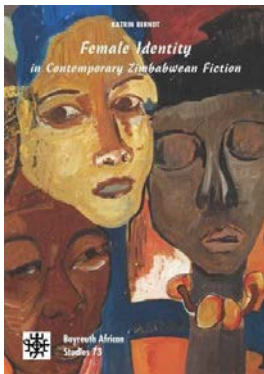


Female Identity in Contemporary Zimbabwean Fiction



Situated at the interface of postcolonial criticism and gender studies, the study offers in-depth analyses of how Zimbabwean writers of the post-independence era combine oral narrative conventions with literary modes and genres of the written British tradition. With a focus on selected novels by Yvonne Vera, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Chenjerai Hove, Vivienne Ndlovu, and Nozipo Maraire, the book discusses how their fiction addresses the growing up and the education of girls in societies shaped by two patriarchal heritages, and the opportunities for building a self-determined individual and a confident cultural identity. Female identity also serves as a motif to draw attention to cultural taboos such as sexual violence, disintegrating family structures, adoption and HIV/AIDS, and it introduces new perspectives on historical transformations such as the war of independence and the end of White minority rule. The analyses highlight a vital aspect of the selected novels: their engagement with the postcolonial challenge of negotiating identity, exemplified through the progressive literary formation of their main female characters. Women's identity, the study demonstrates, is composed of distinguished layers and subject positions that reflect the country's colonial legacy as well as the aporias of contemporary culture.