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**Wild Places of Zimbabwe** By *Dick Pitman*. Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1980, 192pp., Z\$11.30 (h/b), Z\$4.75 (p/b).

**Ivory, Apes and Peacocks** By *C. Emily Dibb*. Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1981, 272pp., Z\$11.50 (h/b), Z\$4.70 (p/b).

**The Valley of Tantalika** By *Richard Rayner*. Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1980, 165pp., Z\$11.50 (h/b), Z\$4.70 (p/b).

**Call-of-the-marsh: Life with a Basenji** By *Jill Wylie*. Bulawayo, Books of Zimbabwe, 1979, 302pp., Z\$11.50

Today's writers on African wildlife are faced with an enormous challenge. Wildlife is recognized as one of the continent's greatest assets, yet it is being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. The relentless growth of the human population, together with environmental degradation, drought and poverty, is placing many species in jeopardy and we can expect to see a number of them become extinct in the near future.

Tragically, most of Africa's inhabitants are unaware of the glory and uniqueness of its wildlife, and of how little time there is left. In Zimbabwe a whole generation is growing up without any contact with wild creatures, for many rural areas now have little or no wildlife; the National Parks are too expensive or inaccessible for the bulk of the population, whose knowledge of wildlife will come only from books. The wildlife author is faced with the problem of writing books that will kindle an interest in their subjects, without being earnest and dull on the one hand or trivial and anthropomorphic on the other.

The four books reviewed here range from the serious to the light-hearted. In a sense, they all fail to meet the objectives of stimulating a general interest in wildlife because the authors all come from a small segment of Zimbabwe's population and the experiences they relate cannot be shared by the majority. They all serve to emphasize how desperately this country needs good, Black writers on wildlife who can make people aware of their heritage and awaken a desire to save it. All of the books under review describe events and ways of life that no longer exist and this gives them a special poignancy and interest, but we still need books dealing with the contemporary problems of wildlife in this country.

Dick Pitman attempts to do this and discusses the various problems faced by the great wild areas of Zimbabwe. His book is an account of a trip to some of Zimbabwe's most spectacular and inaccessible wild areas in an unpredictable and cartankerous Land Rover. It was written in 1979, when the liberation war was drawing to a close, and the most interesting aspect is his description of the way staff of the Department of National Parks lived during those troubled times. I was a member of the Department then and I especially enjoyed reading about people and events that I knew or knew of.

His love of these wild areas comes over very well and he manages to capture the special qualities of living and working in them. The zest and enthusiasm of people doing arduous, sometimes dangerous and often ill-rewarded work is well-described. The time that the author writes of could be considered a high-water mark in the history of wildlife management in Zimbabwe because the

relative isolation that the country had been in prior to this meant that we had not been fully exposed to the problems affecting wildlife elsewhere in Africa.

Dick Pitman discusses these problems in some depth and gives graphic descriptions of the effects of poaching. This discussion seems a little naïve now, in view of the ferocity of the poaching campaign against our wildlife that is now taking place. At the time this book was written it seemed impossible that our black rhinoceros population could be decimated as it has been. If the spirit of resourcefulness that is described in the book still exists, then there is some hope.

C. Emily Dibb is the daughter of one of Zimbabwe's earliest wildlife photographers and her book describes an enchanted childhood on a rambling property on the outskirts of Bulawayo, surrounded by domestic and wild animals of all kinds. I read the book with nostalgia since I grew up in a similar environment in the Matopos and knew many of the people she writes about. This nostalgia was combined with sadness though, because few children today will be able to share these experiences.

She has a gift of characterization of people and animals and her description of the Toppies' evening chorus is one of the best I have read. Perhaps adults always seem larger than life but her book contains accounts of many seemingly eccentric people — which is how I remember the Bulawayo of my youth. I especially enjoyed the story of the filming expedition to Gorongosa for it summarizes the difficulties and excitement of doing things only a few years ago, things that now seem easy. Travelling by car — and there are some nice car stories in this book — symbolizes for me how tamed Zimbabwe has become: and how it is the duller for it.

