

ISSN : 2347-503X

# Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal



**Vol II Issue IV : May 2014**

**Editor-In-Chief**

**Prof. K. N. Shelke**

[www.research-chronicler.com](http://www.research-chronicler.com)

# Research Chronicler

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue IV: May – 2014

## CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Download
1	Dr. Sherin Shervani	Analyses of the Identity of Muslim Women in Modern Non-native English Fiction	<a href="#">2401.PDF</a>
2	Dr. B.V. Rama Prasad	Realization of the Distance between the Writer and the Focal Character in Vasudendra's Short Story "First Time at the Pinnacle"	<a href="#">2402.PDF</a>
3	Jaisingh K.	Innovative Techniques in Language Teaching: An Analysis of the Computer Assisted English Language Learning Software used in most of the Engineering Colleges in India	<a href="#">2403.PDF</a>
4	Mohammed Najmuddin Khan	Superheavy Elements: Its Annals	<a href="#">2404.PDF</a>
5	B. Moses	Problems of equivalents and morphology in translating the Tamil novel "Helicoptergal Keezhe Iragi Vittana" into English	<a href="#">2405.PDF</a>
6	Shram Mustafa Hama-Salih & Dr. Muktaja Mathkari	Women in Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (1958)	<a href="#">2406.PDF</a>
7	Shivani Jha	<i>The Hungry Tide</i> : A Discourse of Dispossessions	<a href="#">2407.PDF</a>
8	Prin. Dr. D.M. Muley	Political Impact of Reservation Policy on Scheduled Castes	<a href="#">2408.PDF</a>
9	Dr. Smriti Singh	Identity and Ethnicity in Kiran Desai's 'The Inheritance of Loss'	<a href="#">2409.PDF</a>
10	Dr. Muktaja Mathkari & Shram Mustafa Hama-Salih	Women in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's <i>The River Between</i> (1965)	<a href="#">2410.PDF</a>
11	Nisha. K. P.	Reflections on Research Studies in Stress and School Environment	<a href="#">2411.PDF</a>
12	Dr. K. A. Attar	Displacement and Search for Home in Jean Rhys's <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	<a href="#">2412.PDF</a>
13	Dr. Ashok Wagh & Dr. S.T. Gadade	Activity and Periodicity in Financial Planning and Performance in Colleges	<a href="#">2413.PDF</a>
14	Dr. Muktaja Vikas	Pronouncing and Denouncing Motherhood: Rama Mehta's	<a href="#">2414.PDF</a>

	Mathkari	<i>Inside the Haveli</i> and Margaret Laurence's <i>A Jest of God</i>	
15	Dr. Archana Durgesh, Md. Osama, Md. Ashraf, Md. Faiz, Md. Md. Kashif, Md. Ammaar	Revolution 2020 - Battle for a Perfect Life	2415.PDF
16	Mrs. Mishra Santwana Gopalchandra & Dr. K. L. Chincholikar	A Study of Correlation of Academic Achievement with Aptitude, Attitude and Anxiety	2416.PDF
17	Dr. Manju Lalwani Pathak	Economic Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore	2417.PDF
18	Solanki Milind Kantilal	The Effect of History and Post-Modernism in Today's Indian English Literature	2418.PDF
19	Dr. Archana Durgesh & Dr. Pooja Singh	Communicating Across With a Touch & a Glance	2419.PDF
20	Anil Kumar Singh	Motifs of History in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh	2420.PDF
21	Dr. Franz Josef Gellert & Professor Dr. Hugo Velthuijsen	Gradual Retirement Schemes and Older Workers Social Inclusion and Employability in The Netherlands	2421.PDF
22	Dr. Raji Ramesh	Negotiating the Patriarchal Authority: The Magic Toyshop	2422.PDF
23	Jayasimha P.	Transmutation of Confession as Devotion: Cognitive Modeling of Saint Augustine's <i>Confessions of a Sinner - Book One</i>	2423.PDF
24	Bijayata Pradhan	Voices from the Margins: A Study on the Texts Based on the Life of The Tea Workers in the Tea Estates of Darjeeling	2424.PDF
25	Nivedita Ghosh	The Emerging Marital Trends in Indian Scenario	2425.PDF
26	S.N. Sithi Shamila	Redefining 'Quality' through Student Participation: A Holistic Perspective	2426.PDF
27	Isha Dhar & Zia Afroz	Bitcoin-A Historical Perspective of the Effects of the New Currency on the Global Economy with the Future Speculated	2427.PDF
28	Dr. Santosh J. Mishra	Painful Journey of Self Discovery through Different Cultural Spaces in <i>Desirable Daughters</i> by Bharati Mukherjee	2428.PDF
29	J. Kirubakaran & Dr. M. Dharmalingam	A Study on Impact of Financial Sector Reforms in India with Reference to Indian Capital Market	2429.PDF
30	Mr. Kailas B. Aute	Contesting and Voicing non-normative sexual Identity: A Critical Study of Shyam Selvadurai's <i>Funny Boy</i>	2430.PDF
31	Zia Afroz & Sumbul Fatima	Need of Entrepreneurship Development in Rural Sector in India	2431.PDF

