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Anticipatory Anti-colonial Writing in R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*

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Abstract

This article uses the term "anticipatory anti-colonial writing" to discuss the workings of time in R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Both these first novels were published in 1935 with the support of British literary personalities (Graham Greene and E.M. Forster respectively) and both feature young protagonists who, in contrasting ways, are engaged in Indian resistance to colonial rule. This study examines the difference between Narayan's local, though ironical, resistance to the homogenizing temporal demands of empire (Barrows 2011) and Anand's awkwardly modernist, socially committed vision. I argue that a form of anticipation that explicitly looks forward to decolonization via new and transnational literary forms is a crucial feature of *Untouchable* that is not found in *Swami and Friends*, despite the latter's anti-colonial elements. *Untouchable* was intended to be a "bridge between the Ganges and the Thames" (Anand 1972) and anticipates postcolonial negotiations of time that critique global inequalities and rely upon the multidirectional global connections forged by modernism.

Keywords: Adam Barrows, anticipation, anti-colonial modernism, decolonization, Indian-English novel, postcolonial times

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Summer, probably 1927. Three men sit in Tavistock Square, WC1, drinking sherry and cultivating an inconspicuous air in case anyone should appear on the steps of number 52.[1] The owner of this residence is Leonard Woolf and he is unsure of his wife's engagements that afternoon. Apologetically, he arranges the gentlemen under a chestnut tree; his friend and fellow interlocutor of the British imperial mindset, Morgan Forster, and the young Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand, who recalls the meeting a half-century later in his memoir *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981).

Woolf remarks that, in their campaigns for independence, "the Indians are sometimes demanding, then abject" and continues ironically, "And they all long for re-immersion in the Ganges. Back to their past – given to them by Max Mueller and Mrs. Besant." (Anand 1995, 78)[2] Anand listens appreciatively to a parody of a worldview that, he notes in the preface to *Conversations*, has become known as Orientalism. To Anand, Woolf and Forster are "two pioneers of freedom and intimacy" whose modest manner is without "the patriarchal bluff" of British India (1995, 77). On the edge of the "precious world" of London's avant-garde and possessing some experience of South Asia, these men are receptive to Anand's political and artistic ambition, and his frustration.

A "gauche" incomer to the landscaped cosmopolitanism of Bloomsbury, Anand has found his feet sufficiently to interrogate Forster about the fate of Fielding and Aziz at the end of *A Passage to India* (1924): "Do you think they will come together when India becomes free?"(1995, 72) [3] The elder writer does not answer and his silence is troubling amidst *Conversations*' lively, sometimes rebarbative, encounters. Forster makes a vague tribute to the "miscellaneous hotchpotch" of India that *may* become the site of freedom, before leaving to catch his train (1995, 78).

This unresolved debate between men who consider themselves progressive humanists resonates with the unanswered questions that are amassed in Anand's first novel, *Untouchable* (1935). Begun during the twenties but rejected by fifteen publishers before finally being accepted with a Preface by Forster, the

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novel turns the "hotchpotch" of colonial India into a subaltern drama that anticipates an anti-colonial, transnational literature (Cowasjee 1972, 49-56). In *Roots and Flowers*, Anand acknowledges that the "timebound, work-a-day world" of the modern novel might seem, like Forster's India, chaotic and "plotless," constrained by the need for "creative artists to confront their own time." (Anand 1972, 18) These, however, are productive limitations because the questions articulated through the subaltern consciousness of Bakha, the "hero-anti-hero" of *Untouchable*, anticipate how - economically, politically and socially – change might be lived. [4]

In 1936 Anand was one of the authors of the inaugural manifesto of the All-India Progressive Writers Association (later known as the PWA), a document that evinces a future-orientated Socialism "optimistic in its epochal vision but emphatic about the self-critique and work that postcolonial *reconstruction* (as opposed to *rebirth*) will take." (Gopal 2005, 14)[5] The PWA was responsive both to social issues in India, including caste reform, and left-wing cultural movements in Europe that brought "a fresh sense of interventionary urgency" to writers. (Gopal 2005, 2) Anand thereby committed himself to a literature aiming to express the stratified and multiple political processes of global modernization. (Gaonkar 1999, 1-18) Anand sees his position as both part of an historical "now," with a history of resistance by activist Indian students who preceded him in London, and as "forever" in it's commitment to fight for Indian freedom and social equality.[6]

