

A long way gone 'ishmael beah and allegory of the cave plato's

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Insert of Can childhood ever be lost beyond recovery? Allegoric stories are famous for their ability to express the information borne by them in a much hidden manner. It calls for extreme application of people's wits to adequately discern and interpret the ideas raised therein. The allegory of the cave by Plato is not an exception to this category of literary writing. In his memoir, A Long Way Gone, Ishmael Beah creates characters that reflect the allegoric world depicted in Plato's Allegory of the cave. The two writings resonate with one another painting picture of the human mind and the tussles that characterize the behavior of every individual in the world especially when encountered with life challenges. In this article, I will use the two texts, Allegory of the Cave by Plato and A long Way Gone' by Ishmael Beah to justify the statement ' can childhood ever be lost beyond recovery?' The childhood ages are characterized by innocence of the mind and soul. Children are notable for being able to express their feelings and emotions in a manner that is straight, often hiding nothing compared to the older generations where hypocrisy characterizes most of their talks and manner of expressions. In his Memoir, Ishmael creates his protagonist; a child aged 12 years of age at the beginning of the story. Ishmael at this age has an innocent mind of a child making him central to the flow of the story. Living in a country rocked with war and violence due to the locals' invasion by the country rebels, the young boy is forced to join the militia forces in order to fight and be able to defend himself and those close to him. Alongside other young boys from his tiny village in Sierra Leone, Ishmael, while traversing the lonely war torn fields develop feelings and emotions that derails him completely of his innocent childhood feelings. He loses his innocence in the

field as he comes into close encounter with the war atrocities. Killing, sights of blood and dead people all around him becomes his usual norm in his war days. Contrary to the feelings of childhood that is free from crimes and the normalcy of reveling in criminal offences, Ishmael totally loses his childhood innocence and becomes a child combatant.

However, even as Ishmael revels in war and engages in serial killings as a combatant, his childhood likings such as the love for rap music remain his most revered hobby. Even though his present perception is derailed by the events encountered during combat, his childhood perception of life, far from that of evil combat remains and when this is discovered, he is helped and he develops his talent to help him in his future life. To him and the rest of the staffers at the UNICEF (Ishmael), all is not lost after his redemption from the battle field. His childhood dreams are recovered and made use of further reversing his proper childhood feelings and development priorities. Ishmael's story can be related to the events Allegory of the Cave in a very complex manner. As the young Ishmael is assimilated into the war path, we can attribute him to one entering a cave as described by Plato. The circumstances surrounding his recruitment and assimilation into the war fair is compared to those that prompt a person to enter the cave and their consequent assimilation and imprisonment in the cave. However, if one feels the extremities of the cave, the scorching fire, diffused light amidst tribulations of cave living, they would want to come out of the cave through the raised path (Thomas). Though the path out is difficult to climb as in the case of Ishmael in the rehabilitation camp, the persons soon manage to make their ways out of the cave prisons aided by their past/ childhood

beliefs. In relevance to the two texts, childhood is likely to be lost in the course of a person's life. However, the persons remain firmly entrenched on their childhood teachings and beliefs that can at times aid in their redemption from childhood losses. For this reason, despite the childhood loss, there is room for redemption as is seen in the case of Ishmael, being redeemed and rehabilitated into a normal person, free from wars and related atrocities inflicted in him during combat.

In conclusion, the texts, Allegory of the Cave and A long way Gone are related in their thematic concerns. Relating the redemption of the lost childhood feelings in Ishmael during combat, Plato argues that despite one having entered the cave, there is room for redemption and return to normalcy. To this extent therefore, we can argue that childhood loss is redeemable based on the lessons learnt from the two texts.

Works Cited

Ishmael, Beah,. A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier. Free Town: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007.

Thomas, Sheehan,. " The Allegory of the Cave." Republic VII: 514 a, 2 to 517 a, 7 (2012): 3- 9.