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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Under the Skin** By D. Caute. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1983, 447 pp., £3.95, ISBN 0-14-005604-1.

**The Espionage of the Saints** By D. Caute. London, H. Hamilton, 1985, 160 pp., £9.95, ISBN 0-241-11750-X.

**The K-Factor** By D. Caute. London, M. Joseph, 1983, 216 pp., £8.95, ISBN 0-7181-2260-7.

David Caute is the kind of person White Rhodesians invited to dinner and then regretted having done so. More than any other account of the last years of UDI his *Under the Skin* exposes their obsessions and neuroses. And it does so by merging historical fact with numerous conversations gleaned from dinner parties and braais — conversations recorded in the comfort of Meikles Hotel or within the laagers of remote farmhouses. With an uncanny ear for speech patterns and clichés Caute allows his subjects sufficient verbal rope to hang themselves — then stands back and lets us view the result:

'in my opinion our black Rhodesians are the finest in Africa' [says a company director from Borrowdale], 'they are fine people and I am proud of them. If certain people would only get off our backs and let us get on with the job of building up this wonderful country then I believe we could make this thing work, I do believe that, David, I wouldn't stay here if I didn't' (p. 27).

Such conversations speak volumes.

But the narrator of *Under the Skin* is not a totally detached reporter. As the events of the war reach their bloody crescendo he becomes an eloquent spokesman against violence — aware, though, that words somehow sanitize the horror:

There is an unreal orderliness about lists of the dead . . . Death on the field of battle is contingent, violent, anarchic: a list of names is orderly, a way of regrouping in regimental squares after the chaos. This trooper hit by a landmine in the Mount Darwin area, that corporal stopped a bullet near Lupane; they rub shoulders for the first time after their lives have ended. One died in a flash, the other bled slowly, yielding his life through large, ragged wounds. But there is no blood, no sound of dying, on the printed page (p. 295).

This is the voice of one whose apparently careless cynicism masks a deep moral commitment to individual freedom and dignity.

And it is also the voice behind Caute's other important work about Zimbabwe — the essay 'Marechera and the Colonel — a Zimbabwean writer and the claim of the State' which appears in his book *The Espionage of the Saints* (pp. 1-96). Here Caute examines what he sees as three challenges to civil liberty during 1984 — and the Orwellian overtones are fundamental to his theme. In England there is the betrayal of Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdal; in Zimbabwe the imprisonment of Dambudzo Marechera. Despite their personal shortcomings,

says Caute, all three share a kind of heroism in the refusal to let their separate voices be quelled by the State and its apparatus.

Of course, it is not as simple as that in the telling — certainly not when dealing with Marechera — and Caute acknowledges as much in his Preface to the essay. He will, he disarmingly tells us, make some changes to 'the truth': certain conversations may be slightly altered; certain gaps may have to be filled. But through this fictive approach — paradoxically — events and people (often unnamed) are eerily recognizable, certainly to Zimbabwean readers. And it seems an ideal way of writing about Marechera, whose own relationship to objective reality was often problematic but whose work — given its rootedness in the shifting states of the unconscious — offers far more historical perception than most other Zimbabwean writers. Indeed, Caute's leaning towards the fictive in this essay frees him so that he can offer a much more complex picture than is common in journalistic writing of his hero/anti-hero: the man whose writing 'blisters every totem pole'.

But what happens when Caute turns to the novel form itself? Is he freed even further? Perhaps in his earlier work like *Comrade Jacob* (London, Quartet, 1974) and *The Decline of the West* (London, Panther, 1968) this was the case. But in *The K-Factor* — his metafictional account of the death of White Rhodesia — something goes very wrong. The story seems promising enough: it is 1979 and Mr and Mrs Laslet of Hastings Farm are surrounded by the effects of war. Enter Hector Nyangagwa, supposedly researching land issues for his Ph.D. But is he all he seems? Or is he really working for the comrades? And is not there something decidedly strange about the Laslets? Does their six-month-old baby really exist or is it a figment of everyone's imagination?

This final question is never really answered and yet the baby is central to any understanding of the novel. It is the focal point of Sonia Laslet's racial neurosis, but when the child is 'kidnapped' by a group of guerrillas their ransom note is painfully ironic: 'Your baby has gone. What have you lost?', it reads. So is the baby meant to stand for White obsessions and fantasies? Or are the references to Sonia's 'virgin birth' to be seen in conjunction with the predominant motif of the book: sexuality at its most animal and brutal?