---

**Contesting and Voicing non-normative sexual Identity: A Critical Study of Shyam  
Selvadurai's *Funny Boy***

**Mr. Kailas B. Aute**

*Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Smt. CHM College, Ulhasnagar (M.S.) India*

**Abstract**

We live in an age where transnational immigration, border crossings, and global media are proliferating at an increasing rate. Discussions about the self - which are further intensified by issues of gender, class, race, and nationality. Acquiring knowledge about issues of self and identity becomes all the more critical in the face of sweeping demographic changes in the world. There are two central objectives of the paper. First, I will try to analyze the transformations of identity that have emerged in the transnational Diaspora communities. Secondly, the pressure to conform to the needs of the majority has a profound impact on the identity of an individual. Individuals are often forced to conform to behavioral codes that are deemed 'right' or 'acceptable' by the majority. This often results in conflict failure to conform; on the other hand, it would result in the victimization and the ostracization of an individual by the group.

This Paper focuses on Shyam Selvadurai's projection of identity. Selvadurai's fiction projects the effects of forced conformity on the identity of an individual and the damage that can result. Shyam Selvadurai is an emerging voice in Sri Lankan fiction, who also belongs to Tamil minority. His novels such as *Funny Boy*, *Cinnamon Gardens*, and *Swimming in the Monsoon Sea* are loaded with colonial experiences, identity politics, and ethnicity. These texts demand thoughtful and sensitive readings by evading oversimplified sexual, national, and ethnic categorizations. Further, in these novels Selvadurai tries to combine the post colonial politics, historical material, and personal experiences.

The proposed paper is an attempt to inspect Shyam Selvadurai's first novel, *Funny Boy* to see how non conformity of the gay protagonist to the accepted social norms can be considered as Alfred Korzybski's idea of breaking the inflexible framework of society to find the meaning in life. Shyam Selvadurai is also contesting stereotyped sexualities through his writing about homosexuality and diasporic communities.

**Key Words:** Gay Identity, Transnational Diaspora communities, Non-normative sexual identity, Alfred Korzybski's concept of General Semantics.

Ceylon was successively colonized by three European powers from 1505 to 1948 - the Portuguese between 1505 to 1658; the Dutch between 1658 and 1796; and finally the British 1796 to 1948. Originally divided into disparate kingdoms, Ceylon was consolidated into a single political and

territorial unit by the imperialist powers for the convenience of governance. Prolonged exposure to the diverse political, socio-cultural and religious forces inevitably altered the ethnic, religious, and social composition of the island. During the Portuguese period, Roman Catholicism was

introduced to the island. Converts to the Catholicism were assured of 'preferential treatment under the law, as well as exemption from certain taxes and these converts came to be regarded and treated as a privileged group'. (De Silva: 1981:127). The Dutch introduced another denomination of Christianity; the Dutch reformed Church, and also established a homogeneous legal system. The most pervasive and influential role played by the British. Historically, the relationship between the Sinhalese and the largest minority, The Tamils, had been tense and the British policy of allocating power and privileges during colonial rule ensured that ethnic division remained intact. The question of identity can therefore be regarded as the central, most important issue in contemporary Sri Lankan Society.