In *Untouchable* Anand combines his future-driven political programme with an involvement in modernist representations of time and the self, using "unreal" modes of time (non-linear or non-standard) to connect the "now" of immediate experience with the "forever" of liberation via a representation of the subaltern mind. Anand's text therefore rejects what Fredric Jameson has termed the language of "infinity" at the close of *A Passage to India*, associating it with the "illusionism" of Rabindranath Tagore's work, not with the modernist milieu. (Jameson 1990, 58-59) His reason for quizzing Forster is: "I felt I must know whether politics was admissible in a novel."(1995, 71) Anand is true to Woolf's

tongue-in-cheek assessment of Indians: demanding in wanting an answer, rather than a carefully choreographed refusal, and abject when he does not get one.

According to the late-imperial perspective that Woolf plays upon, India is associated with childish proclivities, reliant upon Britain for protection and development. In *Conversations*, Anand's insistence upon his own childlike inferiority somewhat disconcertingly becomes a strategy for promoting the Indian-English novel, a form that was frequently dismissed. George Orwell wrote in 1935 that, "an English-language Indian literature is a strange phenomenon," (Orwell 1968, 216) while Virginia Woolf refers to Anand's writing as "child-like" and Indian culture as unchanging. (Anand 1995, 104) Anand seizes on the expectation that children can be unruly and challenging, as well as simple, turning it to his advantage as "the presenter, interviewer, reporter and commentator" upon London's grown-up cultural arena. (Verma 1993, 181)

This pose of the awkward child is also utilized in *Untouchable* and goes on to be a prominent feature of Indian writing after the 1930s. (Singh 2010, 13-18) It is, in Anand's case, a paradoxical position because he presents himself as a child entering a grown-up world whilst claiming to produce work that will sweep it away. This contradiction operates at the level of literary form in that the very methods of modernist experimental writing that have been criticized as metropolitan and elitist are those that colonial writers, including Anand, drew upon to produce resistant texts in the mid-twentieth century (Gikandi 2006, 421).

This paradox is important in considering anticipatory anti-colonial writing because, if colonial aesthetic forms can no longer be considered derivative or peripheral (Parry 2009, 27-55), but rather are "*constitutive* of modernist art" (Barrows 2011, 16), they can be appreciated as deliberately inventive, even impertinent, in demanding that differences be acknowledged and changes be made, even as they participate in recognized metropolitan forms.[7] Anticipation (of recognition, an answer, a revolution or a transformation) can then be analyzed as a vital factor connecting the "now" and the "forever" of resistance in

Anand's work, and the postcolonial writing that subsequently represents the growth of a new India. (Riemenschneider 2005, 1-25)

This study approaches Untouchable's anticipation of change as a deliberate "call to action" inkeeping with Anand's political aims: "our liberation and those of other oppressed peoples, whoever they were, wherever they were and of whatever shape, size and colour" (Anand 1946, 36). By reading *Untouchable* alongside R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) I aim to define what is distinctive about anticipation in Anand's work. I have chosen *Swami and Friends* not as in any way typical of the Indian-English novel of this period, but as the product of a writer whose political ambition is usually considered as contained as Anand's is thought expansive. Also a first novel and published at the recommendation of a British literary figure (in this case Graham Greene), *Swami and Friends* is a "textbook" example of how "empire time" (Giordano Nanni's term) operates in colonial texts as an imposed order that is in tension with "local" or "native" time, but in a way that does not necessarily anticipate a resistant version of the future.[8]

Beginning with the advent of World Standard Time in 1884, time has been a conceptual tool for understanding relations between the globe, the empire, the nation and the individual. Empire or World Time has contributed to the "representations of an authoritarian management of bodies, communities and nations" required by global capitalist expansion. (Barrows 2011, 2) All twentieth-century cultural forms, traditional and novel, had to handle the "new burden" of world time but modernist texts, according to Barrows, deal more prominently with "the enlistment of temporality in the imperial project" while "forging alternative models of temporality resistant to empire's demands" (2011, 3). However, because his primary interest is "the socioeconomic transformations that accompanied standardized transportation and communication networks," the Indian texts that Barrows reads (Venkataramani's *Murugan the Tiller,* 1927 and S.K. Ghosh's *The Prince of Destiny*, 1919) are not modernist or cosmopolitan, though they may be modern. (2011, 19-20) I wish, therefore, to utilize Barrows' crucial analysis of temporal standardization to compare the representation of

