

Female Dis-Empowerment in Contemporary Zimbabwe: A Re-Look at Shona Writers' Vision of the Factors and Solutions

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Abstract : The majority of women in contemporary Zimbabwe continue to hold marginalised and insignificant positions in society and to be accorded negative and stereotyped images in literature. In light of this, government and civic organisations and even writers channel many resources, time, and efforts towards the emancipation of the female gender. Using the African womanist and socio-historical literary theories and focussing on two post-colonial novels, this paper re-engages the dis-empowerment of women in contemporary Zimbabwe, examining the believed causes and suggested solutions. The paper observes that the writers whip the already whipped by blaming patriarchy, African men and cultural practices as the underlying causes of such a sorry state of affairs while at the same time celebrating war against all these, as well as education, unity among women, Christianity and single motherhood as panaceas to the problem. The paper concludes that the writers' anger is misdirected as they have fallen trap to the very popular yet mythical victim-blame motif espoused by many writers who focus on Shona people's problems.

Keywords : cultural practices, female dis-empowerment, patriarchy, Shona novel, solutions, Zimbabwe

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