According to the **Oxford Dictionary of English (861)**, the word "**identity**" originated in the late sixteenth century from the **Latin** word **idem** which means **same**. Apart from denoting "the fact of being who or what a person or thing is," the term also stands for "a close similarity or affinity." Apparently, when one thinks of identity, one tends to think of "sameness," of being identical. As Benedict Anderson explains, one of the reasons why photographs, one of the accumulated "documentary devices (birth certificates, diaries, report cards, letters, medical records, and the like) are important to us is that they inform us about our own identity as the child in our childhood photographs is thought to be **identical** with the person we are today.

The meaning of "**identity**" as we currently use is not well captured by dictionary

definitions, which reflect older senses of the word. Our present idea of "**identity**" is a fairly recent social construct, and a rather complicated one. Given the centrality of the concept to so much recent research and especially in social science where scholars take identities both as things to be explained and things that have explanatory forces

One can argue that **identity** may be termed as **social** and **personal**. In the former sense, an **identity** refers simply to a social category, a set of persons marked by a label and distinguished by rules deciding membership and alleged characteristic features or attributes. In the second sense of personal identity, an identity is some distinguishing characteristics that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially consequential but **more-or-less unchangeable**. Thus, "identity" in its present embodiment has a double sense. It refers at the same time to social categories and to the sources of an individual's self-respect or dignity.

Social categories have two distinguishing features. First, they are defined and by implicit or explicit rules of membership, according to which individuals are assigned or not to the category. Second, social categories are understood in terms of sets of characteristics for example, beliefs, desires, moral commitments, or physical attributes, thought typical of members of the category, or behaviors expected or obliged of members in certain situations, as in the case of roles, such as a professor, student, or police officer. I will call these the content of a social category. Schelling observes:



The concept of role in sociology, which explicitly involves the expectation that others have about one's behavior, as well as one's expectations about how others will behave toward him, can in part be interpreted in terms of the stability of "convergent expectations," of the same type that are involved in [a] coordination game. One is trapped in a particular role, or by another's role, because it is the only role that in the circumstances can be identified by a process of tacit consent. (Schelling: 1960: 92)

Identities are not just ascribed or achieved as part of the individual's socialization and developmental process; they are also socially constructed and negotiated by social actors. These identifications of self and other may be accepted or they may be contested; in many cases they overlap or intersect with other significant—and sometimes competing—identities (Rummens 1993). Making a distinction between self-identity, personal identity, and social identity helps to shed greater light on these closely intertwined processes.

Identity formation refers to the cognitive developmental processes that each individual undergoes throughout the maturation process as he or she explores his or her place in the world and develops a unique sense of self. Research literature in this area examines the different developmental stages that individuals undergo and explores variations according to age (children, adolescent, youth, and adult), ethnicity, and gender.

The role of various factors in identity development or formation receives considerable attention. This includes an examination of the impact of: place of birth;

migration; material, economic forces; language; cultural forms and industries (literature, oral narratives); education; religion; the state moral factors; value orientations; culture and cultural differences; as well as racism and hate / bias activity. The different contexts (inter-situational) in which these developmental processes take place are also examined, as is their expression through language, literature, oral narratives, and social interaction. The importance of socialization is also considered.

Heterosexual bias is here defined as a belief system that values heterosexuality as superior to and or more "natural" than homosexuality. It is argued that the re-conceptualization of homosexuality as a valid option for an adult life-style would suggest changes in the Set System.