Perhaps Caute feels that metafiction of this kind is the best way of exploring the absurdities and senselessness of White Rhodesia. But what are we left with? A brittle, superficial novel shocking only for its gratuitous violence. And, anyway, the Rhodesia of 1979 was far more surreal than any writer — except Dambudzo Marechera — has yet been able to grasp.

University of Zimbabwe

FIONA LLOYD

**To Breathe and Wait** By Nancy Partridge. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1986, 242 pp., Z\$7.88, ISBN 0-86922-379-8.

This story of Deidre, a widow in the Bulawayo of 1978, whose knowledge that she is dying brings her an ever-increasing awareness of perception about those she loves and the country she lives in, will perhaps excite uncomfortable memories for

many Whites who lived through the pre-Independence war years. A new dimension is added to her relationship with her friend Katharine when she at last leaves to understand the latter's conviction that the war being waged to preserve White supremacy is intrinsically immoral. The right of every human being to freedom, both personal and political, becomes obvious to her with the realization that Julia, her maid, and increasingly her friend, is exactly like herself in every respect and that their mutual interdependence must be based on an equality of fact as well as of personal recognition. At the same time, she acknowledges that her children have the right to stand alone, and that emotional independence is as unimportant as physical liberty. Threaded through the story is Deidre's own late blooming of heart and mind, paradoxically as her physical strength declines.

The tale is told in a stream-of-consciousness style which does not always succeed; some judicious pruning might well have sharpened the impact of the ever-flowing, sometimes rambling, thoughts, recognizably feminine in their preoccupation with home and family. Though the atmosphere of those years, the mood of those involved, is well captured, the book would certainly be improved by careful editing and a sharpening of the focus on the central problems. Finally, Mambo Press must be taken to task for the unacceptably large number of misprints and the erratic punctuation, notably as regards the use of the question mark, which are bound to irritate the reader.

*University of Zimbabwe*

VÉRONIQUE WAKERLEY

**Women and Law in Southern Africa** Edited by A. Armstrong. Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1987, xiv, 281 pp., Z\$5.00, ISBN 0-949225-48-7.

**Independence is not only for One Sex** By K. Bond-Stewart. Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1987, 128 pp., Z\$6.50, ISBN 0-949225-50-9.

**Young Women in the Liberation Struggle, Stories and Poems from Zimbabwe** By K. Bond-Stewart. Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1984, 67 pp., Z\$3.00, ISBN 0-949932-85-X.

**Zimbabwean Women in Industry** By P. Made and B. Lagerström. Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985, 60 pp., Z\$3.50, ISBN 0-949932-98-1.

All of the above books are published in Zimbabwe Publishing House's 'Women of Africa' series, but they are very different in concept and style. *Zimbabwean Women in Industry* irritated me in its bald and somewhat didactic style, and particularly in the number of uncaptioned photographs which — to me at least — were not self-explanatory. Presumably this book is aimed at the 'working class' women's market, to sensitize women workers to their specific disabilities in the labour market and to organize them rather more effectively than has been the case to date; in which case, it would be better produced in Shona, Ndebele and Tonga than in English.

*Young Women in the Liberation Struggle* is based on the writings of female ex-combatants in the course of their English studies at Ranche House College. There is a tendency in some of the pieces to mythologize, in the style of traditional

oral literature on this continent, but on the whole I found this collection — especially the longer accounts — gripping and very emotive reading. I hope that some of these accounts will find their way, in modified form, into school curricula at both primary and secondary level, and preferably in the indigenous languages of this country rather than (or at least as well as) English. I can think of no better illustration of alternative female role models for Zimbabwean children to be raised on, in any socialist attempt to create gender equality in our society.

*Independence is not only for One Sex* is in many ways an expanded and perhaps 'up-market' version of *Young Women in the Liberation Struggle*. It covers, disappointingly scantily, the life histories of a number of prominent (and some not-so-prominent) Zimbabwean women. As such, in my view, it falls between conflicting stools: it will disappoint the serious reader looking for local versions of the biography genre; equally well, it may be seen as a bit too long and complicated for those oriented to women's magazines. Perhaps its main appeal would be to the secondary school reader.

