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### **Colonial Remnants and the Commoditization of Desire in Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India***

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**Abstract:** Colonial remnants refer to the remains of structures, institutions, landscaping projects, socio-cultural establishments, and various other formations utilized in consolidating colonial hegemony over a colonized nation. The term, however, calls to question whether they remain as mere reminders of colonial rule, stripped of their essence, or still carry with them the underlying forces that shifted modes of existence in the spaces they occupied upon the achievement of independence and the formation of a nation-state. The role of these remnants consequently calls into question if the parameters of a true “post-colonialism” have been achieved in a world of neocolonial exploitation. Both Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* are layered works that contain encounters with colonial remnants where an interplay of desire and class engages with the power of these institutions, as well as the complexities arising from these engagements. This article will attempt to provide an analysis of the engagements thereof, whether they are made in moments of defiant resistance, undermining irony, or in the dangerous unawareness of class consciousness.

**Key words:** Postcolonialism, Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Postcolonial Literature, Shyam Selvadurai, Bapsi Sidhwa, *Funny Boy*, *Cracking India*, Novel, Sri Lanka, India

Within Western colonial history, imperial and colonial forces (specifically focusing on England), have created structures or institutions that carry their presence constituted by not only their military strength, but socio-economic sensibilities. These structures can be in the form of sculptures or names that are placed in central positions that oversee populated areas with the aesthetic sensibilities of the colonizing force. Schools modelled upon an English education system and churches meant to veer a nation's youth and posterity towards internalizing colonial ideologies are even more active in their role in establishing colonial hegemony. We can question whether colonial institutions and structures still maintain their literal and symbolic presence or become mere fossils of a history of empires and dominion. In “Signs Taken for Wonders” Homi Bhabha writes that “the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference” (150), and while his main example is the English book, his argument can indeed apply to every institutionalizing colonial effort from schools to gardens. It is within that line of questioning that I turn to examples of postcolonial literature with the purpose of analyzing the presence of these colonial remnants.

Colonial forces, whether they express their intent through militant conquest, or through the guise of protection and free trade, interact with the nations they colonize in ways that shift modes of existence as they effectively disseminate their socio-economic values along with their cultural practices. While I am not referring to the possibility of a “state of nature” before contact with a colonial power, I am acknowledging a certain shift in the way colonial values affect the nations and peoples they colonize, which we can see from the fact that foreign embassies, military encampments, and schools serve as microcosms of the foreign, in this case

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colonizing, nation. I would like to present a reading of Shyam Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* that focuses on the after-effects of colonial capitalism and how moments of sexual desire and intimacy provides for attempts at resistance through a reading of the microcosms of colonial nation-states, or the remnants of those microcosms from past colonial experiences. There are interesting parallels between the two novels, as they both utilize the "naive perspective" to expose the reader to a history of colonization and the rise of ethnic tensions. The two novels create a point of comparison through which we can see the interconnection between capitalism and desire in the postcolonial state, whether it is after the state is formed (*Funny Boy*) or in the process of formation (*Cracking India*). We can claim that they present features that are coded in the traditional sense of a *bildungsroman* yet subvert that tradition in the ways Lisa Lowe discusses in the fifth chapter of her work *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. A reading of the two texts with a focus on the capitalist undertones related to the microcosms of the colonizing forces can enlighten us to those parallels as well as differences, and resistance is manifest not only as a move against a colonizing military power, but as an indirect opposition to, or awareness of neocolonial capitalism.

### ***Funny Boy* and Desire as a Form of Resistance**

One would expect to approach an analysis of Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* as a coming-of-age novel or *bildungsroman* to carry on chronologically; step-by-step in a manner that is characteristic of said genres, tracing the development of an individual. Several of the analyses included here from Andrew Lesk to Tariq Jazeel and Gayatri Gopinath, begin at Arjie's home with the "Pigs Can't Fly" chapter, and end at the "The Best School of All" as Arjie tries to negotiate his sexual, ethnic, and national identity within each space. In contrast, beginning the argument from "The Best School of All" chapter informs us as to how the Queen Victoria Academy, operates in a specific kind of subject formation which consequently informs on the mechanisms of domesticity and the household. Through an Althusserian analysis of Ideological State Apparatuses, we can see how the Queen Victoria Academy becomes implicated in a certain cyclical ideological entity that includes Arjie's home as well as the family hotel. Althusser claims that:

Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic. (There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus.) Thus Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. The same is true of the Family....The same is true of the cultural IS Apparatus (censorship, among other things), etc. (145)

What we can see within this analysis is the potential web of relations between colonialism represented by the remnant of the Queen Victoria Academy, neocolonial exploitation represented by the Paradise Beach Hotel, and a patriarchal heteronormativity that is forced upon Arjie throughout the spaces of the home and the academy. The home and academy as Ideological State Apparatuses present their repressive potential as Arjie's is initially expelled from his mother's room as well as the space of the girl's game of Bride-Bride, and later physically punished by the Academy's principle, Black Tie. Even though the Queen Victoria Academy is a later episode of Arjie's life in Sri Lanka, we can note how its existence forged generations of men that perpetuated a version of Western masculinity that would result in Arjie's father sending him there.

