



Ruramisai Charumbira

Denison University

Friday, April 4, 2:30pm

326 Academic Building

We will never be a colony again!: The Consequences of Privatizing the Legacy of “the Struggle” in Southern Africa

Abstract: In Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe, the word is that anyone who opposes the current incumbent – who has been in power for the past twenty-eight years – is a “witch” and a “puppet” of western governments. To that end, the president of that country has sought, again, to construct himself and those around him as the only legitimate heirs of Zimbabwe's struggles for freedom from colonial domination, both in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By privatizing the legacy of Zimbabwe's two major anti-colonial wars, Mugabe has made sure to construct any opposition as rooted in the “outsider who made us a colony.” The opposition, for its part, has not made any headway in reaching back to that same history and beyond to disown and challenge Mugabe's privatization of the country's history, and the legacy of those that stood against imperial domination before him. Similar patterns have emerged in other Southern African countries raising a concern in a region and continent rising out of its burdened past. Dr. Ruramisai Charumbira's talk will provide an historical perspective on the current situation in Zimbabwe, and offer a comparative analysis with two other countries in the region, Namibia and South Africa. Her major argument is that the gendered owing and privatization of history in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa spells disaster for the region.

Ruramisai Charumbira, is currently an Assistant Professor of History at Denison University, a liberal arts college in central Ohio. A graduate of Yale University, with a focus on Southern Africa, Dr. Charumbira's research is on women's and gender history, as well as intellectual history. She has published articles on women and religion, women and imperialism, and has a forthcoming article in the journal *History in Africa* titled: *Nehanda and Gender Victimhood in the 1896-97 Rebellions: Revisiting the Evidence*. She is also currently working on a book manuscript tentatively titled: “By Nehanda I Swear”: *Nehanda of Zimbabwe in Historical Memory*. Dr. Charumbira will be joining the Department of History at the University of Texas at Austin in the Fall of 2008.