

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

November 11. Faulkner, concluded. Anand (I).

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review

language with a life of its own

puns and permeable boundaries

Addie: “People to whom sin is just a matter of words, to them salvation is just words too.” (176)

the flooded river as image of novelistic language

murkiness, multiplicity, ghostliness, violence

Faulkner, literary technique and the periphery

consecration via Paris (Casanova)

influence in Latin American literature

peripheral experience / modernist form

“unreal” reality (magic, zombies)

“uneven” modernity (dirt roads, “graphophones”)

modernity

Darl had a little spy-glass he got in France at the war. (254)

country/town/class

“Them country people” (243)

Consider: MacGowan’s chapter and Peabody’s chapter (ca. 43). How does class difference structure the text? Think about descriptions and behaviors, but also about perspectives. How does Faulkner ask us to see class?

country/town/class

“You hold it [the rope] tight,” I say. “I done already wrote this visit onto my books, so I’m going to charge you just the same, whether I get there or not.” (43)

“What you doing to her, Skeet?” he says.

“I cant tell you,” I says. “It wouldn’t be ethical.” (248)

country/town/class

When we pass the negroes their heads turn suddenly with that expression of shock and instinctive outrage. “Great God,” one says; “what they got in that wagon?”

Jewel whirls. “Son of a bitches,” he says....It is as though Jewel had gone blind for the moment, for it is the white man toward whom he whirls. (229)

“Thinks because he’s a goddamn town fellow,” Jewel says. (229)

We mount again while the heads turn with that expression which we know; save Jewel. (231)

country/town/class

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Faulkner's "reality"

peripheral situations/poetries of disempowerment

opposite of metropolitan: rural not urban

“backwardness” (wagons not cars)

elaborate system of social stratifications

discrimination of insides and outsides

history understood as legacy of still-living conflict

environment is unmastered, threatening

underdevelopment of infrastructure

imaginative resources of chaos, fantasy, illogic

precarious life rewritten as life with the dead

peripheral situations

Discussion

Consider the opening two paragraphs of *Untouchable*. What aspects of a peripheral situation emerge in the description? What can be compared to Yoknapatawpha and what must be distinguished?

Does Anand handle his subject as Faulkner does?

peripheral situations

As in *As I Lay Dying*, layered spatial and social peripheries
“under the shadow both of the town and the cantonment”

A brook...once with crystal-clear water, now soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks, the dung of donkeys, sheep, horses, cows and buffaloes heaped up to be made into fuel cakes. (9)

(Before us the thick dark current runs.)

peripheral situations

differences

Distantiation of the narrator: “the ugliness, the squalor and the misery...made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in” (9).

Colonial problematics: the British regiment; “the glamour of the ‘white man’s’ life” (9).

Urban but peripheral, not rural

Question: have we studied other versions of this geographic/political position?

POLITICAL DIVISIONS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE

English Miles

0 100 200 300 400



REFERENCE NOTE

- BRITISH INDIA COLOURED — RED
- TERRITORIES PERMANENTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA — PINK
- NATIVE STATES AND TERRITORIES — YELLOW
- RAILWAYS SHOWN THUS —

1909; wikimedia commons

affiliations

Bloomsbury

Simla—s.s. *Viceroy of India*—Bloomsbury
September–October 1933

Anand, Untouchable

Anand arrives in London 1925 to do a Ph.D. at UCL
works at Woolfs' Hogarth press 1929–1930
E.M. Forster helps *Untouchable* to publication by left-wing
house Wishart in 1935 after 19 rejections
(too much feces in it)

For next time: read Forster's preface carefully

Affiliation

Dublin, 1904.

Trieste, 1914.

Joyce, Portrait

Trieste—Zürich—Paris

1914—1921

Joyce, Ulysses

Simla—s.s. *Viceroy of India*—Bloomsbury

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Anand, Untouchable

affiliation/language

He thought:

—The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.

(*Portrait*, 159)

And he had felt a burning desire, while he was in the British barracks, to speak the *tish-mish, tish-mish* which the Tommies spoke. (*Untouchable*, 39)

affiliation/language

Gandhi: Why don't you write in your language?

K. C. Azad: I have no language. My mother tongue is Punjabi. But the Sarkar [government] has appointed English and Urdu as court languages! ... Few of us write in Punjabi. The only novel writer is Nanak Singh. There are no publishers in Punjabi or Urdu.... In English—my novel may get published in London...

Gandhi: Acha! Write in any language that comes to hand. But say what Harijans say!

Anand, Little Plays of Mahatma Gandhi (1991; qtd. in Shingavi, The Mahatma Misunderstood)

next time

read Forster's preface