

1: Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai

Funny Boy breaks boundaries in its telling of the homosexuality of the young protagonist, Arjie. The story follows Arjie's awakening as a homosexual living in Sri Lanka. There are many things that Arjie does not know throughout the story, and just as Arjie is learning of these things, so is the reader.

He is a Christian openly gay, which is a problematic issue for a Sri Lankan resident. At the age of nineteen, he moved to Canada with his family after the ethnic riots. He studied creative writing and theatre and has a Bachelors degree in Fine Arts from York University. He currently lives in Toronto. *Funny Boy* his first novel was published to acclaim in and won the W. His second novel *Cinnamon Gardens* has been published in Canada, the U. K, and the U. Shyam Selvadurai is the editor of an anthology, *Story-wallah!* The ancient setting of the house with its long and dark corridor, its ancestral photographs on the walls, and its high ceiling inculcate fear in the hero Arjuna. Both the adults and the children benefit from the spend-the-day arrangement. Ammachchi is like earth-goddess in fairytales and any disturbance of her peace would invite a catastrophic earthquake. Auntie Kanthy comes back from abroad with her husband Uncle Cyril and their daughter Thanuja. No sooner they have settled down in Colombo, Thanuja joins the girls in their games. Arjuna enjoys watching his mother dressing herself. Here it is clear that he is led by his libidinal feelings. Auntie Kanthy seems to be a cynical woman. The boy escapes from her, as grandmother gets hold of him to kiss. Auntie Kanthy seems to capitalise on the sympathy the others hold for her for having a tough time when she was abroad. However, she fails to prevent the others from their involvement in the bride-ride. All girls laugh at Thanuja dressed as the bride groom. Thanuja in her groom role violates the rules and conditions of the game by assuming a dictatorial mood. When the others try to quieten her she demands the role of the bride. Auntie Kanthy comes to the porch, threatens the girls for calling her daughter fatty, gets hold of Arjuna in a tight grip, and pulls him along the corridor into the drawing room where all the adults have gathered. All the adults laugh at him calling him funny. When the parents are at home, the father blames the mother for allowing Arjuna in her room while she gets dressed. He enjoys the perfume smell of her jewellery. The technique she uses in wearing her saree fascinates him. But after he gets caught in a saree, his mother does not allow him in her room while dressing herself. The mother keeps aloof of him. The mother, on the next spend-the-day, orders Varuna that Arjuna should be included in his cricket team. Arjuna imagines how Thanuja will take his place, and plans to escape from cricket and manoeuvre the game of bride-ride. But the others reject him. In deciding the batting order, the players have to select one out of a column of hyphens drawn against a column of numbers that are covered at the moment of selection and that represent the positions that players would occupy by luck. Arjuna acquires number one position in the batting order, but he is not given it. He protests against Murugesu taking over his position. The boys try to negotiate with him but he persists in his protest. Then he is chased out for his stubbornness. Ultimately, he goes to join the girls. There Thanuja has already taken control. But he cannot join them in the cooking. Being creative, he uses his office-employed groom position to have fun and one by one the girls leave the cooking and start operating at his commands as the officer. Unable to tolerate this, again Thanuja wants him out. Then he threatens her not to give the saree for bride-ride. She allows him to search for it but laughs at his failure. Finally, she runs away with the saree and he tries to grab it from her by pulling her by the hair. The saree gets torn and the children retaliate this by tearing her blouse. Even the dominant Janaki feels helpless at the sight of her howling. Ammachchi comes to the scene with the sternest look on her face. She seems not considerate about his explanations but wants to punish him. He feels that he does not belong either to the boys or to the girls. Auntie Radha and Rajan meet in America and get impressed by each other. Later on Rajan informs his parents and gets them to make a proposal for Auntie Radha. The young man is known as an engineer working for an American company, neither an alcoholic nor a womaniser, hailing from a family of healthy people. Arjuna is thrilled by the idea of attending a real church wedding in the family with a real bride. He visualises the saree, the confetti, the cakes, the pala haram, and the jasmine garlands that would go for the wedding. Arjuna eavesdrops when the adults are talking about Auntie Radha. He is now not allowed to move with the other children since he has fought with Thanuja, and is to do some work in the house