However, what emerges with crystal clarity as a recurrent theme in all three of these publications, is a very important lesson to women in society: it takes strength to be different, and women grow strong by practising being different! Change women's behaviour, and attitudes to women change too.

*Women and Law in Southern Africa* is, in contrast to the three books considered above, primarily an academic collection put together for university teaching purposes. Its fourteen papers are divided thematically into six parts (women and property, marriage and divorce, women and their children, women's legal studies, women and health, and women and criminal law). Their geographical distribution is uneven: Botswana (3), Mozambique (1), Swaziland (4), Zambia (1) and Zimbabwe (5). Four of the papers, including those dealing with Mozambique and Zambia and two of the three on Botswana, are reprints of prior publications elsewhere.

The theoretical orientation of the papers is generally concerned with a sober, empirical analysis of the problems generated for women by dual systems of law (with the exception of one orthodox Marxist, Ncube, who insists on attributing it all to feudalism and/or capitalism). What is striking about the problems that women in this region experience with the legal systems of their respective countries (apart from the many similarities in legal structures) is that so many of them emanate from marriage or its legal absence, reflecting, perhaps, what anthropological Marxists have analysed as the ideological and material trappings of the 'lineage' mode of production, rather than feudalism articulated with capitalism.

Eight of the thirteen authors are themselves women, and all but one are qualified lawyers, most in academic posts. Not surprisingly, then, the focus of most of the papers is on legal analysis of the law. Only those by Griffiths (on the way in which effectively single women manipulate both customary and statutory systems in Botswana in order to obtain assistance in raising their children) and Chikanza and Chinamora (on abortion in Zimbabwe), bring empirical data to bear on legal problems. One may argue, of course, that logic is sufficient to analyse problems in the law, and that case law highlights such problems without the need for empirical investigation. But as an anthropologist who has approached legal problems primarily from the angle of people living in society rather than from the perspective of administering the law, I feel that there is considerable room for fruitful collaboration between lawyers and social scientists

on these issues. For example, in considering problems of 'dual marriage' (statutory and customary marriages existing simultaneously for a married pair), there is no reference in this book to the extensive work of anthropologists in identifying and defining the marriage process in the 'traditional' societies in question. Nor is the anthropological literature on bridewealth apparently known, with its hard-won distinctions between payments in patrilineal and matrilineal societies, and the precise rights that are transacted by bridewealth in each. Greater clarity in legal understanding might emerge from using this literature.

That said, however — and with no intention of delving into the many specifics of the individual arguments — I found this a serious and useful collection, less uneven in the quality of its individual papers than is commonly the case (though not without some contradictions between individual authors on the 'correct' interpretation of specific aspects of Zimbabwean colonial law). It will undoubtedly and deservedly find a place beyond its primary orientation as a source for students reading law.

University of Zimbabwe

ANGELA P. CHEATER

**Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe** By D. Lan.

Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1985, xix, 244 pp., ISBN 0-85255-200-9, Z\$12.50.

It is a performance. The book *Guns and Rain* is a theatrical event, both entertaining and absorbing. The author, David Lan, had the wit and courage to enter a remote corner of Zimbabwe, Dande, at Independence to study the relationship between the spirit mediums and the guerrillas. After spending over eighteen months in Dande, Lan wrote his thesis for which he was awarded his doctorate by the London School of Economics. This book is based on the thesis. It is about one aspect of the struggle for Zimbabwe (1966–80) as reported in an operational zone in the Zambezi valley. It sets out to describe the active support given to the resistance by Shona religious leaders, and to detail the collaboration between ancestors and their descendants, the past and the present, the living and the dead. Using structural analysis, Lan examines the politics of resistance, gives an account of an important historical event, and traces Shona social theory and practice. His study has been widely praised as a model which shows how anthropology can contribute to politics and history.

Lan has a writer's eye for a catchy phrase — 'The Lions of Rain' and 'The Sons of the Soil' are two of his section headings — and a craftsman's ability to thread themes using carefully chosen words like coloured beads so that the whole is an intricately worked and pleasing ornament. Yet my copy of *Guns and Rain* is littered with question marks. How does he know this? I want to ask. Where is his evidence? How many people told him that? Where is the counter evidence? For example, let us see what Lan says about work. In the second chapter, on 'The People and Land', he describes the Korekore of Dande as living in villages in which,

Each household has its own fields where the men work in the early morning while

their wives care for their children and prepare the morning meal. Women and men return to work till midday, eat and rest until mid-afternoon then return to the fields until the sun goes down.

