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Reading The Bambata Rebellion in South African English Fiction

J A Kearney

Summary

The focus of this paper is a group of thirteen early novels by white writers in which the Bambata Rebellion features significantly. Discussed in turn are: (a) the novels tending to endorse white prejudice; (b) those which are ambivalent in terms of the sympathy shown to whites and blacks; and (c) those which involve some sustained questioning of white propagandist interests, and possibly even some empathy for the black cause. Underlying the study is a concern with the extent to which white South African attitudes may have shifted towards, and perhaps beyond, the more enlightened responses to the Rebellion observed in the final set of novels.

Opsomming

Die fokus van hierdie artikel is 'n groep van dertien vroeë romans deur blanke skrywers wat oor die Bambata-rebellie handel. Die volgende word beurtelings bespreek: (a) romans wat neig om blanke vooroordeel te bevestig; (b) dié waarin die houding teenoor blankes en swartes ambivalent is; en (c) die romans waarin blanke propagandistiese belange in 'n mate bevraagteken word, en daar selfs empatie jeens die swart saak voorkom. Onderliggend aan die studie is die vraag of blanke houdings moontlik nader beweeg het aan, of selfs verby, die meer ingeligte reaksies op die Rebelleie wat in die laaste stel romans bespeur kan word.

Much attention has been paid in South African literary criticism to fiction concerned with the Anglo-Zulu War and with the Anglo-Boer War. As sparse reference is made to the Bambata Rebellion, it may be conjectured that there are very few relevant works of fiction dealing with it. My recent investigation of fiction in the first few decades of the twentieth century has, however, brought to light no less than thirteen early novels in which the Bambata Rebellion plays a prominent part.¹ Now may be the opportune time to take stock of them, almost ninety years since that rebellion, and at this time of major change for South Africa.

The novels range from 1907 (Bertram Mitford, losing no time, brought out *The White Hand and the Black* barely a year after the Rebellion) to 1927 (when Sidney Attwell's doom-laden *Drifting to Destruction* was published).

The full list, in chronological order of publication, is as follows:

Bertram Mitford, *The White Hand and the Black* (1907); Mitford, *Forging the Blades* (1908); Nendick Paul, *A Child in the Midst* (1909); John Buchan, *Prester John* (1910); Mitford, *A Dual Resurrection* (1910); William Westrup, *A Sentimental Cynic* (1911); Mitford, *Seaford's Snake* (1912); George W. Hardy, *The Black Peril* (1912); G. Heaton Nicholls, *Bayete! Hail to the King* (1913)²; Amy B. Baker, *The Snake Garden* (1915); Douglas Blackburn, *Love Muti* (1915); Noel Hope (Pseud. of Sarah Morewood), *Nomquba: A Zulu Maid* (1923); Sidney Attwell, *Drifting to Destruction* (1927).

The Bambata Rebellion is presently receiving a great deal of attention from historians. Shula Marks's (1970) comprehensive account, however, continues to be regarded by historians as the most authoritative contemporary study of the Rebellion. To Marks the Rebellion was, above all, a protest against the multiple injustices of white colonial rule. In Catherine Greenham's novel *Rebellion* (1991), (the only recent novel that deals with the Bambata Rebellion)³ the foreword written by Ingrid Machin provides a convenient summary of the main events that fits in with Marks's interpretation:⁴

One of the most dramatic and tragic events in the history of colonial Natal was the so-called Bambata or Zulu rebellion of 1906: dramatic because the flashpoint was at last reached in the Natal government's exploitation of the Natal Nguni; and tragic because the rising was quelled by fearful men, themselves caught up in events beyond their immediate control, to which they saw only harsh military solutions.

The trigger which set off the rebellion was the collection of the new Poll Tax by the magistrates, early in 1906. Chief Mveli's men attacked police sent to enforce the law at Trewirgie, near Richmond, and Chief Bambata's men attacked police at Mpanza in the Umvoti county. Bambata then crossed the Thukela into Zululand. There he had, earlier, solicited the tacit support of the resentful Dinizulu, demoted in 1898 from the position of Paramount Chief of the Zulus to that of leader of the Usuthu faction of the Zulu people.

Twenty Natal chiefs and five chiefs from Zululand, a small fraction of the total of 321 chiefs, joined the rebels and gathered, with their followers, around Bambata in the Nkandla forest area. Here the colonial militia, fearing a general conflagration, ruthlessly defeated the rebels with much slaughter. In the final battle at Mhome Gorge, Bambata was killed.

(Greenham 1991: Foreword)

I discuss in turn: (a) the novels which are most prone to endorse one-sided white assumptions and interests; (b) secondly, those which reveal strongly ambivalent attitudes in terms of the degree of sympathy shown to whites and blacks; and, finally, (c) those which involve some sustained questioning, if

not rejection, of conventional white propaganda, and possibly even an empathetic approach to the cause of blacks. Underlying this study are the troubling implicit questions: to what extent have white South African attitudes shifted significantly; how far have more enlightened responses prevailed since those early decades?

(a) Colonialist Racism: Westrup, Baker and Attwell

William Westrup⁵ is clearly fascinated with James Leonard Egerton, the hero of his romantic novel, *Sentimental Cynic* (1911). Through endorsement of Egerton, Westrup manages to reinforce virtually all possible colonial prejudices, mores and ideals. Ironically Egerton is offered as a considerable challenge to local popular opinion because of his friendship and partnership with the alcoholic, Bill Adams. What Egerton has observed, as only a "true gentleman" can, is that beneath Bill's dissolute exterior there lurks the heart of a fellow-gentleman. The story revolves round the gradual success of Egerton's risky but resolute rehabilitation of Bill.

In his account of both stages, the novelist keeps close to the historical records but his account reads more like an insert which has to be fitted in to provide authenticity for the sake of his major interest in the two male characters. Shortly before news of the rising, when Egerton has become sufficiently impressed with Bill's farming skills to take him on as an assistant, he invites Bill to join the F.M.R. (Frontier Mounted Rifles). Egerton's position as popular lieutenant commanding this troop, gives Westrup the opportunity for rousing village scenes when the men are called up and when they return triumphant. Indeed, in terms of recording the response to the rebellion of what is probably a fairly typical small Natal white farming community, the novel is worth reading.

Egerton's role as the lieutenant who earns the full esteem of his men, fits in with what appears to be Westrup's own totally unquestioning attitude towards the colonial administration's handling of the rebellion. An early conversation in the novel, however, leads one to hope for possible signs of a more enlightened position. Castigating Bill for a particular state of drunkenness, Egerton points out:

I am a great believer in the superiority of white over black, and in your present state you do no credit to my convictions.