General semantics is not any philosophy or psychology or logic in the ordinary sense. It is a new extensional discipline which explains and trains us how to use our nerves system most efficiently. In brief it is a formulation of a non-Aristotelian system of orientation which affects every branch of science and life. The issues involved in it are not entirely new, their methodological formulations as a system is workable and teachable. The aim of the work of Aristotle and the work of Non-Aristotelians is similar, except for the date of our human development and the advancement of science. The problem is whether we shall deal with science and scientific methods of 350 BC or of today. In General semantics, in building up a non-Aristotelian system the aims of Aristotle are preserved yet scientific

methods are brought up to date to all the human fields.

Alfred Korzybski was not only a bold innovator, but also a brilliant synthesizer of available data into a coherent system. Korzybski offered his non-Aristotelian system with general semantics as its modus operandi as an ongoing human acquisition of knowledge, ordering and self correcting through and through, since it provides self reflexively, for its own reformulations. This system when internalized and applied can create a sane and more peaceful world, which justifies the title of his book *Science and Sanity*.

General Semantics turned out to be an empirical natural science of non-elementalistic evaluation, which takes into account living individual, not divorcing him/her from his reaction altogether but allocating him some value .

We need not blind ourselves with old dogmas that human nature cannot be changed; for we find that it can be changed. We must begin to realize our potentialities as humans then we may approach the future with some hope.

One of the tremendous obstacles in the revisions of Aristotelian system is exactly the excellence of the work of Aristotle based on the very few scientific facts known 2300 years ago.

A modern revision of the Aristotelian system or building of non-Aristotelian system involves, or is based on similar aims, namely the formulation of general methods not only for scientific work but also life, as we know it today.

The present system of social life is largely built upon misconceptions or misrepresentations. Korzybski believes that the problems of humans have been vitiated by primitive methods which still often dominate our attitude and outlooks. To discriminate is to produce *two*, Freedom, rightly understood, is the aim of Human Engineering. But freedom is not license, it is not licentiousness. Freedom consists in *lawful* living—in living in accord with the laws of

Human *nature*—in accord with the *natural* laws of Man. A plant is free when it is not prevented from living and growing according to the natural laws of plant life; an animal is free when it is not prevented from living according to the natural laws of animal life; human beings are free when and only when they are not prevented from living in accord with the natural laws of human life. I say “when not prevented,” for human being will live *naturally* and, therefore, in freedom, when they are not prevented from thus living by ignorance of what human nature is and by artificial social systems established, maintained, and protected by such ignorance.

Gayatri Gopinath is a significant voice in Diaspora theory and she has worked extensively on South Asian texts on Queer sexuality. According to her, it is essential to understand queer subjectivities within the contexts of family and nation. Such an understanding is very essential in reading a novelist like Shyam Selvadurai. Christianization and transformation of sexual behavior into a moral issue were also the outcomes of colonialism which created in Sri Lanka a bourgeois sexual morality

similar to that of Europe. Another outcome of imperialism was the criminalization of alternate sexualities. Sri Lankan Tamil writers propose non-normative sexuality to redefine the boundaries of nation, home, and family, by showing that ethnicity and sexuality are closely connected. Gayatri Gopinath explains how normative sexuality naturalizes gender roles and hierarchies that legitimize the criminalization of alternate sexuality. She says:

Within the familial and domestic space of the nation as imagined community, non-hetero-normative sexuality is either criminalized, or disavowed and elided; it is seen as a threat to national integrity and as perpetually outside the boundaries of nation, home and family.... The nation demands heterosexuality as a prerequisite of 'good citizenship', since it depends on the family as reproductive unit through which the stability of gender roles and hierarchies is preserved. Heterosexuality, in other words, is fundamental to the way in which the nation imagines itself. (Gopinath: 1997:469)

Diasporic subjectivities and the alternate sexuality in Diaspora are not merely expressions of sexual orientation but also a configuration of logic that tries to displace the logic of normative culture. Gayatri Gopinath explains this subversive logic of sexuality in the context of "Queer Diaspora".

