

DESIRE AND DESTINATION IN SHYAM SELVADURAI'S FUNNY BOY

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ABSTRACT

In Shyam Selvadurai's remarkable debut novel, a boy's bitter sweet passage to maturity and sexual awakening is set against escalating political tensions in Sri Lanka during seven years up to 1983 riots. The novel explores a Tamil Boy's struggle to negotiate life in Sinhala-dominated Colombo while also coming to terms with his emergent same-sex desire. *Funny boy* set in Sri Lanka, but written from Canada by an exiled Sri Lankan born Tamil, intervenes in the country's contemporary geographies of difference. The novel explores a Tamil Boy's struggle to negotiate life in Sinhala-dominated Colombo while also coming to terms with his emergent same-sex desire. This study engages with the representation of queer identities to scrutinize homosexuality and homosexual relationships in the selected Sri Lankan English Fiction. The novels of Shyam Selvadurai give a brilliant portrait of the anxieties aroused by gender non-conformity, especially in patriarchal societies.

Key words: maturity, queer-identity, homosexuality, patriarchy, gender

Sri Lankan literature is the literary tradition of Sri Lanka and the bombastic part of Sri Lankan literature is written in Sinhala language. Sri Lankan writing in English is an act of ripeness and deep feelings and notions. Sri Lanka is a multi-racial and multi-religious nation and it has a long chronicle of ethnic conflict. Literature written in English by Sri Lankans developed in the post-independence period. The early Sri Lankan writers were trying to find an idiom to reconcile their western sensibilities with their Sri Lankan reality. The writers looked for inspiration in the natural and rural settings, searching their stories in the villages among the rural folks.

Shyam Selvadurai is a Sri Lankan-Canadian writer born in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1965 to a mixed parentage of Sinhalese mother and a Tamil father. He is now living in Toronto since 1983. In the age of Nineteen, Selvadurai with his family migrated to Canada in order to get away from the 1983 riot in Colombo because of the growing ethnic and political strife between the country's majority Buddhist Sinhalese and minority Hindu Tamil population.

The first novel of Shyam Selvadurai is *Funny Boy* published in 1994 won the Lambda Literary Award for gay male fiction and the Books in Canada First Novel Award. It is an auto-biographical novel that tells the story of a young boy Arjie Chelvaratnam who is the protagonist in the novel. The major themes present in the

novel *Funny Boy* are ethnic crisis, cultural identity, sexual identity, marriage, language, migration, multiculturalism and gender.

Funny Boy isn't just about the unthinkable theme of homosexuality, but it also tells about how political and provincial clash affect individuals' lives. The fact is Arjie's homosexuality and how he comprehends and manages it are a portion of the vital subjects in the novel. The political riot between the Tamils and Sinhalese individuals in Sri Lanka where Arjie lives with his family assume an imperative job in forming the story. Growing up in the midst of a time of unpleasant political change in Sri Lanka, Arjie adventures an especially irresolute experience into advancement in Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*.

The protagonist Arjie lives in an ethnically isolated society. In *Funny Boy*, religion and ethnicity are connected to control a few dimensions and connecting manages how the characters live their lives in their general public.

Queer theory is a field of Gender Studies that developed in the mid-1990s out of the fields of gay and lesbian investigations and women's activist examinations. Intensely affected different deconstructionists, strange hypothesis manufactures both upon women's activist difficulties to the possibility that sex is a piece of the fundamental self and upon gay/lesbian investigations nearby examination of the socially developed nature of sexual acts and characters.

Homosexuality is unlawful in Sri Lanka and the genuine risk of physical brutality and terrorizing may have been prevented me from investigating this subject but Sri Lankan depended on unbending hetero and sexual orientation jobs. The novel is far beyond an individual adventure. Arjie is a kid who is endeavoring to come to terms with his own homosexuality with regards to Sri Lanka, a nation that is brimming with ethnic strains between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, and also with regards to his own extremely customary male centric family. . The contention between the two diverse ethnic gatherings likewise makes him go into oust, together with his family, to Canada. Subsequently, the author centers around more than the hero's lost youth and blamelessness. He lets the novel and Arjie, investigate clashes and issues concerning prejudice and sexual character, both inside the family and inside the nation.

The idea of male power is displaced by the thought of domineering or various leveled masculinities, maybe best portrayed as those types of manliness ready to underestimate and overwhelm ladies, as well as other men, on the grounds of class, race as well as sexuality. Arjie brings up, inside the masculinity talk to which he naturally defaults. As male, yet in, as self-alienated interesting kid as both an insider and he encounters ordinarily. An another unique circumstance, the relations between various types of manliness. He encounters relations of coalition together with Uncle Daryl, Jegan and obviously with Shehan, every one of whom see Arjie for his identity, past his inclinations.

Arjie's sexuality is arranged exclusively inside the bounds of sex, male and female. His prohibition from both the young men and young ladies recommends that Arjie himself occupies some third space in the middle of these two, however that third space is only portrayed as clever and never named. Similarly, as the space Arjie

possesses among male and female isn't plainly characterized, so too are the words utilized to portray this space unclear and moving.