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time in *Swami and Friends*, a text that arguably has a local or even traditional focus, with that of *Untouchable* as a modernist or at least experimental text.[9] I do this in order to suggest that "local" or "native" time may provide an alternative to the regulation of empire time but does not necessarily anticipate specific alterations in material conditions, political structures or artistic forms. Anand's transnational perspective may be usefully distinguished from the "nonsynchronous" Indian times that Barrows discusses, and from Narayan's local time, through its mode of anticipating decolonization. As such, it has a particular relevance for analyzing time in postcolonial writing that, in Neil Lazarus's view, persistently "refuses integration, resolution, consolation, comfort: protests and criticizes." (Lazarus 2011, 31)

Untouchable negotiates between what Barrows calls "temporal isolationism" (a Bergsonian retreat from public intercourse into a private, bodily, "intimate temporal rhythm") and "temporal transnationalism" (a cosmic or cosmopolitan linking with "a larger humanity not hindered by the determinations of nationally regulated clocks"). (2011, 11) The first refers to the interior and aesthetic preoccupations for which modernist time has been critically appreciated (Kern 2003, 10-35), the second to the kind of cosmopolitan consciousness depicted as both wished for and feared in Forster's work. (Jameson 1990, 55) Anand's approach is deliberately engaged not only with these yin-yang features of modernism but with an Indian literary tradition whose interlocking interests in social injustice, Gandhian traditionalism and socialist ideals contributed to a dual allegiance: "the English writing intelligentsia of India was thus a kind of bridge trying to span, symbolically, the two worlds of the Ganga and the Thames through the novel." (Anand 1972, 15) This is writing that looks towards the future, rather than to the heroic past as Meenakshi Mukherjee accuses some early Indian-English novels of doing, and towards other texts that do the same. (Mukherjee 2002)

In highlighting Anand's transitional position I recognize that postcolonial authors have recently been considered part of the same historical and literary momentum as metropolitan modernists (Kalliney 2006, 50-65; Lazarus, 2011,

21-88). I am motivated to look at this relationship the other way around by asking how Indian colonial writers constructed this momentum by demanding a national, and necessarily postcolonial, future. Anand is a useful case study to choose because of his socialist/humanist commitments and international readership. In contrast, Narayan's novels are often valorized as "local", or as parables of an unchanging India; they typically recount an interruption in daily life, sometimes in the form of an outsider's arrival, and its consequences. The inquisitive but cautious inhabitants of the fictional town Malgudi slip back into their own lives afterwards. However, questions persist in the catchy details that give the novels their magical flavour. As Malreddy Pavan Kumar claims, Narayan's "fabulist localism" (2011, 560) can be understood as an example of "provincialized modernity." (Chakravarty 2000, 1-36) The intricate encounters and vernacular variety of Malgudi prevent it being read as a "microcosm" of India "complicit with ethnocentrism, nativism, agrarianism, Hinduism and nationalism." (Kumar 2011, 559-560) Kumar therefore proposes that Narayan's art is a means of "receiving the world through the local," an approach that is profitable for a consideration of the future in his novels. (2011, 567) While Kumar is interested in how Narayan's culturally peculiar but mobile cartography looks towards the postcolonial, I am concerned with how his "rooted" but plural texts present time (Kumar 2011, 561).

The "local cosmopolitanism" in *Swami and Friends* cannot be considered modernist or explicitly part of a global exchange of letters. (Kumar 2011, 558) However, despite arising from widely different literary, religious and geographical backgrounds, both Narayan and Anand represent conflicted responses to empire time; the teeming small-town time of *Swami and Friends* and the interiorized time-clashes of *Untouchable* both "anticipate" the difficulties and discrepancies common in postcolonial representations of time.