All religions in Sri Lanka have generally perceived that homosexual behavior is a sinful act. Since homosexuality is against the social standards it is considered as a sexual misconduct. For instance, according to Christian ethics in the context of Sri

Lanka, "Sexual relationship between husband and wife is considered holy. Homosexuality is considered as a breakdown of ethics and religion. According to the Islamic views, they see homosexuals or acts committed of this nature as challenging God's creation and hence considered a revolt against God.

Homosexuality is against the biology. Two males or two females cannot produce another human being. That would be an unproductive relationship as far as the science is concerned. So it is not a question of choice but a question of rationality. If everyone selects to be a homosexual the entire human race will vanish from the face of earth before long. Where homosexuals speak of their rights claiming equality for their community. "We are just as human as everybody else, therefore our rights should not be any different from others", since the nature of social attitude rejects homosexual orientation and considers it as an abnormal situation most of the homosexuals refrain from revealing their real sexual orientation. "They have been made to feel ashamed of themselves, which is not good for their mental health; it is not fair to marginalize homosexuals from heterosexuals. There is a social pressure against homosexuals in Sri Lanka and that he is aware that some of the gays have to face discrimination, blackmail, and abuse. The discrimination, blackmail, and abuse on homosexuals happen mostly because there aren't any laws protecting the homosexual community. "Existing panel code is lack of protective measures. There should be more powerful laws protecting LGBT, and also women and children, "The homosexual community in Sri Lanka faces



all forms of discrimination, marginalization, and experience violence; inevitably since there are no laws protecting the community against these acts. “Lots of people get away just because the victim has nowhere to complain. Most of them are afraid to seek help of a law enforcement officers fearing further abuse,”

Homosexuality is a pivotal point in most gays' lives. Telling the story of coming out of the closet helps gay people from their identities. Gay novels also help gays feel a sense of belonging. There is a sizeable gay population in Sri Lanka but many gays and lesbians cannot come to terms with themselves due to family pressures and behavioral expectations imposed by Sri Lankan culture. A gay identity does not make much sense to many homosexuals. Male homosexuality in any event is illegal. There is no gay scene in the western sense in Sri Lanka but there are several gay groups who lobby for reform and provide support and counseling to gays and lesbians. Many of these groups also organize occasional gay events such as parties and outings. Homosexual acts between men, regardless of age, are prohibited under Section 365a of the Penal Code with a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment. There is still rampant homophobia in Sri Lanka. Homosexuals may face blackmail may be forced to leave their homes and may lose their jobs the stigma associated with homosexuality prevents many from living openly .(“Any act of gross indecency”) apply to both homosexual and heterosexual sex, only homosexuals are labeled criminals under 365 and 365A of the Penal Code of Sri Lanka.

**Shyam Selvadurai**, like many of his Sri Lankan literary counterparts, lives outside Sri Lanka, but writes about it. He uses his “shards of memory” to recreate the lost world. This looking backwards, for him, is not just wistfulness. It is in fact a conscious political choice to narrate histories in order to come to terms with the anguish and sense of loss. As an émigré writer with a hyphenated status, Selvadurai creatively uses his ‘belongingness’ to his native land and writes stories, which provide ‘alternate narratives’ that challenge ‘official truths’ and provide new readings of established historical, social, economic and political codes. Sri Lanka looms large over his novels – **Funny Boy**, **Cinnamon Gardens**, and **Swimming in the Monsoon Sea**. This preoccupation can be explained in terms of a deep personal anguish – a need to write about/reclaim what is very close to the heart.