(Westrup 1911: 43)

To this Bill replies with, one might have thought, telling force:

... it has been borne in upon me most forcibly that the blacks are, in many instances, infinitely higher in the social scale than the whites.

(Westrup 1911: 45)

Nevertheless, shortly before the regiment is ordered home after the first stage is over, Bill is happy to agree with Egerton's belief that "one in every ten rebels should be taken and shot out of hand" (1911: 237). And when the regiment receives its second call-up, Bill expresses his delight in terms that would have warmed the heart of any sternly reactionary colonial:

Naturally the wily native is presuming on the tacit promise held out by our respected Mother Country that he shan't be hanged if he murders an odd policeman or two. It is a fascinating pastime, and most ridiculously easy. Two policeman to a few square miles of country swarming with niggers! By Jove! We must show them we are in earnest this time, or there will be the very devil and all to pay.

(Westrup 1911: 249)

Needless to say, on their return home these two smug racists are much aggrieved at the tame handling of the rebellion.⁶

Amy Baker's *The Snake Garden*⁷ (1915) deals with Transvaal episodes in the Bambata Rebellion. As in the case of Westrup, (and two of Mitford's novels as we shall see later), her chief interest in the rebellion is as a means of testing and affirming the mettle of her female protagonist, Theo Hambridge, and there are initial signs of a bildungsroman which will chart the progress of an unusual and enlightened heroine. The young black woman, Papalata, takes grave risks in returning to the farm where Theo lives to warn her that her present and erstwhile lovers, who have just set out on a journey, risk ambush from rebels. The relationship between the two women could perhaps have been more fully developed, but unfortunately the Papalata strand does not become extended into the Bambata-related episodes of the novel.

While Fluffy Brune, Theo's tobacco-farming brother-in-law, acknowledges that blacks "can't be kept back for ever" (1915: 241-242), Baker herself has grave misgivings about the value of their going forward. The local chief, Mchunga, who - leagued with Bambata - spreads the spark of the Natal rebellion in his kraal, is presented as having gained from his education in England nothing more than a spirit of self-indulgence and indolence. Baker does not appear to have considered how inefficient a spreader of rebellion these qualities would be likely to make him.

Sidney Attwell's *Drifting to Destruction*⁸ (1927), a much later novel than Westrup's or Baker's, is intended as a dire warning to whites. While

Attwell emphasises the inflammatory nature of flagrant racism through the behaviour of the cruel lumber agent, Kortor, there are few signs, on the writer's own part, of a compensatory regard for the victims of racism.

The plot revolves around the forest-ranger, Blagstock, who leans towards accepting the view held by his police corporal friend, Botha, that segregation is the only viable solution for South Africa. To this end several fairly lengthy discussions are devoted, but the moment of conversion is attained only after Blagstock, in Botha's company, has secretly attended a forest gathering of black rebels addressed by their leader, Inzeema (Attwell's version of Bambata). At this point Attwell initiates his grim reconstruction of the Bambata Rebellion by having Inzeema instruct his audience to kill their masters as stage one of their revolt.

Much emphasised in the sardonic build-up to this culmination of the novel, is the crass stupidity and complacency of the local whites, the white press, and even the government in refusing to believe Blagstock's frantic warnings. The forester's sense of fighting "two enemies: the indifference of the government and the cunning of the blacks" (1927: 181) is clearly one which his author shares, and which has indeed prompted this heavily didactic fictional exercise as a further desperate attempt.

Far from trying to understand and alleviate white panic and hysteria, the novel fuels it at every point. Lurid images accumulate: of the "whole country ablaze with fire" (p. 200); of the town of Stalville completely isolated; of rebels shelling the church (potent symbolic overtones here) where all the white townspeople have sought shelter (and where pathos can be readily mingled with horror). An unintentionally ironic moment occurs, after Blagstock has rushed through the streets shouting the warning, "The Kaffirs are coming" (p. 183), when all the local black people are seen leaving the town. At no stage does Attwell contemplate the sobering thought that, had they not needed to leave, as would follow from a logically applied segregation policy, the vulnerability of whites to attack by blacks might have been so much greater.

(b) Colonialist Ambivalence: John Buchan, Nendick Paul, Sarah Morewood, George Hardy.

In *Prester John* (1910), John Buchan⁹ is not in fact specially interested in the actual events of the Bambata Rebellion. His inspiration is rather the Prester John legend and the fascinatingly ambivalent figure, the Reverend Laputa, as fulfilment of the legend. Racism is inseparable from the conception of Laputa since there is continual stress on his unprecedented and

unique status. Buchan is skilled in mythopoeic evocation, and the revelation of the sacred snake-necklace, Laputa's fetish, handed down from the days of Prester John, gives rise to some of the most powerful writing in this successor to Rider Haggard's adventure-romances. In the incantation to which David Crawford, the protagonist, is secretly party - the incantation which establishes Laputa as rightful heir to Prester John, and also provides the signal for the commencement of the rising - Buchan's final emphasis is telling:

No Kaffir ever forged that ritual. It must have come straight from Prester John or Sheba's queen, of whoever ruled in Africa when time was young.

(Buchan 1910: 103)

The mixture of splendour and horror which characterises the ritual, is part of the sustained ambivalent rhetoric used for the developing portrayal of Laputa. When Crawford witnesses Laputa's dying moments, Buchan reaches towards even greater heights of myth-laden fervour, ironically through a stress on Laputa's human, rather than, superhuman qualities:

He had ceased to be the Kaffir king, or the Christian minister, or indeed any one of his former parts. Death was stripping him to his elements, and the man Laputa stood out beyond and above the characters he had played, something strange, and great, and moving, and terrible.

(Buchan 1910: 178)

The Ethiopian movement is of central importance in this novel. Captain Arcoll (the experienced traveller who has long been on Laputa's trail), after defining for Crawford the meaning of Ethiopianism, explains that hitherto the movement had seemed to him "perfectly harmless" (1910: 75). Laputa, however, has changed Crawford's mind ("none of your flabby educated Negroes from America"); thus he decides to take seriously what he hears Laputa proclaiming to his rebel audience; that "he was there to lead the African race to conquest and empire" (1910: 77). Although Buchan does not devote his most dramatic writing to the exposition of black people's grievances, there are substantial indications, initiated in Arcoll's long discussion with Crawford, and followed up in Laputa's oration, of the legitimacy of protest by blacks:

If it be the part of an orator to rouse the passion of his hearers, Laputa was the greatest on earth. "What have ye gained from the white man?" he cried. "A false religion which would rivet on you the chains of the slave. Ye, the old masters of the land, are now the servants of the oppressor."