In *The Valley of Tantalika*, Richard Rayner has written a story about the hand of man as seen through the eyes of the animals, in particular Tantalika the otter and a small group of impala. I find such books too improbable to be able to enjoy them and it is certainly difficult to write a good book in this vein. Nevertheless, Rayner has written a rather moving story which draws attention to the plight of the animals when man decides to take a hand in their world. If such a book can remind people that all development schemes involve the destruction of natural habitats it will have served a valuable purpose.

I am not sure what it takes to write a good book about a dog; I think high adventure, hard men, hard dogs and a harsh environment are essential ingredients. *Call-of-the-marsh* is a story of a Basenji, no doubt an unusual dog, which was the author's pet for some thirteen years. The book includes some vignettes of country life in Zimbabwe during the 1960s and of encounters with wild animals, but I soon tired of *Call-of-the-marsh* (for such was the dog's name). Surely Jock of the Bushveld or White Fang never had to worry about such 'ho-hum' things as being dosed for worms? This book is written in the form of a diary which I found irritating at first, infuriating somewhat later, and it ultimately ruined the book for me. If it had been written in a narrative style with less attention to daily trivia it would have been a much better book.

**Zimbabwe Law Review** (1983/4), I & II. Harare, Univ. of Zimbabwe, Dep. of Law, 1985, 289 pp., various rates of subscription.

The first and second volumes of the *Zimbabwe Law Review* appeared in 1985. They were intended to cover the years 1983 and 1984. I hope that Volumes III and IV will appear in 1986 to bring us up to date. The *Review*, which should be referred to in abbreviated form as *Z.L. Rev.* to distinguish it from the *Zimbabwe Law Reports* (*Z.L.R.*), is the successor to the University Law Department's *Zimbabwe Law Journal* which was published between 1961 and 1982.

Why do university law departments publish Law Reviews or Journals? Partly, no doubt, to 'keep up with the Joneses'. Most reputable law departments do so. Therefore, a law department which does not do so feels that it is not reputable. But there is a nobler motive, and it has to do with the dynamics of the relationship between the university and the profession, between academics and practitioners. (I use the word 'practitioners' here in an extended sense to include Government, which 'practises' law by making and enforcing it.)

Teachers and practitioners can coexist on three levels. At worst they can ignore each other, going their separate ways and maintaining an intellectual aloofness with its accompanying untested prejudices. If they recognize each other's existence and develop a relationship, then that relationship can go one of two ways. It can be fruitful, with a dynamic tension between the two parties sparking each other to new heights; or it can be barren and thus, inevitably, destructive, each criticizing, demeaning and diminishing the other.

The *Zimbabwe Law Review* is, in this sense, the academic outreach towards practice; the manifestation, from the University's point of view, of its relationship with practitioners and with Government. It is, of course, something more than that as well. It is a show-piece of the Law Department, a stage on which are displayed the achievements as well as the internal relationships of the Department, those between student and staff, progressive and conservative groups, the Department and the University. So it looks inwards and outwards, a mirror, a lighthouse, a signal, a beacon and an illumination.

I would judge the *Review*, therefore, by two standards: How does it contribute towards a creative dynamic relationship between the University, the profession and the Government? And how much does it show of the Law Department's own internal dynamism?

I would give the *Review* very high marks on the first basis. The first three articles on Family and Customary Law by Doris Galen, Robert Seidman and Julie Stewart are extraordinarily useful and thought-provoking discussions of questions which are at the centre of today's stage. For anyone concerned with the reform, application or development of the law in these areas, they must be required reading.

These are followed by two articles which relate our law to that of Tanzania in the one case and Zambia in the other — a useful reminder to practitioners that we can and should look beyond South Africa and England. The article on the *Zambian Bill of Rights* is particularly illuminating, and an interesting endorsement of the value of a justiciable Bill of Rights.

