

Language and the Politics of Feminism through the Lens of Ba's 'So Long a Letter' and Alkali's 'The Stillborn'

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Abstract : The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis postulates that the structure of a language determines the way in which species of that language view the world. It also states that the culture of a people finds reflection in their language. Consequently language becomes a vehicle of thought; a channel through which negative stereotypes of women is created and also one through which such images are dispelled. Women are generally portrayed as weaker vessels and inferior to men; a position which draws a counter reaction from women through their writings. In their writings, they attempt to reinvent womanhood and liberate the woman from the hitherto negative light they were portrayed. This position best describes the term feminism which argues that women be given equal rights in all spheres of life as men. This paper attempts to evaluate Ba's 'So Long a Letter' and Alkali's 'The Stillborn' with the view to identify the relationship between language and feminism. In evaluating this relationship, the paper concludes that there are several factors responsible for the variation in the speech pattern of male and female. All of these factors favour the male gender and further condemns the woman to oppression. Although the writers come from two different cultural backgrounds, the works amplify feminism and captured them as apostles of feminism.

Keywords : feminism, language, politics, Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis

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