ordered by Ammachchi. Now and then he receives a knock on his head for his silly mistakes. Janaki who has taken pity on him allows him to be in her room and read through her Sinhala love comics. Day by day, his enthusiasm about the on-coming wedding in the family keeps growing. He waits for Auntie Radha to come from America. Only a week after her arrival at home, Arjuna gets an opportunity to visit her. He notices Auntie Radha playing the piano at home, but disagrees about it within himself, expecting her to have an exciting romantic relationship with Rajan, shopping, going out with him, cooking and cleaning the house for him. Her hair is frizzy; she is thin; she does not wear a saree, but a top, strange trousers, and odd shoes. She appears totally different from his imagination. This time he has to dust all the brass ornaments in the drawing room. She kisses him and starts playing a romantic tune. While dusting the brass items, he feels cheated by Auntie Radha. What he expected in her is not there. She differs from the other adults in the Chelvanayagam family as she does not have their cynicism. She invites him into her room and allows him to play there. He starts examining the cosmetics on her dressing table. Auntie Radha decorates his face by rouging the cheeks, putting a pottu on his forehead, colouring his eye-brows etc. She enjoys doing it and shares the pleasure of it with Janaki, but the latter warns her against it. She does not mind it though, and allows him to play with her knickknack the whole afternoon. He develops a boldness to talk to Auntie Radha about her on-coming wedding. Auntie Radha is amused by his knowledge about Rajan Nagendra. He makes suggestions for the wedding such as wearing a long veil, deploying ten bridesmaids to hold it, and having seven page boys and seven flower girls to accompany her. He offers to be a page boy but does not want Thanuja to be a flower girl. He even suggests costumes for the entire bridal party. Because of her indulgence, Arjuna considers Auntie Radha to be his most favourite aunt. In the meantime Thanuja comes in her costume for bride-ride and tries to run Arjuna down, expecting to find envy in his eyes. But Arjuna returns a glance of contempt and shows off his fingers so that she could eye his nails coloured with cutes. When she sees the coloured nails, her face becomes clouded with jealousy. Arjuna likes theatre because of make-up. Arjuna imagines that every meeting between a man and a woman ends in marriage. Auntie Doris the director of the play calls on them. She remarks Arjuna with such tender features should be a girl. Auntie Radha joins a group of people including Anil who are discussing some song. Auntie Radha wins over everybody with her rhetoric over a joke connected with her and Anil as a rose and a bee respectively. The other girls comments on it annoy Auntie Radha. After the rehearsal, Auntie Radha and Arjuna happen to enjoy a lift home by Anil in his car. They get down at the road top by Anil in his car. Ammachchi is surprised by their quick return home. Auntie Radha shares a secret with Arjuna, telling that they got a quick bus home. Ammachchi is too mature to fool. In no time she catches Auntie Radha with the truth through a banana seller at the road top, she finds out all about Anil Jayasinghe and expresses her concern over his being a Sinhalese. Arjuna wonders why it causes so much consternation in the family as they live, study, work, and associate with the Sinhalese people. He later gets to know that someone in the family had been killed by a Sinhalese.

2: An analysis of the funny boy and the meaning of the foreshadowing

Funny Boy essays are academic essays for citation. These papers were written primarily by students and provide critical analysis of Funny Boy by S Selvadurai.