(Buchan 1910: 107)

These rhetorical moments of conscience-arousing for his white readers (colonial or otherwise) are carefully limited by the overriding stress on the dangerous, quasi-diabolical power of Laputa. Even that fear, however, is controlled through the notion that "*Laputa is the Rising*" (1910: 164).

Crawfurd's moment of vision is his realisation, once the fetish is in his possession, that Laputa is similarly in his power (p. 161). Until this crucial moment Buchan seems intent on making Crawfurd's motives mixed and even confused. But no sooner has his sacred duty as white man become manifest to him, than these lesser motives evaporate and we see that Buchan is primarily concerned with the challenge to Crawfurd, as fairly ordinary and typical representative of his race. Laputa is the Rising, but Crawfurd, relying on basic European resourcefulness, "savvy", and sheer grit crushes the rising in embryo. The fantasy of the white man's superiority is hereby re-affirmed; the exceptional black, no matter how extraordinary, will be no match for the plucky white.

Two of the novels that fall into the category of marked ambivalence are concerned with religion, and have female protagonists, a white girl and a black woman. Grace Mayfield, the "child in the midst"¹⁰ in Nendick Paul's novel *A Child in the Midst* (1906),¹¹ expresses to her mother the wish that God would use her to help "make anyone love Him" (1906: 22). The encouraging reply contains a double challenge with which the novel sets out to engage:

There is a lot of work for someone to do in Isigodini. There is no church here, and I'm afraid some of the farmers trouble very little about religion. Besides, there are the Kafirs, many of whom have never even heard of God.

(Paul 1906: 22-23)

The first mention of the coming rebellion occurs more than halfway through the novel when Grace's brother, Dick, comes home to their farm on holiday from Pietermaritzburg. Sympathetically aware of how the new Poll Tax is only one of the blacks' "serious grievances", his predicament is that he will nevertheless "have to go and fight them" (1906: 142). While at home, Dick even uses the opportunity of a Sunday sermon to impress on the farmers: "that it was their duty to treat the Kafirs justly and reasonably, and do their best to raise them up by teaching them to become Christians" (1906: 142). Dick's eventual experiences in the Nkandla Forest and at Mome Gorge are reported to his mother in a letter but, as a prelude to the major climax of the novel, Nendick Paul (1906) makes direct use of the Greytown episode in which it was claimed that Bambata aimed to attack the town:

The chief Bambata had conceived a very wicked plan for venting his wrath on the white people; and on the 22nd of February, 1906, he gathered all his warriors together in a big wattle plantation a couple of miles from the town. He was supposed to have brought his men in to pay the poll tax, but that was not his real object. He was going to send some of them into the town to pay the tax, and while they were waiting for their receipts, they were to whip out the assegai heads, which were concealed up their sleeves, and stab the Magistrate and his clerks. As soon as this was done they would rush into the shops and steal all the guns, knives, and axes they could find. Then their friends who were waiting in the plantation, would pour into the town, and massacre all the white people.

(Paul 1906: 186)

Shula Marks (1970: 203, 205) confirms Stuart's (1913: 162) verdict that this so-called "very wicked plan", as well as a substitute when the first plan failed (which would have involved killing the whites while asleep in their beds), was no more than a panicky rumour. Because Grace and her mother have been warned that living in the country is not safe, they are already staying with a clergyman and his wife. When the rumour of the second plan alarms the Greytown people, the Mayfields join other women and children in seeking refuge in the Town Hall but "by God's grace, Greytown was saved from what might have been one of the most terrible calamities that ever happened in South Africa" (Paul 1906: 191). Grace's lack of insight into the fantasy of "Bambata's very wicked plan" reflects that of Nendick himself in not recognising how the "child in the midst" theme offers an opportunity for a radical questioning of white responses.

At the end of the novel Grace falls seriously ill from exhaustion and exposure. Warned that the rebels have threatened to set fire to her home, she has had to spend a night summoning help from all the neighbouring farmers. (No such plots, incidentally, are recorded by the historians.)¹² Her illness so touches the farmers that they make a vow to God: "if He will spare the life of the child we will start building a church for the natives this very week" (1906: 236). A leading farmer, Mankel, when reporting the making of this vow to his fellow-whites in church, places it in the context of significant comments about Grace and the rebellion:

I know it is through them [the blacks] that our little girl is suffering such pain, but we must forgive them, for what they did was done in ignorance. If we treat them sensibly, and teach them about the love of God, there will be no more trouble and no more rebellions.

(Paul 1906: 234)

As a plan for preventing further rebellions, Mankel's idea is sadly limited. Paul has nevertheless tried, within the confines of his paternalistic ideology

and watered-down Christianity, to imagine a redemptive role for Grace in relation to the Rebellion.

Sarah Morewood's *Nomquba: A Zulu Maid* (1923)¹³ is a much more overt work of religious propaganda: published by the Salvationist Press, it was written to spread knowledge of the Salvation Army's mission amongst blacks.¹⁴ In some ways the work is daring in giving prominence to the lives of blacks, and furthermore in giving crucial roles to women. Since to Morewood the essential elements of the blacks' plight reside in their own culture, almost all forms of tribal life come in for condemnation. Such factors as grievances against white administration, are therefore not to be thought of as the causes of the Bambata Rebellion. Morewood is, in any case, not greatly interested in the events of the Rebellion except insofar as they affect the Mission Station. It is true that Captain Clark, the main official representative of the Salvation Army portrayed in the novel, does express compassion for those caught up in the Rebellion (1923: 141 ff.). But the movement is opposed to war of any kind and strongly condemns tribal conflict. So, for example, when the captain is led to exclaim: "How often has blood been shed on this land" (p. 88), what he refers to is black-on-black violence, not white suppression of blacks.