Swami and Friends
Narayan's fiction is often described as apolitical and Anand's as politically radical, but both are interested in the intersections between local and global modes of time. In Narayan's case, official time is symbolized by colonial

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institutions - schools, churches and railways - and is skillfully co-opted and resisted by Indian protagonists. In contrast, for Bakha, the "pioneer" of modern India in *Untouchable*, even public forms of regulated time are unavailable. (Anand 1940, 78) The untouchable sweeper covets the strict routine of the British Tommies as much as the high-caste Swami wishes to be free from the school bell.

For Narayan's nine-year-old Swaminathan, the train is one of the imperial signifiers of gain and loss in the novel, associated with status, regularity and mobility, particularly in the form of Rajam, the policeman's son whom Swami admires even as he taunts his less privileged friends with toy engines.[10] With the building of railways in India from the 1860s and the expansion of trade and communication networks, railway time became "simply time," able to underpin other forms of colonial time regulation. (Barrows 2011, 15)[11] Here the young hero of *Swami and Friends* watches the mail train as he endures a typical day at the Albert Mission School:

> To Swaminathan existence in the classroom was possible only because he could watch the toddlers of the Infant Standards falling over one another, and through the windows on the left see the 12.30 mail gliding over the embankment, booming and rattling while passing over the Sarayu Bridge. The first hour passed off quietly. The second they had arithmetic. Vedanayagam went out and returned in a few minutes in the role of arithmetic teacher. He droned on monotonously […]

Swami's perception of his situation is made possible because he sees the school day, including the scripture lessons in which the *Bagavadgita* merges in his abstracted attention with the Nativity of Christ, as a mid-point between opposite modes of time. The falling toddlers, like the baby brother who he envies at home, suggest an exciting but purposeless present (that is now past for Swami) while the train provides a fixed trajectory towards the future around which the soupy life of school coagulates. Swami's perception is thus punctuated by sights and sounds to which he attaches no immediate significance except that they break up

the day. These peripheral events are essential in that Swami's presence (and present) in school is "possible only because" he can be distracted from it, suggesting that his experience is enlivened by acknowledging alternatives.

The minutely depicted events and lack of narratorial commentary throughout the novel may be read as a naïve capitulation to the colonial "way things are" and have also been appreciated as realist simplicity. Priya Joshi credits Narayan with a "jocular skepticism" that has allowed him to be read, as he said he wished to be, as an apolitical writer christened by Greene, in his Introduction to *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), an Indian Chekhov. (Joshi 2002, 123) However, it is possible to find resistance even in Swami's entrapment. The best Swami can hope for is to achieve the status of a middle-class Indian man, such as his father, who will likely attain a career no more impressive than a clerk. Throughout the novel, Swami is accused of being lazy, lacking concentration and seeking boyish pleasures over study. Such an attitude, interpreted as laziness in colonial discourse, was, according to Franz Fanon, misconstrued as passivity when it was actually part of "the conscious sabotage of the colonial machine." (Fanon 1967, 237-8) Fanon describes a system of "auto-protection", a reaction to colonial force that is transformed into a conscious strategy. In the case of both *Swami and Friends* and *Untouchable* this is manifested in Gandhian resistance.

Gandhi's *satyagraha* (passive resistance) could as often involve doing nothing as something and, if something, doing it *slowly* as though you had all the time in the world. As Vinay Lal points out, Gandhi's denial of clock-time was clever: his campaigns to sever connections with Western social and economic structures were influenced by the writings of Ruskin and Tolstoy and promoted through colonial communication networks. (Lal 2005, n.p.; Nanni, 2012, 19-21) It is therefore imperative not to read indigenous alternatives to empire time as premodern, traditional or, because they often rely upon child or childlike characters, innocent. As we see when Swami gets caught up in a political protest and throws his British-made hat into the fire, the line between passive and active is a fine one.

