

# Zimbabwe: *The Royal Residence*

Welcome to this special edition on the Republic of Zimbabwe, a nation of 11,903 million people (2011), situated in central southern Africa, between the Limpopo and the Zambezi, bounded via land by Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana. The nation's name (Zimbabwe) is derived from the Shona phrase, *dzimba dzemabwe*, meaning houses of stone or stone buildings, that today is symbolized by the Great Zimbabwe Ruins near the present day town of Masvingo.

Zimbabwe has a rich history, not only of achievement, innovation, co-operation and economic prosperity, but also of conflict, trials and tribulations that reflects the dynamism of its peoples. Many scholars, past and present, have enhanced knowledge of the Zimbabwean past through their works. Particularly important in our understanding of the pre-colonial past have been the works of archaeologists, linguists, historians, oral traditions and the records of 16th century Portuguese traders that interacted with central and southern Africa during that era.

This volume is the result of an ongoing interest among scholars to publish critical content on Zimbabwe, a process that is welcomed as we strive to explore the full essence of the African world community experience. Thus, we have ten articles, a commentary, and a profile of the arts.

The first paper argues that Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front electoral 'victories' in post-2000 Zimbabwe are often attributed to the ruling party's reliance on violence, intimidation and other strong-arm tactics; however, that is only part of the story. The second presentation discusses the Third Chimurenga, articulating the achievements attained and the challenges faced by female beneficiaries of A1 farms in selected districts of the Midlands Province. Continuing, there is an analysis of how language contact influenced changes in address norms of the Tshivenda; and following is an article on the status of languages spoken in southern and southeast Zimbabwe, juxtaposing a report on the challenges and complexities faced by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of cultural aspects of the Ndebele language.

Next the volume engages the topics of opening opportunities to the teaching of minority languages in schools; number sayings, numerology and myths in Shona culture that examine number sayings, number-related myths and the numerological significance of some selected numbers; a study that investigated the extent to which *Pfumo Reropa*, a 1961 novel by Patrick Chakaipa, can be used to impart Shona economic values among secondary school learners; and a second paper on the same book, but in this study, a look at the role that proverbs play in the book via the embedment of biblical intertextual elements within.

Echoing the look at intertextual elements is a paper that provides an analysis of select canonical texts in the first two decades of fictional African literature in Zimbabwe produced between 1956 and 1975 that investigates the critical relationship between these early works and the contemporaneous rise and establishment of African nationalism; and the two last sections of this volume include a commentary that argues that intrinsic African values and ethos have been eroded by colonialism and the globalisation of culture which has contaminated African cognitive systems to the extent that some contemporary metaphors unashamedly promote negative values such as selfishness, individualism, gender intolerance, corruption and African taboo violation and, second, a short review of the history of the arts and culture of Zimbabwe that includes paintings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (images), sculpture of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and a profile of music and dance.

The *royal residence* (Zimbabwe) is open, a place of wonder, study, and discussion. Enjoy.

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Art by Kudzanai Chiurai, a Zimbabwean artist and activist that combines the use of mixed media to address social, political and cultural issues in Zimbabwe.