Last in the group of ambivalent novels, yet the one which reveals the most startling divergences in its treatment of blacks, is George Hardy's *The Black Peril* (1912).¹⁵ Though, like Attwell's *Drifting to Destruction* (1927), Hardy's novel can be described as an unabashedly didactic warning, its message does not concern approaching revolt. Hardy's attention is focused rather on the inadequate, shortsighted, and basically unjust social institutions of the Colony of Natal. It is also unique amongst all the novels I consider in taking into account only of the first stage of the Rebellion.¹⁶

The execution of the twelve rebels at Richmond after a summary court-martial, elicits Hardy's scathing condemnation of what he regards as a travesty of British colonial justice: "... the most disgusting exhibition of 'civilised barbarism' ever seen in a British country" (1912: 150). His point, stressed several times with vigour and venom (Hardy's characteristic and, ultimately wearisome, method), is that there was no legal justification whatever for shooting the rebels *before* martial law had been declared. Moreover, in his view, there was no justification for martial law itself. His account of the murder of the two policemen which inspired the retributive executions, admittedly relying on some of his own assumptions, differs significantly from the official version:¹⁷

... like many a white man in the history of England, some of the natives refused to pay what they considered an unjust imposition, at a time when they were very

poor through misgovernment and pestilence. The police were, therefore, called upon to compel payment in certain districts; and of course they undertook the work with all the autocratic, not to say bullying, methods that are characteristic of Colonial police when dealing with blacks. And, one fine day, a certain Inspector, quite ignorant of native character, and a little troop of police ran into a few natives who had had the pluck to stand up for what, rightly or wrongly, they considered to be their rights. Then there was a scuffle, during which some of the police behaved in a despicable manner and, not to put too fine a point upon it, ran away.

(Hardy 1912: 148)

A Daniel come to judgement, one may be inclined to say. Hardy is impressive in his proclaimed liberalism and scathing condemnation of racial prejudice, but profoundly disappointing when his overall outlook is taken into account. The "Black Peril" turns out not to involve anxiety about an incipient revolt, but about miscegenation which, in Hardy's view, "threatens the ultimate subjugation of the two [white] races by the coloured peoples" (p. 142). Hardy's tense, and scarcely believable, mixture of liberalism and racism may thus offer a useful clue to an understanding of the much later alliance of English-speaking South Africans with an apartheid policy.

(c) Colonialist Critical Ambivalence: Bertram Mitford, G. Heaton Nicholls, Douglas Blackburn.

These novelists seem to be not merely critical of the colonial government, but able to empathise, even if inconsistently, with blacks' perceptions and aspirations on an everyday sociopolitical level.

Mitford¹⁸ is interested mainly in the second stage of the Rebellion, the stage which is properly associated with Bambata after he has fled into Zululand. Bambata himself does not become a prominent character in any of Mitford's novels although in the first two there are scenes where he is presented as plotting with other chiefs (whose names are fictitious). In the third novel, *A Dual Resurrection* (1910: 173), we are told: "Bambata's broken out and is lighting the fuse in every location", though he does not appear in person. In the fourth and last of Mitford's Rebellion novels, as part of what seems a growing process of distancing from actual events, Bambata is not even mentioned. His role is taken over largely by Sapazani, first used in *Forging the Blades* (1908), who is perhaps Mitford's most compelling fictitious Zulu chieftain.

Central to Mitford's favouring of his heroes is an endorsement of their interest in making a ready profit. This emerges most strongly in the case of

Seaford of *Seaford's Snake* (1912) who likes nothing better than talking business with chiefs. There is no apparent wish on his part (or Mitford's) that the process of commercial corruption should in any way be halted or curbed, although he has cause to comment sarcastically to his wife, Aurelle:

These people won't look at paper [money]. They'd spit at a five-pound note, but grab eagerly at a golden sovereign. Oh, we've civilised them!

(Mitford 1912: 123)

The rebellion in this particular novel is indeed only an interruption of business dealings, and the ingenious Seaford, for his worldly good sense, consistently earns high marks from his author.

The Ethiopian movement, which the Natal colonists all too conveniently wished to regard as a major cause of the rebellion,¹⁹ is openly derided in Mitford's first two novels *Forging the Blades* (1908) and *A Dual Resurrection* (1910), even while he credits it as a major influence in fomenting discontent. The black Ethiopian preacher, Magwagwa, in *The White Hand and the Black* (1907), contemptible even in name, is described as fat, smug, and gluttonous; a "plausible, smooth-tongued rogue" (1907: 54). Significantly, it is the enigmatic black character, Manamandhla, destined to prove one of Mitford's special saviour figures, who from the beginning shares his author's contempt for Magwagwa. And then in a strange kind of placatory volte-face, having built up such antipathy for the preacher, Mitford shows him as anxious to rescue particular whites from the effects of his own teaching.

Had Mitford been inclined to theorise his position with regard to the race question, he would probably have opted for a fairly strong Shepstone position.²⁰ He certainly places much stress on the superiority of the tribal Zulu, while Blacks in European clothes earn mockery. Educated blacks such as the Reverend Magwagwa provoke scorn while those who have retained authentic tribal ways deserve respect. Mitford's journey through Zululand after the Zulu War, which led to his prose account, *Through the Zulu Country* (1883), reveals considerable interest in Zulu life and a readiness to understand the War from their point of view. In some ways, in fact, he seems to have been able to make a leap of sympathetic imagination and offer a convincing rendering of black consciousness. The reader is given access to intimate discussions amongst Zulu chiefs, and, surprisingly, even to farm servants' private jokes about their masters. Most notable of all, Mitford creates fictional equivalents of confrontations between an individual Zulu and a Magistrate, the white authority figure with whom the Zulus had most to do, and who were often, according to Marks and others, incompetent,

blinkered or provocatively partial.²¹

Most powerfully rendered of all, is the confrontation between Sapazani and the magistrate Downes in *Forging the Blades* (1908) (clearly modelled on historical situations such as Bambata's defiance of the Greytown magistrate). I have space only for a brief excerpt from this remarkable interchange:

[Downes, querying why Bambata ("Babatyana") and another Natal man have been seen near Sapazani's kraal in Zululand]

"A man of your intelligence, Sapazani, must know that the Government has the power to sweep this land from end to end if necessary until there is not a man left alive in it."

"The Government? Which Government?" answered the chief, with his head on one side. "The Government of Natal or the Government of the Great King beyond the sea?"

"Both Governments. Both work together. The question is childish."

"Both work together", repeated Sapazani, still with his head on one side. "Au! That is strange. Because when the men down in Natal were ordered to be shot for killing two of the *Nongqai* the King's Government prevented it."

"That was only until they had inquired further into it", answered the magistrate.

"But they were shot - were they not?"

"We have *heard* so."

There was a note of incredulity about this reply which was exasperating. Perhaps it was intended to be.