There are very few families in Dande which rely entirely on the land for their subsistence. Most have a father or a son, a brother or a male cousin in work, or seeking work, somewhere 'on the mountain'. Without these wages it would be hard to make it even through the better years, almost impossible to survive the worst. But all these wage earners return to work their own fields when they can. Work in the towns, on the farms, in the mines has of course a powerful influence on shaping their view of their world. Nonetheless work in the fields is somehow a more basic form of work, 'real' work, providing a crucial framework of identity — as a member of a household, a lineage, a chieftancy [*sic*] and ultimately of a clan as well. . . .

In the chapters that follow we will advance deep into the undergrowth of mythology and ritual, of symbolism and belief. As we pick our way between these constructs and imaginings, it will be useful to keep in mind this central image: the villages, their fields near the banks of the rivers, the women and men of Dande working them, following the same paths over the fields, first to hoe out furrows, then back to the start and across again dribbling fertilizer (*mushonga*, or medicine) into the earth's new wounds, then back and across to sow the seeds, then back and across to weed and again to weed, day after day, with one eye on the sky, the birds, the soil, insects, winds, the mountain top seeking the signs of rain and then back and across one final time to harvest the heads of sorghum, the tufts of cotton, the pale green cobs of maize. The final time, that is, until next year (pp. 11-12).

Given the density of the undergrowth and the emphasis that Lan later places on agricultural work his description of labour and reproduction is inadequate. His sketch of field work applies to only some months of the year. I doubt that women stay home to prepare breakfast while men go early to the fields to work; surely people in the hot, dry valley conditions hoe and plant in stations, not in furrows; the people of Dande surely grow sorghum varieties that ripen after the maize, and he gives no figures on remittances from migrant labourers. He claims that in Dande a family needs 3.25 hectares of maize to provide a subsistence and cash for basic needs, yet he does not provide evidence for so finely-wrought a figure nor tell us how large 'a family' is. Lan's description reads easily but what authority do his words bear? I have just completed a study of labour in the Zambezi Valley so it is perhaps mean of me to pick on these points. However, Lan later places enormous importance on his construction of work and it underpins his analysis of the role of mediums. He says of the sexual division of labour that men clear the bush for new fields and some hunt; that women do all household activities and maintain river gardens; and that 'All other agricultural tasks may be carried out by women or by men separately or together' (p. 12). We have been told, thus far, that, apart from clearing virgin land and gardening, men and women do all agricultural tasks; that agricultural work is 'real' work; and that the identity of a person in Dande is framed by agricultural labour.

In Chapter Five, 'The Valley of Affines', Lan gives an elegant analysis of the rituals performed by *mhondoro* (literally 'lions', in this context the most important spirits of the land). He explicates the symbolism of blood and the moon and links these to weekly rest days (*zvisi*, sing. *chisi*) and monthly rest days (*chiropa* and *rusere*) when all agricultural work is forbidden and only domestic labour is allowed. He goes on,

If male work is forbidden when there is no moon in the sky and *mhondoro* do not possess their mediums at the same time and for the same reasons, it seems possible that possession is in a sense thought of as male work. Let us follow this possibility and see if it leads us anywhere worth getting to (p. 92).

Well, one is surprised to learn that agricultural work is male work. But let us follow Lan further. He shows that rest days are

associated with death on which no male work, including possession, can take place. But on the anniversaries of these highly significant deaths (the deaths of the *mhondoro*, the chiefs of the past, the death of the moon) one kind of work, women's work may go ahead as usual. Does this mean that men's work is in some sense opposed to death, on a death-day it must cease, whereas women's work is somehow associated with death, so closely associated in fact that on a death-day this work alone may continue? We need to look a little more closely at what women's work, in the widest implications of this phrase, actually is (p. 92).

Not only is agricultural work male work (a fact that has escaped the attention of most anthropologists in sub-Saharan Africa) but women's work is associated with death. We give birth to death? Wait, Lan proves it.