He falls in love and realises his sexuality. I wonder how many people stopped reading my review after that first line. This is nothing new. It is a facet of human existence. Men and women have always been associated with gender specific behaviour according to their culture. And as a young boy growing up in a divided Sri Lanka, Arjie wants nothing more than to be a girl. He was young and confused. Obviously, transgender issues are separate from sexuality. But one thing Arjie does realise is that he is very different to other boys. It takes him many years to actually realise what this difference is, and even longer to accept it. He felt comfortable, safe even, with the girls. As he grows up he realises the restrictions on such a lifestyle. I can sympathise with him here, I think we all can to some degree: At the end of the novel he and his family are forced to flee to the western world, which was more accepting, so I presume that would lead to his eventual admittance. As well as showing the conflict between homosexuality and social acceptance, the novel also portrays the tumultuous time in a divided Sri Lanka. Colonial power has withdrawn, leaving a massive power vacuum that rival factions fight for. However, for all the interesting themes and literary merit, I could not rate this any higher. It was drastically underplayed; there was barely as much as a good bye. They let it die. Personally, I think this would have been a much more powerful novel, dramatic too, if they tried to fight for it and it ended in tragedy. It would have been so much more impactful than a mutual, safe, withdrawal of feelings. I feel like I wasted my time with such levels of character investment for it all to conclude in one cold, detached, paragraph. Other than that though, the novel was an interesting read.

3: Funny Boy- ISU Presentation by pavani fernando on Prezi

Author Sara Paddison professed, "Speaking from the heart frees us from the secrets that burden us." Nothing makes us lonelier than our secrets. By confiding in others, we are liberated from the fears and miseries we have kept inside of us.

In *Funny Boy*, the Western world often merges with the Sri Lankan culture, sometimes to a disastrous effect. The influences of the West bring additional tension to pre-existing problems. For example, the conceit displayed by "Her Fatness" about having spent time abroad adds another facet to the conflict between her and Arjie. Why does this attempt to gain power backfire? Is the appeal of the West as strong for the children as it is for the adults? Do the Western words she learned abroad, such as "faggot," hold any power inside of Sri Lanka? Later in the novel, the construction of a Western-style hotel provides a center for the escalation of civil conflict. Why does this instance of Sri Lankan social strife take place in a Westernized setting? What aspects of the conflict are heightened by the juxtaposition of the Western world with Sri Lanka? Does the presence of a Western object, such as a hotel, compel Sri Lankans to strengthen their ethnic identity? Of these relationships, the most nurturing ones tend not to occur between mothers and their children. Mothers take the role of enforcer and disciplinarian, coming down strictly on their children when they think that they have erred. How does the strength of the maternal figures in the book compare or contrast with the larger societal structure of Sri Lanka? Is respect for tradition the main driving force behind maternal discipline? Additionally, women outside of the immediate family structure are shown as being nurturing and loving. Do their nurturing tendencies display their maternal tendencies that are yet untapped, or do they express their opposition to the harsh role of mother? Why is it that Arjie consistently turns to women when he is in need of emotional support? Now I was beginning to understand why Ammachi had been so angry. Part of her anger was because Anil was Sinhalese, but another part, I now saw, had to do with her fear that Anil and Radha Aunty were in love. Do these relationships manage to subvert their ethnicities, or do they simply reinforce already existing conflicts? What had happened between us in the garage was not wrong. For how could loving Shehan be bad? Yet if my parents or anybody else discovered this love, I would be in terrible trouble. I thought of how unfair this was and I was reminded of things I had seen happen to other people, like Jegan, or even Radha Aunty, who, in their own way, had experienced injustice. Look specifically at his conception of "justice" and how it is informed by the incidents in the text. Is this parallel between sexuality and ethnicity visible in any other characters in the novel? No longer is he just a child playing an innocent game of dress-up. Although he does not fully understand why, he becomes the frequent familial accomplice. Both Radha Aunty and Amma take him into their confidence to keep their individual secrets from the rest of the family. Radha Aunty uses Arjie as a pretext when meeting with Anil. Although no one else can know of her relationship with Anil, Arjie is entrusted with the great secret. Amma trusts Arjie not to reveal that "Daryl Uncle was with us all the time" while on their vacation in the hill country. Why do two adults put so much trust in a young boy? How is the kinship created? Can Arjie truly understand the familial ridicule Radha Aunty and Amma will experience if their secrets are revealed? Do they share their secrets with him because he may understand their desire to commit an act that directly contradicts the norm? Arjie takes the word funny to mean a "humorous or strange," not "homosexual reference," as his uncle intends. He finally realizes that "the difference within me that I sometimes felt. In this instance, Arjie defines "funny" as a deviation from the norm that both he and Shehan experience. However, Arjie does not hold the same disgust that his own father has for individuals who are "funny."