Selvadurai’s first novel **Funny Boy** is personal and confessional. The main theme of the novel is the skilful interweaving of issues of sexuality into the customary narrative of immigrant cultural dislocation. Set against the backdrop of mounting tensions between Sri Lanka’s Sinhalese and Tamil communities that culminated in the outbreak of civil war. The novel posits Arjie as a double marginal – Tamil and queer in Sri Lanka – and presents his predicament in a world that considers him the other.

**Funny Boy** can also be read as a Bildungsroman. Arjie, who is the second son of a prosperous Tamil hotelier family, is around seven years old when the novel opens. By the time it ends, he is on the brink of adolescence. The novel consists of six stories, chronologically connected and with

Arjie featuring in all of them. Each story centralizes a character who can be classified as marginal in terms of race, sexuality or gender. The first and last stories are about Arjie himself, the second about Radha aunty who dares to respond to the advances of a Sinhalese boy although her family is arranging for her wedding with a Tamilian, the third concerns the Burgher Daryl Brohier who was once Amma's lover; the fourth is about Jegan, the son of an old chum of Appa's, who has connections with the LTTE and the fifth involves Shehan, the boy who initiates Arjie into homosexuality. The sixth and final story is in the form of a diary entry, which chronicles the fateful events of violence against Tamils and the subsequent emigration of Arjie's family from Sri Lanka.

Shyam Selvadurai confronts the problematic issue of being different in terms of race and sexuality. Each of the six stories posits the outsider – Arjie, Radha aunty, Daryl, Shehan, and Jegan – against the mainstream/dominant culture and narrates his/her experiences. **Funny Boy** is thus an example of postcolonial discourse that draws its sustenance from presenting a counter discourse. It makes a valuable contribution to the mosaic of Canadian culture.

The turning points in the protagonist's life and search for an identity are crucial and influenced by issues of separation, and the theme of exile is prominent in the novel. Selvadurai uses the theme in several aspects on a number of levels, concerning both ethnicity and sexuality. However, the narrative also allows the protagonist to find an alternative route in exploring his identity as a "funny one". These turning points are

illustrated by a moving beyond the traditional gender roles and the idea of masculinity in areas of gendered and racialised spaces. Selvadurai shows a people that are ethnically and/or sexually divided while at the same time being linked through words and languages that can give and/or take away possibilities. He tries to show that the protagonist overcomes the limitations that society has set by choosing the path that is right for him, a path that allows him to be "funny boy". The novel is so much more than an individual personal journey. Arjie is a boy who is trying to come to terms with his own homosexuality in the context of Sri Lanka, a country that is full of ethnic tensions between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, as well as in the context of his own very traditional patriarchal family. He gets exiled from the world of the girls and "the free play of fantasy" (3) which forces him into the world of the boys, a world which he cannot come to terms with. The conflict between the two different ethnic groups also causes him to go into exile, together with his family, to Canada. Thus, Selvadurai chooses to focus on more than the protagonist's lost childhood and innocence. He lets the novel, and Arjie, explore conflicts and issues concerning racism and sexual identity, both within the family and within the country.

Andrew Lesk points out that in the novel **Funny Boy** the protagonist "Arjie [...] witnesses subjugation not only of Tamils to the majority Sinhalese but of various other groups, notably homosexuals [...] and women" (35).

Gopinath talks about Arjie's entry into the boys' world as an "entry into proper gender

identification [which] is figured in terms of geography and specialization, of leaving one Carefully inscribed space of gender play and entering one of gender conformity” (170). She convincingly argues that the novel’s gendered sites iterate “nationalist framings of space” which talks about an “inner” space as a site of “spirituality and tradition” and personified as a woman, and an “outer” space which is a space of masculinity, “politics, materiality, and modernity” (170). The novel shows clear and distinct differences between what Gopinath refers to as “inner” and “outer” space. The “inner” site is where the girls’ territory is and where the women are ruling and the “outer” space is where the boys’ territory is, a territory of the masculine game of cricket. Gopinath also argues that Selvadurai is challenging these gendered spaces. In the novel Arjie is portrayed as a more careful boy (or young male) not wanting to give the rest of the judgmental world any reason to marginalize him. By excluding Arjie from “the girls” and forcing him into the boys’ world of games of cricket, his father also forces his idea of what masculinity is and how a proper man should act upon him. He feels that Arjie’s “funniness” is some sort of a danger to the norms of masculinity and therefore, believes that by excluding him from “the free play of fantasy” he will force his son to change his personality.