Where I worked, in the Omay, on *zvizi* days men made fishing nets; built houses, granaries, goat pens, and chicken coops; carved hoe handles, stools or drums; wove slings; fixed bicycles or sandals; and spent hours nourishing relations among kin and neighbours not necessarily over pots of beer. Do the men of Dande not do these tasks? Is none of that male work? My study shows that women spend much more time on agricultural activities than men do even when men are at home and not away earning money. (In a recent ILO study, 'Labour Productivity in Zimbabwe', 1984, a large sample of farmers were interviewed of whom only one third were men because the rest were migrants, yet the author of the report concludes that 'men are farmers and women are their assistants.') Is it different in Dande? Are the women doing male work? What nonsense. Lan continues his analysis, tying together notions of impurity (menstrual blood) and the loss of teeth and burial practice and life as a drying-out process (with women reverting periodically to 'utter wetness'), until he concludes that,

Women's work is thought of as the reproduction of human life by biological means with all the wetness, softness and blood that that entails. Men's work, by contrast, is the reproduction of human life through the agency of the mediums, the recreation of the lives of the senior lineage ancestors by means of the rituals of possession (p. 94).

This extraordinary exclusion of women from the reproduction of human life through the ancestors is backed up by comments on women's 'very insignificant part' in the burials of adults and their role as 'de-individualised women' at possession rituals. Finally, Lan says,

To string all this imagery together: on *chiropa* [*chiropa* is the day after the non-appearance of the moon in the sky — a rest day] the moon is dead. It is the day of blood when the earth may not be cut into with a hoe nor may any other men's work such as hunting be done. Only women's work in the house or the gathering of wild plants is allowed. On *chiropa* there are no *mhondoro*, no spirits, none of the life after death, the re-emergence of the ancestors of the lineage made possible by the mediums and the men. There is only biological life, the life of the menstrual blood of wives, that is to say the life made possible

by affines. On *chiropa* the ancestors of one's own lineage do no work. They are dead and the mediums cannot restore them to life, for *chiropa* is a day polluted by affinal blood . . .

For the Korekore, then, there are two kinds of life. There is the biological blood-drenched life associated with women as affines, and there is the social and intellectual life-in-death of the *mhondoro* controlled by men . . .

It is as if the symbolism of biological reproduction, in reality the most significant source of fertility and creativity, has been stolen by men to lend lustre to their own cheap-jack construction of cloth, beads, sticks and beer (pp. 95-8).

Who, I wonder, is employing cheap-jack constructions? Lan grants women only biological reproductive powers and identifies them with death (see p. 95) and as affines, which is the same, in his overall analysis, as strangers. He empowers men with control over the social and intellectual life of the shades. Men do the 'real work' and have 'ancestral fertility'. His analysis of Korekore myths is similarly extraordinary in the smooth manner in which he turns the central role of women into one of insignificance and subservience. Despite the handicaps that women carry — they are blood-drenched, insignificant and de-individualized — four *mhondoro* are, Lan admits, regarded as women or as having a female aspect (p. 88) (four, I presume, of the fifteen *mhondoro* Lan interviewed, p. 232). Of these four, only two are 'unequivocally women': Nehanda is the daughter of Mutota, Chiqua is the daughter of Nyamapfeka, and the mediums who are possessed by them are always female. Besides, there are other female mediums in Dande but they are possessed by male *mhondoro*. The author then comments, 'Despite this I do not deal with Nehanda and Chiqua in what follows because their 'femaleness' is purely functional' (p. 88). 'Maleness' is dysfunctional and therefore worthy of attention?

He eventually places the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in debt to the spirit of a woman, Ambuya Nehanda, 'the *mhondoro* whose mediums had participated both in the first liberation struggle, the rebellion of 1896, and in the second' (pp. 217-18). During the second War of Liberation, Nehanda's medium was Kunzaruwa, a woman, and it is with her power and influence in Dande that Lan opens his book. Perhaps Nehanda and Kunzaruwa are honorary males, like female anthropologists.

*Guns and Rain* is a fine performance. But Lan has done a great disservice to Shona women. It is my understanding that Shona women can take hold of positions of enormous power, that their myths grant them places of honour and significance, that their rituals offer scope for the control and direction of events, and that their part in reproduction (both as mothers and as agriculturalists) is of prime, not secondary, importance to the welfare of the nation. Women are not free: the burden of male domination is great but an analysis such as the one Lan gives undermines the opportunities Shona culture provides — opportunities only being won back now by women in the West.