4: Funny Boy - Wikipedia

A Chapter-by-Chapter Critical Summary of Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai E.A. Gamini Fonseka SHYAM SELVADURAI was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka in and is of a Tamil and Sinhala mixed background.

Background[edit] The novel presents vivid sketches of family members, friends, school teachers, shown co-operating, arguing, loving, and living. The large Tamil family, and its arguments and discussions reflect a specific culture, while in many aspects the problems are universal. Tension mounts as the riots come closer to home, and the whole family sleeps in their shoes so they can quickly escape should the Sinhalese mobs descend. Selvadurai brings together the struggles of sexuality, ethnicity and class. These issues arise during the development of the protagonist, Arjie, whose maturation is framed against the backdrop of ethnic politics. While both he and Arjie are gay and Sri Lankans who immigrated to Canada, they had very different experiences. Arjie is no longer allowed to play with the girls. Radha Aunty and Arjie develop a special relationship, immediately, and both become involved in a performance of *The King and I*. Although she receives an engagement offer from Rajan Nagendra, she is reluctant and develops a friendship with Anil Jayasinghe, a Sinhalese who is also involved in the play. The extended family warns Radha and encourages her to put an end to the relationship. Radha Aunt goes to Jaffna to forget about Anil, and on her return journey, she and other Tamils are attacked on the train. Eventually, she becomes engaged to Rajan. It is through the friendship between his aunt and Anil that Arjie begins to understand the concept of ethnicity and the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict. Arjie is cognizant of a long history between Amma and Daryl Uncle but is unsure of the cause of the tensions until he has an eventual realization of their affair. When Arjie becomes very ill, Amma decides to take Arjie from Colombo to the countryside to recover. Although Amma tries to pursue the matter further, a civil rights lawyer tells her that there is nothing they can do, given the state of the country, and that "one must be like the three wise monkeys. See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" Jegan previously associated with the Tamil Tigers , but insists that he has broken all connections with the organization. Jegan also strikes up a friendship with Arjie and for the first time, Arjie feels his homosexual tendencies surface, as Arjie admires "how built he was, the way his thighs pressed against his trousers. The Best School of All[edit] Appa decides to transfer Arjie to Victoria Academy, a school he says "will force you to become a man" Arjie catches the eye of a boy named Shehan as well as the notorious school principal. Diggy hints that Shehan is gay and urges Arjie to stay away from him. Arjie notices in himself a growing attraction towards Shehan as the two spend more time together. The principal, nicknamed "Black Tie" ropes in Arjie to recite two poems at an upcoming school function. The function and specific poems are especially important to "Black Tie" as they are his final plea to prevent the government from reorganizing the school. Arjie gets nervous reciting the poems and forgets his lines, and the principal beats Arjie as well as Shehan for failing to help him memorize the poems. One day, Shehan kisses Arjie on the lips and he recoils, but it is after the kiss Arjie begins to comprehend his own sexuality. Afterwards, Arjie feels ashamed of himself and believes he has failed his family and their trust. An Epilogue[edit] In the final chapter of the novel, rioters start to burn down the Tamil houses and establishments in Colombo. After their own hotel is attacked and Ammachi and Appachi are killed, Appa decides it is time for the family to leave the country. After making love to Shehan for the last time, Arjie leaves Sri Lanka and moves to Canada with his family. A jealous cousin who gets Arjie into an embarrassing situation just to gain her superiority in the game of "bride-ride". She supports him and understands him when others are harsh on him. A stereotypical character representing what boys should be like. Named Diggy-nose or Diggy due to his habit of poking his nose in all affairs. Arjie is fascinated with how she would get ready for special occasions and liked to watch the process. The head of the family. He makes decisions on behalf of the entire family. Well educated and belonging to the upper-middle-class strata of the society. They are killed during a riot when their car is set on fire with Ammachi and Appachi still in it. She returns from school in America and lives with Ammachi and Appachi. Arjie and Radha Aunty have a special bond. Daryl Uncle – Daryl, a Burgher , is a friend of Amma and previous lover, who returns from Australia to investigate government corruption. Jegan Parameswaran – Jegan is the son of a friend of Appa,

