

Womens Roles in so Long a Letter by Mariama BA

Over the past century, women of the Western world have made incredible strides in closing the gap of equality which separates them from men. While western women are starting to enjoy the freedoms that their mothers did not share, women from less developed countries still fall behind in terms of equality. There are many elements that solidify this difference between the west and developing nations. Religion, culture, and history are some of the main elements, but many would agree that the largest hinderance on women's rights is the belief that women are inferior to men due to their biological role in reproduction. Mariama Ba's novel, *So Long a Letter*, is unquestionably a work of feminist literature.

Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* is set in Senegal, a West-African country located just north of Guinea and west of Mali. This setting is important because it is where Ba was born and raised. From an early age, she began to recognize the harsh inequalities between the sexes and formulate criticisms for which she would later integrate in this book. She expresses these criticisms through the development of two central female characters who contradict the traditional role of Senegalese women. Ba attempts to challenge societal norms that promote the dis-empowerment of women by solidifying the ideals of her two main characters.

Even today, the Senegalese view of women prioritizes a women's ability to produce and raise many children. The character, Ramatoulaye, bears twelve children within a thirty year marriage. After child bearing, the roles of women include household tasks such as cleaning, childcare, and cooking for the family. The education rate for women is far lower than that of men, furthering the divide between the sexes and strengthening the patriarchy.

Ramatoulaye or "Rama" is a recently widowed school teacher that recounts her emotional struggles following her husband's death in the form of a letter. She isn't so much upset with the passing of her spouse, but rather his decision to take a much younger second wife and leave their family with nothing. It is commonplace for men to take up multiple wives in Senegal. The more wives you have, the more powerful you appear.

Aissatou finds herself in a similar situation. She leaves her husband after he marries a second woman after years of marriage. She clearly expresses her disapproval of polygamy as she sees it as a lack of respect toward the dignity of women. "I am stripping myself of your love, your name. Clothed my dignity, the only garment, I go my

Mariama Ba So Long A Letter Summary

**Eldred D. Jones, Eustace
Palmer, Marjorie Jones**



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Teaching Women's History Bettina Bradbury, 1995 A Study Guide for Mariama Ba's "So Long a Letter" Cengage Learning Gale, 2017-07-25 A Study Guide for Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Literature of Developing Nations for Students This concise study guide includes plot summary character analysis author biography study questions historical context suggestions for further reading and much more For any literature project trust Literature of Developing Nations For Students for all of your research needs *African Studies Review* ,2003 **Women in African Literature Today** Eldred D. Jones, Eustace Palmer, Marjorie Jones, 1987 This issue of African Literature Today is entirely devoted to African women writers and to the presentation of women in African Literature This is a recognition of two important facts Firstly that African women writers as a number of articles show have been neglected in male authored studies and journals Secondly that the last ten years or so have at last despite all sociological factors against them shown a blossoming of accomplished works by African women writers Running through the articles is the refrain that the cause of womanhood has been inadequately served by African male writers in their works It is maintained by Sylvia Bryan and Jennifer Evans that there are some men writers who have portrayed independent complex women characters However in the final analysis it has to be left as Katherine Frank suggests to women writers to present female characters with a destiny of their own Publisher's description *African Literature Today* ,1968 **Index Islamicus** ,1998 International African

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