Stewart Cant has written a somewhat abstruse article on 'Police Discretion', which, like some of the other articles, might benefit from having a summary either as a headnote or footnote. Next, there is an article by Geoffrey Feltoe on the

perennially absorbing subject of provocation as a defence in murder or assault charges, tracing the growth in our law through *Tenganyika's* and *Nangani's* cases, as it develops differently from the South African law.

Finally in this section of the *Review* there is a reproduction of an address by Shadreck Gutto to the 1984 Summer School on 'Law and Legal Education in the period of transition from Capitalism to Socialism'.

The next section of the *Review* is entitled 'Dialogue' and contains an 18-page article by Kempton Makamure and Shadreck Gutto. I am not sure that it is a dialogue unless you define dialogue as a monologue by two people. The article is well-constructed although for my taste spoiled by the use of emotive language in place of reasoned argument. It criticizes the foreign policy of the United States of America.

The student contribution section which follows shows the value of the Department's requirement of a dissertation from its students as part of the BL course. The three articles are, in fact, expanded and polished dissertations by students, two of whom are now on the staff. They are well worth reading.

Ben Hlatshwayo gives a critical historical analysis of the Hire-Purchase Law of Zimbabwe from a 'historical materialist' point of view; Welshman Ncube has some useful and thoughtful comments on the Legal Age of Majority Act and the decision in *Katekwe v. Muchabaiwa*; and Moses Chinyenze discusses a book on *lobola* by the ever-controversial and stimulating Ignatius Chigwedere.

At the end of the volume there are four comments on decided cases. There should, I think, be more. An article by Felicity Rooney on the Legal Aid Clinic is valuable because it is a practical commentary on a most important aspect of the University's work — its contribution towards society which at the same time provides practical training. The *Review* ends with a reproduction of the text of the Nkomati Accords, a Survey of Legislation during the period 1980-4, and two book reviews.

I have said that this first edition of the *Zimbabwe Law Review* scores well as a constructive and creative outreach towards practitioners. I think it succeeds almost equally in its effort to show us, outside the University, what the Department is achieving and trying to achieve. I hope that in the next volume we may hear more about the proposed changes in the curriculum and the reasons for those changes.

*Supreme Court of Zimbabwe*

Mr Justice N.J. McNALLY

**Two Minutes to Midnight** Various authors. Harare, Gemini/Kailani Publishers, 1985, 184pp., Z\$11.50.

**Ivory Madness** By David M.H. Lemon. Harare, The College Press, Modern Writers of Zimbabwe Series, 1983, 146pp., Z\$4.95.

So much of contemporary publishing in Zimbabwe is naturally concerned with great issues that it is something of a relief to turn for a moment to some lighter literature, and both *Two Minutes to Midnight* and *Ivory Madness* are very light literature indeed, albeit for different reasons.

*Two Minutes to Midnight* is a polished collection of short-short stories chosen,

says the introduction, 'from a wide range of material...including the prize-winning entries in several "horror competitions"'. International experience on the part of most of the authors is evident in an assured handling of material and the skilful introductions of the chilling climaxes, evident too in the originality and the variety of the themes. This is reading admirably suited to the odd idle moment, though perhaps, for the nervous reader, rather less admirably suited if those odd idle moments lie in fact around midnight!

In *Ivory Madness*, on the other hand, the author's lack of experience and even more his lack of exposure to competent writing by others, is equally evident. In place of the cosmopolitan gloss of the short-story collection, it is an uncompromisingly indigenous product, in its mores as in its setting. A first novel by a Zimbabwean writer, it suffers from stock types in place of characters, an unskilled prose and a liberal use of clichés. Despite these handicaps, however, there are hints of future potential. The plot is imaginatively devised, the story-line moves steadily, and the author's real feeling for his subject comes through. David Lemon should persevere.

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