**Shona Sculpture** By F. Mor. Harare, The Author, 1987, 160 pp., 100 col. pl., Z\$26.00.

The third and most recent publication on the stone sculpture of Zimbabwe is the book *Shona Sculpture* by Fernando Mor, written while he was the Italian Ambassador to Zimbabwe.\* This local publication appeared simultaneously with the Italian original in Italy, and the author's intention is to introduce the sculpture movement to the foreign public, basing his work on 'notes, reflections and conversations on Shona sculpture' during his time in Zimbabwe.

Mor has attempted to summarize the phenomenon of what he terms the 'Shona sculpture movement', firstly by analysing the movement's historical and cultural relevance from an art-historical perspective, secondly by analysing the work itself in terms of aesthetics, and thirdly by examining the motivations behind the artists' drive to creativity.

The issue of defining the contemporary sculpture movement in terms of its relevance within the cultural and historical context of African art generally is contentious and has occupied critics since the beginnings of the movement in the early 1960s. Mor's factual knowledge of contemporary African art and the historical background to the arts of Zimbabwe in particular is insufficient, and he does not present the reader with any clearly-defined perspective which could facilitate a more perceptive response to the work. He claims Shona culture is interesting historically only from an 'anthropological and human' point of view (p. 13), and dismisses or ignores any aesthetic traditions which preceded the modern. The most innovative art movement will reflect what has gone before in the very process of focusing on new dimensions; in fact, Mor himself states in a later chapter 'all true form is metamorphosis, the reflection of the past and of becoming' (p. 61). However, he makes no reference to the precedents of the Zimbabwe Birds (found at Great Zimbabwe and other similar ruins), or to any other evidence of the traditional use of sculptural form, as may be found in media such as clay and wood.

Mor's historical summary also contains inaccuracies, including referring to the 'beautiful graffiti' on the walls of caves in the context of Shona culture (pp. 13, 17) although these are creations of the San people. He also makes the curious announcement, in referring to the students of the National Gallery's BAT Workshop, that he has 'never seen in their hands a book or illustrations of plastic arts' (p. 22). Here he erroneously uses the term 'Workshop School', a phrase used to describe the loose association of sculptors who centred their activities around the National Gallery during the 1960s and 1970s.

From a rather shaky attempt at a historical perspective, Mor examines the work in its cultural context. To what extent is it rooted in an 'ethnic' culture, and what has been the influence of the European model? He points out that the movement arose 'without any specific heritage', that it surpasses 'the ethnic element... the figure or mask that has often degenerated into mass produced craft which satisfies tourists' facile tastes for the exotic (p. 38.) He sums up his

\*The other two are J. Kuhn, *Myth and Magic: The Art of the Shona of Zimbabwe* (Cape Town, D. Nelson, 1978), and M. I. Arnold, *Zimbabwean Stone Sculpture* (Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1981); see the essay reviews 'Shona sculpture', *Zambezia* (1979), VII, 111-14, and 'Contrasting views of Shona Sculpture', *Zambezia* (1982), X, 49-57.

perspective by saying, 'It is African sculpture that nonetheless unconsciously expresses itself in modern terms, akin to the European sensibility' (p. 38.)

The problem that a contemporary art movement can flourish in the heart of Africa without obvious links to an ethnic tradition continues to perplex many Eurocentric critics and historians. During a recent discussion which took place in Paris following the opening of a major exhibition of Zimbabwean sculpture, museum directors, critics and historians were concerned almost solely with obtaining an explanation as to how the work was related to a 'tribal' origin. When an explanation could not be given in obvious terms — such as, perhaps, that the Shona worshipped stone images — the movement was dismissed as derivative of European traditions, although it was acknowledged that the work itself was extremely successful in aesthetic terms. An artist and sculptor showed greater understanding with the comment that 'there has been nothing new in art since the stone age' — in other words, the deeper currents of aesthetic creativity flow on irrespective of the superficial changes wrought by time and culture.

It has been something of a tradition for many European writers to fall back on Frank McEwen's considerable influence as first director of the National Gallery in attempting to explain the 'modernity' of Zimbabwean sculpture. Mor subscribes to this view: 'we owe to Frank McEwen . . . the perspicacity which recognised the plastic potential of some industrious artisans in a distant area of the Nyanga mountains . . . (p. 20). He goes on to state that

the clarifying and illuminating work of McEwen did not consist in the imposition of European influences or models, with the attendant risk of an inauspicious acculturation. Instead he offered to talented young artists the arduously reached conclusions of European aesthetics on the concept of Art: understood not as the representation of an hypothetical given exterior, but as a creative spiritual fact (p. 20).