The apparent opposite of lazy local life, the mail train brings the educated and tyrannical Rajam to town. When he departs because of his father's career, he refuses to acknowledge Swami because he has missed their team's big cricket match. Desperately seeking recognition, Swami hands him, through the window of the train, a copy of Hans Christian Anderson's fairytales that he himself cannot comprehend:

> Rajam kept looking at him without a word and then (as it seemed to Swaminathan) opened his mouth to say something, when everything was disturbed by the guard's blast and the hoarse whistle of the engine. There was a slight rattling of chains, a tremendous hissing and the train began to move. Rajam's face, with the words still unuttered on his lips, receded. (183)

The fairytale, as a universalizing emblem of a European childhood that has failed to recruit Swami, has its connective potential interrupted by the train, just as the boys' words are drowned out. "Empire time" cuts across a colonial present already divided between the mobile, cosmopolitan Rajam and the small-town Swami. There is no anticipation that Rajam will return or that Swami will come to understand the cross-cultural currency of fairytales. However, by being excluded from the global communication networks that Narayan's novel both parodies and is a part of, Swami does become an unwitting channel for resistance. In allowing the train to leave and Swami to remain in a local time that resists definition by state or colonial timetables, the text registers a colonized self who is not easily made compliant.

Out of curiosity, Swami attends a Swadeshi gathering at which foreign cloth is burnt. This scene, closely followed by a protest at the imprisonment of Gandhi, can be read as anticipating both resistance and change, foreshadowing the inclusion of Quit India campaigns in Narayan's war-time novels, *Waiting for the Mahatma* and *The Guide*.[12] Caught up in the protest as the crowd enters his school, Swami is transformed by the moment, "an unobserved atom in the crowd" whose attitude to young children is altered as he pushes them roughly

aside: "the children scattered about stumbling and falling." (123) Following the protest, Swami is expelled from school and is tortured by his inability to get from his new school to cricket practice on time; two forms of assimilation to colonialism clash. Excluded from his second school for asking to leave early for cricket, he runs away and finds himself lost at a "ghostly hour" outside any familiar form of time. (145) He is finally found a day late for the big match.

Swami therefore falls foul of all measures of "empire time". In his confused momentum towards self-understanding only the stories of his history teacher appeal to him: "When he described the various fights in history, one heard the clash of arms and the groans of the slain."(138) The ability to be immersed in a story or experience is often associated with the child, as Anand's use of the pose presumes. However, in Swami's case, it is not the sense of "actually being there" that is paramount but the suggestion that violent or out-of-the-ordinary events will later be given structure or meaning. If Indian history, as Dipesh Chakravarty argues, has been written according to the rhetoric of the colonizer, then Swami's desire to hold onto the actual events, to be an "atom" in the protest rather than a commentator on it, works alongside his enjoyment of history in identifying the need for a different national narrative (Chakravarty 2000).

Narayan's novel is far from radical in that it leaves Swami's world very much as it found it. However, through refusal, laziness and distraction, the child hero is resistant to the conventional narrative of colonial development in India. The text makes no direct comment on Swami's learning (or lack of it), as the narrator does in *Untouchable*, and the calm that the narrator enforces by holding back judgment suggests that it *cannot* be the case that Malgudi remains cohesive after its incomers have left; as Fanon suggests, capitulation is only surface deep. From this perspective, the Narayan's realist colonial present is a way of taking us in, showing colonized India's contradictions while holding onto the ordering capacity of "empire time" and its history. The incursion of the protest into Swami's world allows for the possibility that a neutral position cannot be maintained, that there will be future disruptions - the rearrangement of

schedules, the scrapping of timetables, the stopping of clocks - in Malgudi's locopolitan timescape.

 The trials of modernist time: *Untouchable*

While the very seamlessness of Narayan's narrative allows for discontent, *Swami and Friends* differs from *Untouchable* because its anticipation of change relies upon chance events that may or may not come to have historical importance. Even after his involvement in the protest, Swami does not "think through" or communicate the difficulties of his own or India's position, as Anand's Bakha attempts to:

> He stood for while where he had landed from the tree, his head bent, as if he were tired and broken. Then the last words of the Mahatma's speech seemed to resound in his ears: "may God give you the strength to work out your soul's salvation to the end." "What did that mean?" Bakha asked himself. [...] He was calm as he walked along, though the conflict in his soul was not over, though he was torn between his enthusiasm for Gandhi and the difficulties of his own awkward, naïve self. [...] "I shall go and tell father all that Gandhi has said about us," he whispered to himself, "and all that that poet said. Perhaps I can find the poet some day and ask him about his machine." And he proceeded homewards. (156-7)