(Mitford 1908: 283-284)

Sapazani is, par excellence, the tribal Zulu and yet he is also a rebel, pent up with bitterness and thus ready to challenge the entire colonial administration. There is, implicitly, a considerable dilemma here for Mitford, one that he either remains unconscious of, or simply will not allow to surface in the novel. The more overtly rebellious Sapazani becomes, the more he seems to slip from Mitford's imaginative grasp to become the stereotype of the cruel and treacherous black. And Mitford spares nothing in attempting to convince us of the eventual malice to which Sapazani will stoop. Having allowed the reader a glimpse beneath the surface of the stock colonial view, Mitford does not seem to have realised how jarring would be a lapse back into it.

Two of Mitford's novels on the Rebellion involve the use of a black saviour figure. There is the strange Manamandhla of *The White Hand and the Black* (1907) who, before his role of goodwill towards the Thornhill family can be manifested, is almost eliminated by the falsely suspicious Thornhill. Although Thornhill's son, Hyland, remarks before a climactic Zulu attack on his fortified laager, "you can trust none of these chaps after

all" (1907: 250), the outcome of the novel, in terms of Manamandhla's persevering loyalty, gives the lie to his words. And Hyland has apparently done some rethinking, for at the very end of the novel it is revealed that Manamandhla and he had "twice met in battle face to face but the assegai of the one and the revolver of the other had simultaneously turned upon another enemy" (1907: 316).

Seaford's Snake (1912) includes no less than three black saviour figures. The most important of these is the ancient wizard/witch-doctor, Fumanisani who, for reasons that remain mysterious, befriends and empowers the trader, Seaford, with his magical powers (chiefly through the snake). Perhaps most impressive of all the enchantments that Fumanisani performs is the change in attitude of Seaford's hitherto racist and highly discontented wife, Aurelle:

... it was supposed to be a truism that the days of miracles were past. Yet, here was one wrought by a very ancient savage, in the heart of a wild, forbidding forest in Zululand.

(Mitford 1912: 307)

Innyoniyentaba, the servant of Seaford's partner, Torrance, is another saviour figure, unique as a female in this category of Mitford's characters. She not only saves her master from his burning house, but goes back a second time to try and rescue some of his possessions. Moved by her loyalty and devotion, to which the narrator has already paid tribute, Torrance exclaims to himself: "And these are the people to whom we send missionaries!" (1912: 117).

However far Mitford's black saviour figures enable him to transgress conventional colonial boundaries, there is one route barred to them - support for the Rebellion. The thought of Innyoniyentaba's being consulted on her political views, never arises of course, while all the male saviour-figures are scornful of Bambatha's activities. Furthermore, Sapazani, who - in the earlier novel, *Forging the Blades* (1908) - had been the trusted friend of the trader, Ben Halse, and of his daughter, Verna, becomes their enemy once he joins the rebels' cause.

In line with the lack of evidence which would implicate Dinizulu directly in the Rebellion,²² Mitford is careful to insist, as in *A Dual Resurrection* (1910: 251), that the "king has held aloof". In *The White Hand and the Black* (1907) the old chief, Zavula, who was loyal to the white government during the Anglo-Zulu War, and remains loyal in the Rebellion, is termed by Elvedon, the Magistrate, a "dear old boy", and his murder by opponents is presented as an act of devilish villainy. Mitford does not try to

pretend, however, that Zavula's loyalty is based on anything other than a pragmatic recognition of superior British power. Through this chief, Mitford makes a rare reference to the tax grievance which was, in fact, at the heart of the Rebellion; Zavula tries to convince his followers that it should be seen as payment for their own protection by the British since otherwise they would be ruled by much worse masters, the Amabuna (Boers). Even the experienced assegai-maker, Malemba, in *Forging the Blades* (1908: 160), pours scorn on young enthusiasts for the Rebellion, warning them sombrely: "We are the white man's dogs to-day, and always shall be". On the other hand, Ndabamatoba in *A Dual Resurrection* (1910) who had ambitiously hoped to renew the Zulu achievements of the Anglo-Zulu War, is shown as a bitterly frustrated man when his plans come to nothing. Thus Mitford gives some general sense of the spectrum of probable attitudes shown by Zulu chiefs, while broadly favouring those who were opposed to the rebellion. Again it is in terms of worldly values that the second group is seen to be wiser; Mitford is not concerned with high-minded Empire sentiment, and the sense of injustice or bitterness shown by the proponents of rebellion is thus not in any serious way gainsaid.

Mitford panders to white fears through several distortions and falsifications of history in order to evoke scenes of maximum horror. Just how deliberate the process probably is, is suggested by the fact that one of the most appalling occurs in the first of the four rebellion novels, *The White Hand and the Black* (1907), at a time when the historical events must have been startlingly fresh in the author's mind. The young English sergeant, Parry, is cold-bloodedly butchered within the kraal of the chief, Nteseni, and at his command. This takes place within the hearing of the two men, Thornhill, the main protagonist, and Elvedon, the magistrate, who had been held prisoner with him. What provided Mitford with some justification was the conflation of two separate white deaths in the course of the Rebellion. First was Sergeant Brown's death which occurred when a column of the Natal Police, while providing an escort for whites stranded at Keats's Drift, was attacked by Zulu rebels.²³ Four members of the Police were killed altogether, four wounded, but the body of Brown, missing at the time, was later found mutilated.²⁴ In a quite separate later incident a young postal official, O.E. Veal, who had accidentally wandered into the domain of the fully roused Qwabe tribe (despite a warning not to take a short cut through this part of the country), was murdered because he was, quite understandably, believed to be a spy.²⁵ In opposition to the Chief, his Induna, Meseni, and several others decided to make use of parts of Veal's body for "doctoring in war". Neither of these events matches the fictional circumstance in which the chief himself gives the order for murder, and in

which the atrocity takes place within the hearing of fellow white prisoners.

A more complete fabrication occurs in *A Dual Resurrection* (1910) when the young Halfont is captured by Zulu warriors after what is called in the novel the Battle of Gcoma Valley (a fictional version, judging from the geographical detail, of the Battle of Mome Gorge, probably the most famous incident in the course of the Rebellion).²⁶ Although the Chief is at first reluctant to yield to his soldiers' clamour for Halfont to be handed over to them, he eventually does so because of the incessant background noise of shelling from the Natal forces. At this point, Mitford regresses to the most conventional type of colonial horror story: Halfont, stripped naked, is held over an ants' nest while his tormentors jeer. Although the torture is interrupted by some accidental shelling, the point is made: utter barbarism is at work. It is true that the context of "iron hail" (shelling) from the white forces which has brought ruin upon the Zulu rebels' army, is offered as a reason for their being incited to such lengths of cruelty. But Mitford's overall strategy in his handling of the Battle is not one that allows for much sense of impartial judgement. When it becomes clear to the white troops that victory is to be theirs, we are informed:

Those now becoming victorious here had old scores to pay - a recollection of comrades cut off and slain, and worse still, barbarously mutilated [probably a reference to Veal's death: see Marks, p. 231]. No quarter had been offered *them*, and now the tables were turned. Blood ran hot.