The African artist does not need to be familiar with the paths of European art history in order to reach the same conclusion, for his perception of the nature of art is instinctive, as indeed is the perception of the creative artist from time immemorial. The process of intellectualizing the creative act was a part of the dawning of the 'modern' age in Europe, accompanied by the compartmentalization of life and thought into specific disciplines, and a separation of art from life. This led to a certain spiritual sterility in European art, resulting in the artist grasping after form and technique as ends in themselves.

By contrast, Zimbabwean sculpture is generally accepted as having an immense vitality of expression, the inspiration for which is drawn from the artists' inner reality, a reality which encompasses a rich panorama of beliefs concerning the mythical, the spiritual, and which are their cultural heritage. Mor acknowledges that the unique characteristics of the sculpture have been influenced by the artists' cultural orientation: 'it would have been a serious error to have sought to suffocate the ethnic culture which still survives and is at the origin of the inspiration and authenticity of the Shona sculptors'. However, Mor has no wish to delve into Shona symbolism in his quest to explain the inspiration of the work, as he states that the themes of Shona animistic symbology 'are irrelevant to our aesthetic vision and independent of the works' true artistic value' (p. 40).

The greatest strength of Mor's book lies in his descriptive prose of the aesthetic qualities of the work itself, and in describing the response to art. For those wishing to gain some understanding of the nature of sculpture as an art form, said by

Henry Moore to be one of the most difficult arts to understand, passages of Mor's descriptive, sometimes lyrical, prose can be illuminating, although the proliferation of words and ideas sometimes borders on the obtuse.

The book contains 100 photographs of works in Harare at the time of writing, which together with a biography of artists, gives the most up to date source of reference currently available.

*National Gallery of Zimbabwe*

GILLIAN J. HUIZENGA

**The Commonwealth Observer Group in Zimbabwe** By S. Chan, Gweru, Mambo Press, Occasional Paper Socio-Economic 18, 1985, 93 pp., Z\$4.50.

The first half of this booklet is a personal recollection by a participant while the second half is made up of his letters written at the time to a friend. As such it is a useful, lively adjunct to H. Wiseman and A. M. Taylor's, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: The Politics of Transition* (Oxford, Pergamon, 1981, reviewed *ante* (1983), XI, 73, 78). The author emphasizes the lucky improvisation that helped make the group and the elections of 1980 a success; the one politically significant detail is the Group's pressure on the Governor to moderate his increasingly anti-ZANU (PF) stance.

R.S.R.

**Local Government in Zimbabwe** By J. D. Jordan, Gweru, Mambo Press, Occasional Papers Socio-Economic 17, 1984, 92 pp., Z\$3.60.

This booklet is designed as an introduction to the functions of local government. At a time when the structures of local government are being rapidly changed, students will find it useful, and salutary, to be reminded of the basic facts of why local government is necessary, what it does and how. Local government has been a much neglected subject in this country and it is to be hoped that this booklet may help stimulate further academic work on the subject.

**John [R.] Bradburne of Mutemwa [1921-1979] Three Wishes Fulfilled** By J. T. Dove. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1985, 24 pp., Z\$1.04.

**Strange Vagabond of God: The Story of John Bradburne** By J. T. Dove. Swords, Eire, Ward River Press, 1983, 296 pp., no price indicated.

John Bradburne was a mystic, poet and musician, who joined the Third Order of St Francis and came from England to Zimbabwe in 1962. In 1969 he moved to the desolate Mutemwa Leprosy Camp where he lived in total simplicity and dedication. Unlike Arthur Shearly Cripps, Bradburne was a mystic who had no time for the world of politics and publication and devoted himself entirely to the lepers. He did not endear himself to the local people and it seems that they

murdered him in 1979 after the local guerrilla commander had found no cause to proceed against such a man. These two books by his friend, the director of Silveira House, are a pious record of this martyr.

R.S.R.

**Guy and Molly Clutton-Brock: Reminiscences from Their Family and Friends on the Occasion of Guy's Eightieth Birthday.** Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1987, x, 142 pp., Z\$10,50.

