

## **Repression, Literary Dissent and the Paradox of Censorship in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the paradox of repression, dissent and censorship in Zimbabwe. It interrogates how selected literary artists in Zimbabwe have negotiated repression and censorship via choices of genre, codes, themes and publishing strategy. Given the internet-enabled diversification of publishing platforms, it is argued that alternative literary forms have emerged on social media, and, by refusing to be overtly political, some of the literature constitutes a new aesthetics that dissents without appearing to do so and compels us to rethink political action. The article demonstrates how state censorship appears to be contingent upon genre choices made by artists, potential size of audience, and fear that the supposed political harmony that the regime presides over is under threat. It concludes that cyber platforms have overturned traditional conceptions of literary genres and complicated the ability of the state to censor literary production. Ironically though, cyber platforms have also morphed into sites of repression. It is further concluded that censorship has often mobilised outrage in Zimbabwe's cyber citizens, thus paradoxically creating symbolic resistance and infinite opportunities for discourse.