(Mitford 1910: 194)

Here Mitford quite unscrupulously exploits a sense of jingoism and battle fever, making vast capital out of minimal evidence, and simply eliminating from the minds of his contemporary readers any possible concern with the rebels' just cause.

In general, however, what Mitford says of Seaford might well have some application to himself:

He understood [the natives], and looked upon them as brother humans and friends. They had their shortcomings, but when you came to weigh them with those of his own and other civilised races, why he thought with a frank sneer, that these did not need any missionarising.

(Mitford 1912: 71)

This echoes the characteristic impression conveyed by *Through the Zulu Country* (1883):

I think there can hardly exist a more thoroughly good-humoured race than these people; they never seem out of spirits, always cheerful and lively, ready with a jest too.

(Mitford 1883: 247)

Granted that Mitford and his hosts were, no doubt, on their best behaviour during his visits, and allowing for the condescension betrayed in phrases such as "a savage also, but a fine savage", one cannot help but note the unusual degree of admiration in Mitford's response. To win acceptance from the bulk of white colonial readers necessitated a great deal of pandering to prejudice and stereotyped thinking. In any case he had his own ready safety-valve - his support of Shepstone policy - by means of which he could slide without too much discomfort into a racist mode and be in a state approaching harmony with his fellow-whites. According to this convention the *noble savage* is to be admired. When an uncontaminated Zulu such as Sapazani, however, is on the side of rebellion, enough evidence of barbarism has to be mustered to offset his potential nobility. At this art Mitford is as adept as any conventional colonist when occasion requires.

More impressive evidence of detached and informed awareness emerges in G. Heaton Nicholls's *Bayete! Hail to the King* (1923).²⁷ This is all the more surprising because of his well-known espousal as a politician of white supremacist views, and his endorsement of the policy of separate development. The novel has two stages, only the first of which is based on the Bambata Rebellion. In terms of insight, the least auspicious side of Nicholls's novel is his choice of a leader for the rebellion. In this matter he takes the choice that Buchan avoided: Nelson, alias Chief Balumbata (presumably intended as a variation on Bambata), stems from a "long ancestry of Arabs" (1923: 12). This extraordinary inheritance (shades of the original Zimbabwe Ruins myth) gave him "a dominance over the people by whom he was adopted" (p. 12). Furthermore "his impi was better trained, better disciplined and more daring than any other" (p. 13). Nicholls's underlying racist belief that no black leader would be capable of forging unity amongst all the tribes and thus leading them to achieve power over the whites, depends upon such mythologising.

Ethiopianism also looms large in this novel; the stress is in fact greater than in any other of the "Bambata Rebellion" novels. But Nicholls adopts the reverse of Mitford's attitude: Nelson's training in the United States as an Ethiopian preacher is to be taken with the utmost seriousness. The conviction he gains there enables him to follow his idea with unswerving determination:

A negro church to which every negro belonged would soon put a stop to all injustice; for the voice of ten million people, speaking with one tongue, could not be ignored. Therefore, ... I still think that I am doing God's work in organising the Ethiopian Church.

(Nicholls 1923: 36)

Nelson's training, together with his "magnetic personality" (1923: 136), equips him to dominate his black audiences with ease. When he presides over the baptism of Chief Shipopa in front of his Barotse people, and in the presence of the frustrated white missionary (a failure after years of struggle), we are told:

[Nelson] had successfully penetrated their imagination as a supernatural being, armed with occult powers; and they were prepared to do his bidding.

(Nicholls 1923: 100)

Such moments of racism stand in contrast to the scene in which Balumbata explaining to his warriors why he needs education in America, speaks forcefully of the whites' treachery towards his people: "We treated the Whites as friends while all the time they were laying traps for us" (1923: 26). Later, addressing the Ethiopian Church Council in the United States, Nelson reports with conviction the vision leading to his prophetic calling, and Nicholls does not make him rely on the kind of nativist mythopoeic imagery that Buchan stirs into Laputa's speeches:

The Whites have forgotten me. Into their charge I committed the heathen of Africa and I gave them dominion over the land. But they have oppressed those whom they should have loved and taught, and used them as slaves to be exploited. To thee, Balumbata, I assign the guidance of the church in Africa where millions of my people have never heard of me.

(Nicholls 1923: 51)

When the District Commissioner, Bowden, suggests that Nelson's mission will be a failure, Nelson replies with a degree of passionate challenge that implies empathy on the author's part:

"And why?" he asked. "Can you tell me why?" Because every white man the native meets gives the lie to the teaching of the missionary; and almost every missionary does other than he preaches. You whites have lost your religion. Religion is one thing to your missionary and another thing to the native.

(Nicholls 1923: 76)

Perhaps most powerful of all the extended passages which indicate Nicholls's grasp of the racial situation in South Africa is the debate between

Bowden and Collingwood, another District Commissioner (in charge of the area where Shipopa is Chief, and where Nelson makes his first appearance as the expected "Son of God"). When Bowden asserts that white occupation has brought benefits to blacks, Collingwood's contemptuous reply provides one of the most memorable passages in the novel:

Don't let us have any false sentiment about it Let us justify the fact that the women are often left to sow and reap their fields themselves, while their sons and husbands are working for us at the mines, hundreds of miles away. Let us justify the fact that some of them never return - as much torn from their arms as ever Shipopa tore them. Let us justify the use of a sjambok on an unfortunate native because he did not Kampa when the District Commissioner was coming. Let us justify the annexation of their lands, which we are now selling to white settlers - land we have stolen from them. Let us justify the forcing of labour to work on the roads and for work as carriers, and the punishment they receive if they do not turn out. If you take your stand that all these things and many more that will occur to you, are good for the native, that work will give him self-reliance, that a beating will curb his wild nature, that the grabbing of their land is an excellent thing because it is not beneficially occupied, that, in short, you intend, as a superior person, to buffet the native - then I have nothing to say. A person who believes that a native has no rights of any kind, and that he exists to be a serf to the Whites, is perfectly honest with himself. But don't let us excuse our occupation by saying the native is better off for it, because he isn't.

(Nicholls 1923: 86-87)

Collingwood confesses that these opinions are private ones which he doesn't disclose in official business, and that, as a result, he feels hypocritical when he discusses such matters with Chief Shipopa.