Here an uncertainty of perspective is shared between the narrative voice and Bakha. He stands "as if" tired, the speech "seemed" to continue in his mind and he is calm even though the certainties of his world - his caste inferiority and his wish "to become a sahib" - have been sundered. (157) Bakha's mind contains all he has heard, including Gandhi's speech on liberating untouchables and the poet's polemic on "the machine which clears dung without anyone having to handle it —the flush system"'(155), though he doesn't (yet) comprehend it. At this juncture he is like Swami, repeatedly referred to as "a child" awaiting a history that will make sense of events. (94) But Bakha makes the "tentative decision" to tell what he has heard and, for the first time, to view his own poor home as a locus of action.

The single day told in *Untouchable* is constructed to lead Bakha through moments of illumination, culminating in the encounter with Gandhi, "a legend, a tradition, an oracle" and, to Bakha's surprise, also "like a child". (139, 143) Bakha's baffled admiration of Gandhi is part of Anand's determination to get "inside" the heads of subaltern protagonists without claiming straightforwardly to speak for them. His tenacious position as a writer interested in material things, like flushing toilets, whilst insisting that he takes stylistics lessons from Joyce, facilitates this confrontation of inequities including caste (*Untouchable*, 1935), class (*Coolie*, 1936), and world war (*Across the Black Waters*, 1942). In each of these examples he chooses either a child protagonist or one who, like Lalu in *Across the Black Waters*, is young, naïve, ill-educated and struggling to adapt to new situations that challenge colonial preconceptions:

> If he [Lalu] had been told that in Vilayat, the land of his dreams, where he had been so happy and eager to come on an adventure, the Sahibs, whom he admired so much, were willfully destroying each other […] he would not have believed it"(Anand 2008, 129).

Lalu's horror in seeing Europe at war is a prime example of how Anand's ordinary men (they invariably are men) repeatedly confront the colonial ideology that the difference between Britain and India is one of time in which Europe is regular and civilized and India irregular and barbaric. Using the novel as a "weapon of humanism" to dismantle the hierarchical division between "empire time" and Indian time, Anand's texts anticipate in their "conflict-torn rhythms" an India that is equal to Britain. (Anand 1972, 36, 21)

In *Untouchable,* the movement between Bakha's immersion in the present and the narrator's commentary on his endurance, between realist detail and Bakha's bewildered interior drama, is uneven. Anticipation happens when the narrative voice connects closely to Bakha's thoughts or when pain, bodily and psychological, is realized by Bakha as being temporal and therefore able to be changed:

> Like a ray of light shooting through the darkness, the recognition of his position, the significance of his lot dawned upon him. It illuminated the inner chambers of his mind. Everything that had happened to him traced its course up to this light and got the answer. The contempt of those who came to the latrines daily and complained that there weren't any latrines clean, the sneers of the people in the outcastes' colony, the abuse of the crowd which had gathered round him this morning. It was all explicable now (52).

A single consciousness, mediated by an external narrator, apprehends the meeting of opposites - light and dark, confusion and clarity, persecution and pride – and the moment of realization produces a fragile sense that Bakha has his own history and can anticipate a future.

But the effect is temporary. On the next page Bakha is seized by disgust: "A huge, big-humped, small-horned, spotted old brahminee bull was ruminating with half-closed eyes near him. The stink from its mouth as it belched, strangely unlike any odour which had assaulted Bakha's nostrils that day, was nauseating." (53) Any self-assurance gained is lost in the face of gross physical experience and the realization that Bakha's "unclean" position places him below the status of the bull that revolts him: "What was the meaning of it, Bakha didn't know." (53) A rich old Hindu man touches the bull reverently whilst Bakha must shout to alert passers by to his untouchability. Bakha's present experience is thus constructed through religious and social divisions that undo his fragile sense of himself in time, confirming that in Indian writing of this period "the stakes for a viable politics of time were particularly acute". (Barrows 2011, 19)

