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'Visions of land in the poetry of Chenjerai Hove and Musaemura Zimunya"

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2014-01-20
http://hdl.handle.net10539/13520

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ABSTRACT

Land occupies a special position in the history of Zimbabwe and the African continent in general. The research aims to critically examine the seemingly contradictory visions of land in Zimbabwean poetry. In their poetry, Musaemura Zimunya and Chenjerai Hove concoct startling images of the land or landscape in Zimbabwe. This forces one to not only gaze at the land or landscape but also engage with other broad issues related to literature and history. The research attempts to answer a number of questions. It discusses how history has shaped the Zimbabwean terrain and how this has been captured by the imaginative processes. The focus is on how land is depicted in Zimbabwean poetry and literature in general showing the overall significance of colonialism in this respect. It then examines in detail the poetry of the selected poets showing how each particular poet envisions the land. The poets seem to betray conflicting "structures of feeling". The research explores the contentious issue of "demarcations" or "boundaries" of "country" and "city" focusing on the perceived conflicted relationship between the "two". An attempt is then made to make alternative reading of the selected poets' reading of the land. It is argued that the poets' visions of landscape are in fact a rejection of the present and future, which may be seen as amounting to, in broad terms, an indictment of the postcolonial condition. The poetry evokes feelings and fantasies of escape from the land but ironically to the land which seems to fail to live up to the expectations.