The novel is, of course, meant as a severe warning to South African whites of the power that a black leader like Nelson can attain, and will need to use while injustice remains rampant. The first part of the novel, therefore, makes use of Bambata Rebellion history (tax discontent; the warriors being doctored for war) to create a mood of alarm. At no stage, however, does Nicholls indulge in the crude panic-mongering of Attwell. Presumably, by offering a double package of potential enlightenment and scare-mongering, Nicholls intended to ensure a new political dispensation which would help the whites avoid revolution, by bringing about fundamental reform for blacks.

Last in my final trio of more enlightened novelists is Douglas Blackburn in whose novel, *Love Muti* (1915),²⁸ the idea of the rebellion is central although there is no direct contact with the historical events themselves. This is not a didactic warning novel, however, and, although much attention is given to romantic elements, and some to adventure, neither can it easily

be labelled a "romance". The integration of love and rebellion as themes is maintained throughout in a way that makes a novel like Westrup's seem crudely constructed, and thematic concerns such as Mitford's, superficial.

The novel is governed by a pervasive sense of irony, verging at times on cynicism, that sometimes seems to undermine any possibility of affirmation. But Blackburn is concerned with a world where power games and manipulation flourish; where, in particular, the subjugation of people arouses violent emotional reactions and the potential thwarting of natural human development because of racist and sexist criteria in combination, incites individuals to Machiavellian cunning in order to attain their ends.

Letty Bandusa is a kind of female equivalent of the Reverend Laputa in *Prester John*: she is somehow at the hub of the rebellion. Whereas Laputa's being conceived of as the Rising is a way of enhancing an impression of his power and influence, Blackburn uses the idea to make Letty's personal rebellion a miniature version of the large-scale one. The two forms of rebellion continually reinforce each other. There is enough realistic detail to make her a plausible leader of the actual rising and we are given several indications of her "ardent partisanship of the extreme faction" (1915: 173). In her hidden kloof "sanctuary" she is the recipient of "messages and news from those who await the signal for revolt" (p. 235), besides being ready to accept imprisonment as a means of promoting the cause of rebellion. Disclosing that her motive for being regarded as a "principal agent in the Zulu Rising" is to "get herself into a position of power and influence" (p. 251), Blackburn suggests that her personal search for identity and recognition mirrors the struggle of blacks generally.

Letty's craving for marriage with Charles Robson, the young engineer Englishman, is both means and end in terms of her revolt. She anticipates how "her enemies will bow down and worship her when she's married" (1915: 250), causing the vexed Charles to enquire whether she has taken into account that the "career of ruthless vengeance that [she] is contemplating would hurt [him] as [her] husband" (p. 250). Since Letty is known to be a half-caste, part of her motivation involves an almost crazed ambition to be treated as a white. Her scheming merits to some extent his accusation against her of treachery (pp. 238-239). But, through Charles's claim that Letty's love is selfish, Blackburn makes one of his central revelations about her. She has used every wile and stratagem she knows (including even hypnosis!) to get him into her power. Yet her emphatic rejection of his accusation carries such a note of passionate conviction that the reader shares Charles's credulity. And surely this is Blackburn's wish: she is, from one point of view, a "man-eating Siren" (p. 240); from another, however, she is totally devoted to him. The mixture of possessive scheming and genuine

love in her actions is the complexity that Blackburn offers, as a way of representing the effect of racial branding upon a lively, passionate and ambitious personality. There are no over-simplifications, no sentimental erasures in this novel.

Two characters, the magistrate, Clegson, and Ella King, Letty's rival for the love of Charles, are offered as examples of opposite possibilities for white racists. Clegson becomes increasingly meaner and slyer in his vengeful pursuit of Letty. Her sudden intervention which prevents Clegson from continuing with a merciless sjambokking of her black brother (1915: 269-271), is thus amongst her most admirable actions; desire for power unites here with her finer sympathies rather than with vengeful feeling. Ella's plan to have Clegson publicly sjambokked for his malicious spreading of gossip about Charles is highly ironic. For Ella, erstwhile 'champion of the 'white' side" (p. 206), undergoes a kind of conversion from racism as a result of her love and respect for Charles, even leading her to show pity and kindness to Letty whom she formerly castigated as "only a Kafir" (p. 189). Part of the irony arises from the fact that, whereas Ella's earlier desire was to have Letty flogged, her wrath has now turned on the corrupted representative of colonial justice. More tellingly still, Ella has in effect joined the side of the black rebels in her open defiance of a magistrate.

Blackburn does not invent or reshape Bambata Rebellion events, nor does he try to insert a solid historical package to give authenticity to his novel. Apparently free from anxiety or tension about the possibility of an actual black rising, his imagination can work on the deeper social and psychological issues at work in such events. Free too of the kind of worldly sanctioning of dubious business practices in which Mitford indulges, Blackburn's searing critique takes account of every shade of venality, offering no character protection or connivance. Whereas Mitford and Nicholls do show equivocal enlightenment about the feelings and concerns of blacks, Blackburn comes closest to a resonatingly imaginative and historical grasp of his society's flawed nature. That his insight should be inseparable from sardonic irony, and even cynicism, is perhaps a measure of his despair at the deliberate perpetuation of evasive racist stereotypes amongst South African whites. Is his excoriating vision, one wonders, any less relevant at the *end* of the twentieth century? Or have whites, by and large, ceased to respond to the voices represented in this study by novelists such as Westrup and Attwell, and begun to take serious heed of the enlightened and responsible voices which have, in some form or other, been available all along?