The ray of light is an example of what Barrows calls "temporal isolationism", for it is an entirely subjective moment (in as far as the subaltern figure can be considered a subject). However, the "recognition," that is involuntary and is a culmination of "everything" that has happened to Bakha, is not a transcending of time but rather a sense of the self in time that is only fleeting. This is neither a

transcendent moment nor a rational sense of individual continuity; rather it is a paradoxical representation of time of the kind associated with modernism. As Martin Hägglund argues, the modernist moment cannot transcend time because: "Every moment must negate itself and pass away in its very event. If the moment did not negate itself there would be no time, only a presence forever remaining the same." (2012, 3) The desire for survival, that Hägglund says works in tandem with the fear (and sometimes the desire) for extinction, is what animates Bakha's revelatory moment, rather than a desire to transcend time. While there appears to be a timeline leading to the present and a mind containing "inner chambers", the self can only be "traced" by its own passing through this moment and back to materiality.

It is necessary to add here that survival for the subaltern figure is not the same as survival for the modernist artist or protagonist. The "significance" of Bakha's lot is not that he wishes to survive but that he wishes to become human according to Anand's ideals of a global community without oppression. In *Untouchable* the subjective movement of time must therefore be connected to the world both through artistic expression (Anand's novel) and through political action that, the text anticipates, will put that expression into the hands of what Ben Conisbee Baer calls a "public-to-come". (2009, 577) The colonial subject will then cease to be the child / primitive figure who can be filled up with adult / civilized expectations and will become the striving artist, who, like Woolf's Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*, is able to deal with time, war and suffering by expressing his or her "vision" (Woolf 2008, 170). In Anand's novel, the subaltern protagonist does not yet have a means of self-expression. But Bakha moves from imitation of the British Tommies towards some form of self-determination, involuntarily produced through the combination of the modernist moment and the political events of the mob attack and Gandhi's visit.

The historical claims of caste divisions force Bakha to accept his status and look to fortune to alter it. However, the significance attached to arbitrary objects (such as the bull) both by religion and colonialism mark out what appears to be

chance/fortune as actually produced by the absurd division between "empire time" and Indian time:

> He had followed the sahib because the sahib wore trousers. Trousers had been the dream of his life the kindly interest which the trousered man had shown him when he was downcast had made Bakha conjure up pictures of himself wearing the sahib's clothes, talking the sahib's language . . . He did not know who *Yessuh Missih* was. (128)

Bakha imagines his own transformation not through the words of Jesus the Messiah but through the clothes of the colonizer. A humanist irony is thrown upon his desire for trousers by the novel's disarming of the relation between things and their significance (the bull) in favour of things and their function (the flush toilet), pushing his efforts at sartorial mimicry into the past and anticipating the questions and options at the novel's finale.

Offering three "real" yet unexplored choices - between Gandhian nationalism, industrial modernity and Marxist politics - the ending of *Untouchable* may appear "abstract" in its moral commitments, as Joshi suggests. (2002, 211) However, the text is upfront in admitting the impossibility of representing the subaltern mind in time and the language of the novel is divided in a manner that anticipates later hybrid linguistic forms. Baer calls the novel's English "a kind of self-defeating transvestite medium" that is unsuited to giving voice to subaltern consciousness. (2009, 579) There are numerous untranslated Punjabi words, including "posh posh," and words given in two languages, notably swear words involving mothers and animals. Choices around translation seem to depend less on clarity of meaning than on the demonstration of foreignness or discord, between times as well as cultural practices. For example, "the rascal has gone to get food at the *langar* (kitchen) at the barracks" raises the tension between the paucity and disorder of Bakha's motherless household and the clockwork masculine routine of the British army. (76) It holds up different worlds side by side, as Bakha's final choice does. With its literal meaning given, the Punjabi word is superfluous and yet may carry a metatextual significance; it is a "trace"

of Bakha's past that draws attention to the multiple ways in which objects and locations signify in the novel's eccentric lexicon.

Untouchable partakes of modernism's impetus to engage with "the enlistment of temporality in the imperial project, while simultaneously forging alternative models of temporality resistant to empire's demands". (Barrows, 2011, 4) The idiosyncrasies and unresolved contradictions of the self in time are a crucial feature of Anand's writing in considering the continuity between modernist and postcolonial literatures that has recently been addressed by scholars (Childs 2010; Lazarus 2011; Patke 2013). Such modernist practice moves towards postcolonial writers' concerns with time not as anti-material circularity (Plotz 2008), "contrariety" or "anarchical rhythm," but as an ongoing struggle with "the mechanics of temporal imperialism" (Barrows 2011, 20).