The ones who became the outsiders were those who did not follow the masculine norms and who could not live up to the masculine ideal. Arjie does not measure up to the masculine norm and the standard of masculine beauty. He does not want to take part in cricket and “[t]he pleasure the boys

had standing for hours on a cricket field under the sweltering sun, watching the batsmen run from crease to crease, was incomprehensible to [him]” (Selvadurai 3). Here, masculinity becomes a set of norms that Arjie cannot measure up to regulate his sexual desires, to safeguard hetero-normative masculinity” instead the novel will show that Arjie is able to find an alternative masculinity together with his alliances with Uncle Daryl, Jegan and Shehan. Arjie cannot live up to the masculine norms he finds an alternative masculinity that helps him cope with his several forms of exile. His masculine relations of alliances give him the possibility to see alternative routes. Routes that help him become the person he wants to be, even if that means being “funny” and will eventually exile him from his family.

The characters in the novel are people who live in a society where ethnicity is constantly present and where the family and its honor are extremely important. The society Arjie lives in is an ethnically divided society. It is a society where religion and ethnicity are crucial to your own identity and to power relations between the people. In *Funny Boy*, religion and ethnicity are linked to power on several levels and the connecting dictates how the characters live their lives in their society. It affects them personally and in their relationships with others, for example the lives of Radha Aunty, Aunty Doris and Arjie’s mother and father.

*Funny Boy* explores the marginalization of both Tamils and gays in modern Sri Lankan society. Providing a geographical perspective on the novel, a close ‘spatial

reading' shows how space, on a number of different geographical scales, is central to the homophobic exclusion of gay people in Sri Lanka. The taken-for-granted meanings of the spatial and social structures of everyday life shape not only Sri Lanka's racialised topographies, but also the homophobia and gender hierarchies that underscore such 'race' based identifications. The novel's textual negotiation of these spaces offers radical potential for the practice and performance of modes of Sri

Lankan-ness that 'civilized' Sri Lankan society disavows. *Funny Boy* adds to the slowly growing body of gay writing on the Indian subcontinent. Shyam Selvadurai can be compared to Romesh Gunesekera and hinting at a Sri Lankan literary tradition, but later suggested an alternative mapping of gay fiction. This indeed seems to be a lead that must be pursued. We must link Shyam Selvadurai with other gay writers in the South Asian region, where a movement is quietly beginning.

#### References:

1. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
2. Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press, 1977.
3. Brubaker, Rogers, and Frederick Cooper. 1999. "*Beyond Identity*." *Theory and Society*. Forthcoming.
4. Gopinath, Gayatri. "Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora: South Asian Sexualities in Motion": In *Theorizing Diaspora*, 261-279.
5. Hall, Stuart. 1989. "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference." *Radical America*( 23:9-20)
6. Korzybski, Alfred. 1994. *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*. Institute of General Semantics, USA.
7. Korzybski, Alfred. 1921 *Manhood of Humanity: The Science and Art of Human Engineering*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.
8. Perry, John, ed. 1975. *Personal Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
9. Schelling, Thomas C. 1978. *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*. New York: Norton.
10. Selvadurai, Shyam. 1994. *Funny Boy: The USA*.



# Dhanashree Publications

Flat No. 01, Nirman Sagar CHS,  
Thana Naka, Panvel, Raigad - 410206



## Research Chronicler

**International Multidisciplinary Research Journal**

[www.research-chronicler.com](http://www.research-chronicler.com)