Notes

1. To obtain an initial list of relevant novels I had to rely largely on J.P.L. Snyman's work, *The South African Novel in English (1880-1930)* (1952), and on *ABSALE (A Bibliography of South African Literature in English)*, (K. Goddard: 1993). My subsequent library investigations have added the novels by Baker (1915), Blackburn (1915) and Hardy (1912) to the list.
2. In deciding where to place Nicholls's *Bayete! Hail to the King* (1923) in my sequence, I have used the date 1913, rather than the publication date, because the writer's Foreword, which has the earlier date, explains that the novel was considerably delayed. (See also Note 27.)
3. Apart from those included here, the only other novel on the Bambata Rebellion that I know of is Jack Cope's *The Fair House* (1955).
4. The following additional historical accounts were consulted: (early works) Captain Walter Bosman's *The Natal Rebellion of 1906* (1907); James Stuart's *History of the Zulu Rebellion 1906* (1913); (later works) Edward Roux's *Time Longer Than Rope* (1948) and David Welsh's *Roots of Segregation: Native Policy in Colonial Natal 1845-1910* (1971). Welsh makes a point of trying to avoid the repetition of material already covered by Marks (1970). H.G. Lugg's *A Natal Family Looks Back* (1970) also provides some useful information.
5. A brief biography of Westrup appears in the *Companion to South African English Literature* (Adey et al. 1986) (henceforth to be referred to as *Companion*). *A Sentimental Cynic* (1911) was his first novel.
6. This corresponds with the "official Natal view that the campaigns were conducted with the utmost humanity" (Marks 1970: 243). Marks goes on to explain in detail why this view "does not bear much scrutiny". Her comments on the quality of the officers selected for the Militia Reserves are also pertinent in relation to this novel:

... in many cases [these] were not particularly suitable through their military knowledge or experience, but simply happened to be the most popular or the wealthiest man in their district. It could also lead to unfortunate results for the African population, because the most popular candidate among the white farmers might well be the one with extremist views on the "native question".
(Marks 1970: 184)
7. Although Amy Baker wrote a number of novels (fully listed in *ABSALE* (1993), she does not receive a mention in the *Companion* (Adey et al. 1986). I have not yet been able to trace details of her life.

8. Attwell is another rather unknown novelist, not mentioned by the *Companion* (Adey et al. 1986). His later novel, *Kyamdaka* (1933), was published in Auckland, New Zealand, confirming the indication given by the author's Foreword to *Drifting to Destruction* (1927) that he had emigrated there. *Kyamdaka* (1933) is only a thinly-disguised treatise on an idealised programme of successful segregation (the policy advocated by Corporal Botha, with much authorial support, in the earlier novel).
9. See the *Companion* (Adey et al. 1986: 45) for introductory information about Buchan.
10. An allusion to the occasion when Christ set a child in the midst of the Apostles (*Mark* 9: 36).
11. I cannot find any information about the writer, Nendick Paul. In his Preface, referring to the novel as his first work, he explains how the singing of a child called Gladys, prompted him to write it.
12. I refer here to the accounts written by Marks (1970) and Stuart (1913).
13. Morewood is not mentioned in the *Companion* (Adey et al. 1986); *ABSALE* (1993) lists only the one novel.
14. *Zulu Crusade* (1945) by J. Allister Smith provides an illuminating history of the Salvation Army's mission among the Zulus. Unfortunately it does not mention Morewood or her novel, although Smith wrote the Preface to it.
15. Hardy is not mentioned in the *Companion* (1986). The MA Thesis by Peter Rees, "George Webb Hardy, Journalist and Novelist, and Race Relations in Natal, 1901-1906, with Particular Emphasis on Miscegenation" (1991), is indeed the first and only account of Hardy's life and work that I know of.
16. Rees notes that Hardy antedates the Bambata Rebellion by two years to 1904 so that it can precede publication of Chesterfield's "Black Peril" article in his journal, *The Argonaut*. This view would be valid only if one were to translate the novel directly into autobiographical terms. Since Hardy does not use dates in the novel, however, he is surely entitled to allow a fictionalised version of his own article, "the Black Peril", from his journal, *The Prince*, to have a different chronological relationship to the Bambata Rebellion. I would also challenge Rees's claim that, through this time shift, Hardy "implies that Chesterfield's article was, in part, a response to a threatening situation which was widespread in the colony" (Rees 1991: 50).
17. See Bosman (1907: 1-2).

18. *The Companion* (Adey et al. 1986) gives a certain amount of information about Mitford. The compiler's claim that there is a strong element of biography in all Mitford's novels suggests that, if fuller attention were to be given to his work, a biographical study would be a valuable tool for a critical account of the fiction.
19. For further consideration of this movement see the relevant sections of Marks, Roux and Welsh. Welsh draws attention to Marks's finding that the Black Christians [Amakolwa] of Natal "took up no single stand on the 1906 disturbances: they were as divided as their fellow tribesmen" (Welsh 1971: 311).
20. Welsh (1971) gives a useful and extensive account of Shepstone's policy in the first half of his book.
21. See Marks (1970: 147-153), in particular, and numerous other references. Her most significant observations are the following:

In general, the magistrates shared fully in the settlers' stereotypes of Africans and in their views on most subjects, especially their preoccupation with the questions of land, labour, and stock theft.

(Marks 1970: 148)

... as the Natal Native Affairs Commission remarked, Africans regarded the magistrates "not as their friends and protectors, but simply as the punishers of wrong-doers and the collectors of taxes". *Ilanga lase Natal* went much further, and called them bluntly "the oppressors of the natives".

(Marks 1970: 149)
22. See especially Marks (1970), Chapter X1 (on Dinizulu's trial).
23. For accounts of this attack see: Marks (1970: 206), Bosman (1907: 22-24) and Stuart (1913: 170-174).
24. Stuart gives the details and indicates the purpose of the mutilation (1913: 175-176). Marks (1970), strangely, ignores this aspect of the incident.
25. Here again Stuart gives the fullest account (1913: 377-378) and is at some pains to emphasise that Veal was not tortured. Lugg (1970: 96-97), in a briefer, more informal report, confirms Stuart's main details. Marks (1970) does include this case of mutilation but fails to mention that Veal had been warned not to enter Chief Meseni's area.
26. Bosman (1907) devotes the whole of Chapters XVI and XVII to an account of the Battle of Mome Gorge; it is Stuart's (1913) topic in Chapter XIV; for Marks (1970) it is the climax of her material in Chapter VIII (Phase II: With Bambatha in Nkandla).

27. Nicholls is briefly referred to in the *Companion* (Adey et al. 1986). A fairly comprehensive account of his life is to be found in his book, *South Africa in my Time* (1961), a mixture of autobiography and political memoirs. Here he makes brief mention of his one novel, explaining the reasons for the delay in publication (1961: 93-94) which - in the light of his concerns in the novel - must have been deeply frustrating. Adopting the advice of Senator Langenhoven, as against that of Smuts, he finally went ahead with publication. Nicholls reflects ironically that, while his book made "little difference to white political thought: as far as black thought was concerned Clement Kadali [sic], the prominent native leader, claimed that he received his inspiration from my book" (1961: 94). The influence on Kadali does not seem to me surprising in the light of my own observations on the novel.
28. See Stephen Gray's book, *Douglas Blackburn* (1984). Gray's reading seems to me to oversimplify Blackburn's treatment of Letty Bandusa, in creating a too steadily affirmative impression of her.

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