

# Twentieth-Century Fiction I

November 12. Anand, *Untouchable* (I).  
(with wrap-up on Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*)

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<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355/>

# Office hours

Talk to AG at end of class for appointment for today  
(AG hours Monday may begin 15–30 minutes late)

# Paper I

Papers returned via Sakai Drop Box

AG: marginal comments in \*-paperI.pdf  
final comment and grade in \*-paperI-cmt.pdf

OG: all comments and grade in single PDF, \*-OG.pdf

Please contact me if you cannot access all comments

**Office hours: good for discussing papers**

# Onwards

**Paper 2 due November 26**

Pro tip: embrace difficulty

**For Wednesday evening**

Faulkner style exercise

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355/assn/style.html>

# Faulkner wrap-up

Q. Mr. Faulkner, why did Vardaman say “My mother is a fish”?

Class conference at UVA, Session 14, May 6, 1957

# Review

Multiple perspectives: Faulkner's interest in hypocrisy

**Remark.** Consciousness, maybe, but not intention

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

Whitfield: "When they told me she was dying, all that night I wrestled with Satan, and I emerged victorious. I woke to the enormity of my sin; I saw the true light at last." (177)

# Review

Country vs. town: inequality, vulnerability.

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)

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

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# Country vs. town

Anse along the divide: “Meet Mrs. Bundren.”

“I aint got no people.”...

“No. I have people. In Jeffrson.”

His face fell a little. “Well, I got a little property. I’m forehanded; I got a good honest name. I know how town folks are, but maybe when they talk to me.....”

“They might listen,” I said. “But they’ll be hard to talk to.”  
He was watching my face. “They’re in the cemetery.” (171)

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# Language

bored, burden, Bundren, bore (73)

Vardaman: “It is dark. I can hear wood, silence: I know them. But not living sounds, not even him. It is as though the dark were resolving him out of his integrity, into an unrelated scattering of components—snuffings and stampings; smells of cooling flesh and ammoniac hair; an illusion of a coordinated whole of splotched hide and strong bones within which, detached and secret and familiar, an *is* different from my *is*. I see him dissolve...and float upon the dark in fading solution; all one yet neither; all either yet none. (56–57)

# Language

[Cash:] But I aint so sho that ere a man has the right to say what is crazy and what aint. It's like there was a fellow in every man that's done a-past the sanity or the insanity, that watches the sane and the insane doings of that man with the same horror and the same astonishment. (238)

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Sometimes technique charges in and takes command of the dream before the writer himself can get his hands on it. That is tour de force and the finished work is simply a matter of fitting bricks neatly together, since the writer knows probably every single word right to the end before he puts the first one down. This happened with *As I Lay Dying*....

The Bundren family in *As I Lay Dying* pretty well coped with theirs [their fate]. The father having lost his wife would naturally need another one, so he got one. At one blow he not only replaced the family cook, he acquired a gramophone to give them all pleasure while they were resting. The pregnant daughter failed this time to undo her condition, but she was not discouraged.

Faulkner, interviewed by Jean Stein in 1956

# Faulkner's subject

Faulkner's technique dazzled me....For a Latin American writer, reading his books at the time I did was very useful, because they provided a valuable set of techniques for describing a reality that, in a certain sense, had a great deal in common with Faulkner's reality, that of the South of the United States.

Mario Vargas Llosa (1989)

# Faulkner's subject

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  
(Magic realist Faulkner is zombie Faulkner)

# Faulkner's subject

peripheral situations/poetries of disempowerment

Faulkner thus helped a primitive and rural world that until then had seemed to demand a codified and descriptive realism to achieve novelistic modernity: in his hands, a violent, tribal civilization, impressed with the mark of biblical mythologies, opposed in every respect to urban modernity...became the privileged object of one of hte most daring exercises in style of the century.

Casanova, *World Republic of Letters*, 337

# 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**



# 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.

Trieste–Zürich–Paris

1914–1921

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

September–October 1933

Joyce, *Portrait*

Joyce, *Ulysses*

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)

# Language: discussion

Consider page 81 of the text. What features mark this as a work of Indian English? Who is the imagined audience of a page configured like this one? What do those features that you notice ask the audience to do?

**And:** what do they signify for you reading this now?

# Affiliation

Anand, recording for the Library of Congress (n.d.)

(also includes reading of pp. 60–63 of *Untouchable*)

<http://www.loc.gov/acq/ovop/delhi/salrp/mulkrajanand.html>

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“the voice of all the rejected was not being heard”

Anand mentions as affiliated with the “Thirties movement”: Hemingway, Faulkner, W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, C. Day-Lewis.

[Anand was involved with founding of All-India Progressive Writers' Association (PWA)]