In the Preface, Forster expounds upon *Untouchable*'s temporal contradictions:

> His [Bakha's] Indian day is over and the next day will be like it, but on the surface of the earth if not in the depths of the sky, a change is at hand. (viii)

This mythical infusion does not, however, capture the formal to-ing and fro-ing of Anand's novel. The form as well as the theme of *Untouchable* demand change rather than letting it arise, as Forster suggests, naturally. Like *Swami and Friends, Untouchable* recognizes that the trauma of the colonial subject must be made sense of between the global force of "empire time" and Indian caste and class histories. But it also renders colonialism inarticulate and demonstrates in its formal awkwardness the difficulties of imagining decolonization. Anand's idiosyncratic literary tools are part of an arsenal of "weapons of humanism" that rely, as I have suggested, on the power of anticipation. They are strategies that Anand also used to polemic effect in his 1942 *Letters on India*, in which Leonard Woolf's introduction bluntly dismisses the idea of an independent India as "nonsense". As this article has argued, however, anticipatory anti-colonial

writing forcibly challenges this view and demands that political and racial

inequalities remain the subject of serious debate, as they were in 1927.

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[1] 52 Tavistock Square was the Woolf's primary residence and the office of the Hogarth Press between 1924 and 1939, when it was destroyed in the Blitz. The square now contains a statue of Gandhi and a bust of Virginia Woolf.

[2] Anand left Punjab for London in 1924 with the assistance of the freedom campaigner Annie Besant. He had been briefly imprisoned for his part in the non-cooperation movement. He studied philosophy at University College London and began his career as a writer and critic. There are no precise dates given in *Conversations in Bloomsbury.*

[3] Sara Blair positions Anand amongst radicals active at the "command centre" of imperial culture while Anna Snaith calls him a "creator of an alternative map of modernist London". (Blair 2004, 823; Snaith 2014, 10) This article considers his radicalism as anticipatory, noting that Bloomsbury's cosmopolitanism has been read as heralding the mobile inhabitations of postcolonial cities.

[4] Anand uses the term "hero-anti-hero" in *An Apology for Heroism* and *Roots and Flowers* to refer to the protagonist of the modern novel. In the Preface to *Conversations in Bloomsbury* he applies it to Aziz in *A Passage to India*. Ranajit Guha defines "subaltern" as "a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (Guha 1982, vii).

[5] The manifesto was published by the PWA in London's *Left Review* in February 1935, it is reprinted in *Marxist Influences and South Asian Literature*, ed. by Carlo Coppola (East Lansing: Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1974), pp. 6-7. An edited version was published in the Hindi journal *Hans* (Swan) by Premchand in October 1935. Dhanpat Rai, who took the name Premchand, was a prolific writer in Hindi whose novels deal with social conflict and peasant life. He died soon after the inaugural conference of the PWA in 1936.

[6] On early-twentieth century Indian resistance in London see Tickell 2012, pp. 135-183.

[7] Berman 2011, Bluemel 2004 and Stanford Friedman 2006 argue for an expanded understanding of modernist practice beyond the "high-modernist" metropolitan moment that facilitates my reading of Anand.

[8] Narayan received a telegram saying "Novel taken. Graham Greene responsible" (Narayan, 1974: 115).

[9] Anand's work has often been sidelined as Gorky-esque realism; Priya Joshi asserts that it has little "literary merit" except in "photographic fidelity" and Leela Gandhi limits her comments to "social realism". (Joshi 2002, 211; Gandhi 2003, 168) However, critics of his work interested in global modernisms have begun to use "a more wide-angled and global lens". (Nasta 2008, 156)

[10] The image of Malgudi is said to have come to Narayan in the form of a train station, later popularized in a drawing made by his brother. (Kumar 2011, 564)

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[11] In 1870 Madras time was designated as railway time while a single time zone was created in 1906. Calcutta kept its own time until 1945 and Bombay unofficially until 1955.

[12] As Tickell notes, Gandhi is prominent in Indian fiction of this period but entirely absent in British fiction. (Tickell 2012, 122)

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