moon motif Ishmael set a background, the night without moon and the stars, and creates sad and tense atmosphere of the moment which let readers feel and experience the moment indirectly.

Ishmael's words with the moon motif in *A Long Way Gone* enable the readers to explore his mind as well. Ishmael interacts with the Moon while having

journey, and by putting down his interaction with the moon he expresses his sorrow and thoughts. By examining his interaction with the moon we can know moon also serves as a factor that helps him mentally surviving. The words of the moon comfort Ishmael while telling the readers about his being, situations, and the settings poetically.

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