who comes to work for him. He was a former Tamil Tiger , although only admits to being a part of the Gandhian movement. He made Arjie fully aware of his sexuality and its uniqueness. Black Tie – Very strict principal of the Victoria Academy. Believes that it is possible to extract work from students only by beating them up. Themes[edit] Gender and sexuality[edit] Interplay between sexuality and gender is an important underlying theme in the novel, and it is most apparent in the spend-the-day events at the start of the story. Here, Arjie and his cousins enact a marriage scene in their "bride-ride" game. A girl must be the bride" It is almost as if her masculinity is innocuous, whereas his femininity is a point of contention. Sexuality and gender play an important role in defining the relationships between the characters and their perceptions of one another. Marriage[edit] Marriage appears several times throughout the course of the novel, as it is something Arjie is fascinated with. The most exciting part of the game is the transformation into the bride. The draping of the white sari, allows him to "leave the constraints of [his] self and ascend into another, more brilliant, more beautiful self, a self to whom this day was dedicated" 5. Marriage serves as a source of bonding with Radha Aunty, who is due to marry Rajan Nagendra. Ethnic identity[edit] As the novel is set during and at the start of the Sri Lankan civil war, the characters are impacted, and constrained, on an individual level by the tensions between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, which includes Arjie and his family. For example, the relationship between Radha Aunty and Anil cannot progress because Anil is Sinhalese. His sexuality, while a topic of discussion for his family, is not confronted directly. Instead, he is always referred to as "funny. Throughout the novel, Arjie is also increasingly aware of his feelings towards the boys in his school, accepting that he thinks of the shorts they wear and longs to be with them However, he only fully grasps his sexual identity and its familial implications after a sexual encounter with one of his male classmates. He had been right to try and protect me from what he feared was inside me, but he had failed" The relationship between Radha Aunty and Anil is one such example. In this chapter, Arjie begins to learn about the history of the ethnic conflict and begins to realize the magnitude of the impact it may have on his life. Additionally, in "The Best School of All" chapter, Arjie experiences this tension firsthand in many interactions at school. Reception[edit] The book has found strong positive reception both in scholarly reviews and online reading communities. On GoodReads , the novel gained an average rating of 3. CGPC 12 2 , pp. The Journal of Commonwealth Literature , , Vol. Funny Boy on his personal website, featuring information about the book, some reviews as well as an excerpt from the text.

5: Leading Questions for Funny Boy

Funny Boy Shyam Selvadurai Funny Boy essays are academic essays for citation. These papers were written primarily by students and provide critical analysis of Funny Boy by S Selvadurai.

6: Funny Boy Summary & Study Guide

Funny Boy, by Shyam Selvadurai (), is a novel about coming of age. It won several awards, including the Lambda Literary Award for gay male fiction and the Books in Canada First Novel Award. It won several awards, including the Lambda Literary Award for gay male fiction and the Books in Canada First Novel Award.

7: Marriage as a Predominant Theme in Funny Boy

Funny Boy () became a national bestseller and won many awards. He wrote Funny boy as a form of therapy and to inform people about a topic that is kept dark in Sri Lanka.

8: Funny Boy - Pigs Can't Fly – Radha Aunty Summary & Analysis

Critical Analysis of This Boy's Life by Tobias Wolff - This Boy's Life is the autobiographical account of teenager. Toby and his mother's search for financial stability and a peaceful life.

9: Shyam Selvadurai - Funny Boy

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai Arjie, Selvadurai's protagonist (and thinly-veiled autobiographical self), is apparently both foil to and member of the (economically) privileged male class and comes to embody the tensions in these post-postcolonial struggles.

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