**The Victory of Chief Rekayi Tangwena** *By H. Moyana.* Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1987, vi, 49 pp., Z\$2,95.

The long sub-title of the first book under review indicates its nature. The forty-six contributors have written thirty-six short appreciations about half of which deal with the Clutton-Brocks's time in Zimbabwe. Factually there is little new to what they themselves, P. Chater and D. Mutasa have already published, but it is a warm, fitting tribute to a couple who spoke up for African rights from an early date.

The second booklet, the first in a new series, *Makers of Zimbabwean History*, deals with a famous protagonist of African rights whose stand against the government and its land policies was often blamed on the Clutton-Brocks by the Rhodesia Front. Again there is little new in this publication as it is largely a re-write of the author's chapter on the subject in his *The Political Economy of Land in Zimbabwe* (Mambo Press, 1984). Common to both versions is the author's ignorance of, or refusal to admit, the evidence cited by Isaacman in 1976 that the Tangwena came into Southern Rhodesia as late as 1902 after their refusal to join their paramount Makombe in his resistance to the Portuguese. This fact, of course, invalidates Tangwena's argument of historic, ancestral rights to his land, but it had no effect on his legal rights under Section 93 of the Land Apportionment Act (upon which his appeal to the High Court was won) and, furthermore, in no way diminishes his courage in asserting the moral-political argument.

R.S.R.

**The Cross between Rhodesia and Zimbabwe: Racial Conflict in Rhodesia, 1962-1979** *By D. A. Mungazi.* New York, Vantage Press, 1981, xiv, 338 pp., no price indicated.

**The Road to Zimbabwe 1890-1980** *By A Verrier.* London, Jonathan Cape, 1986, xv, 364 pp., £16,00.

The titles of these books (Verrier's is essentially the same as that of C. M. B. Ute's published eight years earlier) are reminiscent of that spate of works on this theme that I surveyed in 'Last days of White Rhodesia' (*ante* (1983), XI, 73-8).

Mungazi's is a chronicle of events compiled largely from American newspaper reports and has nothing new to say on the subject. Verrier's book, however, is a cut above the average of those reviewed earlier and some attempt has been made to consult British Cabinet Papers and Sir Roy Welensky's papers. On the other

hand, it covers exactly the same ground as the others; and despite the benefit of several years of Zimbabwean independence and new publications to guide him, the author faithfully follows his predecessors, both British and Zimbabwean, in telling us more of the policies of the British, American and South African governments than of the priorities of the Rhodesian government or the dynamics of the White political economy there.

R.S.R.

**An Act of Treason: Rhodesia 1965.** By J. Todd. Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1982, 168 pp. Z\$4.26.

**The Right to Say No.** By J. Todd. Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1987, 204 pp. Z\$9.50.

**Black behind Bars.** By D. N. E. Mutasa, Harare, Longman Zimbabwe, 1983, x, 150 pp. Z\$6.95.

These books are all re-issues of works published in Britain (in 1966, 1972 and 1974, respectively) and banned in Rhodesia until after Independence.

All three are republished basically unchanged but the first, a survey of the background to U.D.I., has a short introduction by S. G. Mpfu. The second, a description of the events surrounding the Pearce Commission, is unchanged. The third, originally entitled *Rhodesian Black behind Bars*, has a new introduction by the Hon. M. Nyagumbo. They were reviewed in this journal when they originally appeared (*ante* 1973), III, 103-4 and (1976) IV, 125-6. Longman Zimbabwe is performing a useful service in making these books available to local readers.

R.S.R.

**God Gave Growth: The History of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe 1903-1980** By H. Soderstrom. Uppsala, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, *Studia Missionalia* 40, 1984, x, 237 pp. Z\$8.10.

This is the history of one of the smaller mission churches in Zimbabwe, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which began in Zululand. Its chosen area was Mberengwa and apart from its following migrants to the towns it has not extended greatly beyond its original base (the Lutheran missions in Chivi and Gutu established by the Berlin Missionary Society were absorbed by the Dutch Reformed Church). The author, who spent some ten years in Zimbabwe, has written an interesting survey of a church which was early to take on a Zimbabwean identity and to take an interest in African advancement, African music and, in the person of H. von Sickard, in local history; as such, it is a useful complement to P. Zachrisson's *An African Area in Change: Belingwe 1894-1946* (Gothenburg, 1978).

R.S.R.