Gender is additionally a key subject as it reflects in the first scene of the novel which manages Arjie's consciousness of sex and the jobs that it plays in a hetero-regulating world. First segment opens with a scene where Arjie was sprucing up to assume the job of lady of the hour in the amusement they call Bride-Bride.

"I want to play bride-bride, please" I said, trying to sound as pathetic and inoffensive as possible. "Bride-bride," Her Fatnesss repeated mockingly. Specifically, the family and companions of Arjie all urge the kid on perspectives race and sexual orientation. The familial love of Arjie's more distant family is now and again pernicious and befuddling, however it by the by serves to direct Arjie through the growing up process. Arjie's friends grow up with him seeing the world through eyes that are close in age, along these lines their perspectives on race and sexual orientation genuinely open Arjie's eyes amidst his adventure into development in Selvadurai's *Funny Boy*.

At the point when everyone centres this novel as a turning out bildungsroman or as a novel portraying the savagery of the Sri Lankan common war. The contentment that is hetero-normative queer phobia classified as patriot manliness catalyses and spikes the savagery. Or maybe than considering these two strands of understanding as parallel or separate stories, that make the case by concentrating on two of the most explicitly transgressive, eccentric here in regard to racial, sexual orientation, religious, and ethnic transgression characters in the novel: Radha Aunty and Arjie. This part shows about Radha Aunt's and Arjie's transgressions of sex and sexual orientation standards inspire common viciousness through a horrible arousing to distinction that peaks toward the finish of the novel with the devastation of Arjie's family.

With regards to the 1983 riot, the Sinhalese state controls the Tamil population by encouraging its demolition. The story is driven by pressures delivered when horde enunciations of brutality and sexuality, physical and ideological, crash into each other when the massacre of 1983. The novel's focal plot mashes together two particular stories turning out of age story and a story of ethnic estrangement and holocaust catalyzed by the windstorm of political conflict between the Sinhalese dominant part and Tamil minority in a place once called home.

Funny Boy further expands and confounds the idea of psychological development by organizing the turning out of age story in a snare of brutality situated at various locales the monetary, the institutional, the physical, the verbal, the religious, the etymological, and the gendered. At the end of the day, the novel works as a procedure of avoiding enunciations of imaginary ethnicity as they surface in and through stories about growing up and additionally investigations of this novel that limit the contention among Tamils and Sinhalese.

Shyam Selvadurai is a realist author who draws upon his own understanding of social relations. He uncovered the covered-up history of conjunction and difficulties the solutions of authority history by evaluating mutual mobs. The author features how patriotism turns into the religion of history, sacralising the bonafide past of

the network. Here spotlight will be made on religion and ethnicity and endeavour will be made how they assume significant job in forming the possibility of country indeed, even in present day.

The 1983 mobs, where the author's tale leaves off, is the point which started a twenty-six-year-long respectful war between the Sinhala individuals and the Tamil Tigers. All through this significant lot of war in Sri Lanka, a large number of guiltless individuals, individuals much like the author's anecdotal characters, lost their homes, organizations, and even their lives. To escape further risk, a large number of Tamils, similar to Arjie's family in the novel and even the author himself, emigrated from Sri Lanka to settle in Canada.

Shyam Selvadurai, the writer of *Funny Boy*, felt the need to expound on this issue since it is kept in obscurity, particularly in Sri Lanka. Moreover, Sri Lanka is looked with numerous social issues. The Tamils and Singhalese are in steady clash due to their diverse good qualities. The author experienced childhood in this kind of air, he was gay and was brought up in a domain where battling occurred consistently. The author chose to compose this book as treatment for himself as well as to loan a voice to the individuals who still experience difficulty conveying everything that needs to be conveyed about both of these issues - particularly kids. The author composes as delicately about the enthusiastic force of youth as he does about the reflect of adolescence.

Arjie Chelvaratnam, the hero in the author's epic *Funny Boy*, ends up experiencing comparable issues. He feels lost since his demeanours towards life vary incredibly from everyone around him. In his novel, *Funny Boy*, the author Shyam Selvadurai utilizes character and plot to indicate how clashing social convictions can prompt disarray and distance.

All through the novel, Arjie is progressively mindful of his emotions towards the young men in his school, tolerating that he thinks about the shorts they wear and aches to be with them. He just completely gets a handle on his sexual character and its familial ramifications after a sexual experience with one of his male schoolmates. Arjie then comprehends his father's worry and why there had been such stress in his voice at whatever point he discussed him. He had been all correct to attempt and shield him from what he dreaded was inside him, yet he had fizzled.

Funny Boy is an exemplary case of a novel about a subject-in-development, an account that pursues the social instruction and sexual and racist arousing procedure of its youngster hero. Finally, Arjie faced the ultimate turning point, and particularly Arjie had courage to refuse to be silent and explore the powerful and hidden possibilities such relation could give the courage which he chooses 'the wrong path' a path that is the right path for him and now he is in his own world and that it does not look to be a 'funny one'. Arjie has experienced many situations and finally, he searched his identity that who he is. The world Gay Day is celebrated on May 17 of every year. And people like Arjie now overcome their fear and they are the identities to the world. And they are one among the common people.

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