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## AFROCENTRICITY AND UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN LITERATURE: TOWARDS RE-STATING AND RE-IGNITION OF AFRICAN THINKING IN THE CRITICISM OF ZIMBABWEAN LITERATURE

*Kutsirayi Timothy Gondo, Thembelihle Gondo*

### Abstract

For a long time, indigenous African systems, experiences, knowledge, skills, philosophy, psychology, history and social experiences have been based on other people's views, values and historical experiences. They have been questioned, under-stated, re-interpreted and even doubted by many scholars of African literature using Eurocentric views and values. Thus, it cannot be denied that today there are so many literary scholars of African literature who have unreservedly used Eurocentric views and methodologies on African and Zimbabwean literature, creating a mismatch between our general understanding of African artistic and literary creations and their aesthetic values (Chinweizu et al., 1980; Achebe, 1990; Ngugi, 1986). This presentation believes that literary values that can be said to be suitable in evaluating African literature and African literary thinking should be based on our understanding of African people's natural reaction and interaction with

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their habitat, making African culture in the form of language, material and spiritual resources the exquisite bedrock of our understanding of African people and all their life and historical experiences. As Okpaku (1970) and Achebe (1990, 2000) would say, critical standards should derive from culture as the basis of sustainable criticism and development of African literature and in order to avoid dislocated and inappropriate knowledge applications. This paper uses a typically African oriented approach to evaluate some of the literary forms of criticisms by selected Zimbabwean critics. It argues that there is need to re-connect, re-ignite and re-claim African aesthetic values in the criticism of African literature in Zimbabwe.

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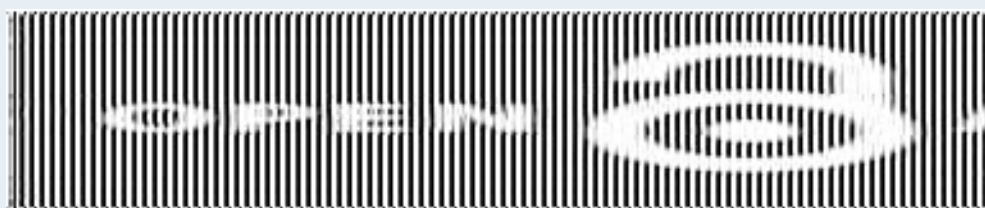
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