In his essay "Ambivalence at the Site of Authority: Desire and Difference in *Funny Boy*", Andrew Lesk claims that "new nations, especially those either adapting to or throwing off the vestiges of colonialism, often reference conservative ideas about male prerogatives (closely wedded to masculinity) and heterosexuality that might result in a strong and procreative country, not only in racial strength but in the social strata" (31-2). Strength and procreativity in this sense, is not just limited to reproductive values, but to economic growth as well, which creates a bond between said "conservative ideas about male prerogatives" and financial gain. The role of the colonial remnant correlates well with Lisa Lowe's claim on the *bildungsroman* "as the primary form

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for narrating the development of the individual from youthful innocence to civilized maturity, the telos of which is the reconciliation of the individual with the social order" (98), a genre that would have been included in the Academy's curriculum. The "civilized maturity" and "social order" are strongly related to the values of the nation-state and serve to reproduce the ideological means of production, if we assume that economic gain is possibly the most significant driving force of empire. I begin my argument by an analysis of the Academy due to the impression Arjie's father has of its values, as he is the initial position through which Arjie is placed into an abject position.

"The Academy will force you to become a man" (*Funny Boy* 115), claims Arjie's father to justify his decision to send Arjie there. Contrary to his expectations, however, Arjie will not only break the taboos set upon the student body by falling in love with a classmate, but also shake the colonial foundations of the Academy represented by the principal. The father's notions of a capitalist masculinity in the sense of "new nations and procreativity" that Lesk mentions, can also be related to his reasons behind placing Arjie in a Sinhalese class. In a pragmatic gesture attributed to capital worth and cultural hegemony, Arjie's father believes that "there was no use in putting [him] in a Tamil class when Sinhalese was 'the real language of the future'" (*Funny Boy* 39). While a knowledge of Sinhalese becomes a life-or-death matter as the violence between the ethnic divide intensifies, the father's claim is made in a time of relative peace and seems to refer to his position as a business owner, which gains significance as we are made aware of the fact that the workers in his hotel are Sinhalese. The father's goal is to continue the cyclical infrastructure of working-class subjugation presumably initiated by the "favoured" position of Indian Tamils brought over by the British colonizers in the 1870s.<sup>1</sup>

Before digressing into my discussion of the hotel, I would like to state how the "decolonizing" act, in Lisa Lowe's terms, becomes manifest in an active resistance against, and effective destruction of the school's position as a colonial remnant, indirectly defusing one of the sources of cyclical neocolonial exploitation. While on one hand, Arjie crosses the line that is set upon the homosocial relations endorsed by the Academy with Shehan, thus disrupting the ideological purposes of its formation, on the other, he effectively causes Black Tie's replacement and the consequent fall of the Academy as it becomes a school meant for Sinhalese students under the vice-principal. Tariq Jazeel claims that "Black Tie is struggling to see the school's colonial legacies of multiracial secularism survive, even though he is a fierce disciplinarian" (242), yet Black Tie seems to be in complete ignorance of the internal politics and power struggles of the school. The failure of the school's "colonial legacies of multiracial secularism" is revealed, as we encounter Tamil students being beaten and bullied without any punitive oversight granted by the Sinhalese Vice Principal. Arjie witnesses a brief encounter between Cheliah, the leader of the ninth grade Tamil class and Salgado, his Sinhalese rival, as Salgado kicks "open a cubicle and the boys crowded inside, dragging Cheliah with them" (*Funny Boy* 120). Arjie's classmate later reveals the undercurrent of ethnic conflict within the school, with the Sinhalese Vice Principle Lokubandra who "wanted to make the Victoria Academy a Buddhist school" (*Funny Boy* 120), consolidating a Sinhala-only rule. Opposing Arjie's father's demands, as well as the demands of Lesk's "new states", the school does not become a space which produces subjects into a national and social order and procreative modes of production, but subjects that are constantly in conflict.

A microcosm of postcolonial conflict through the Academy (a microcosm of the colonial force) is manifest in Arjie's recollection of the "spend-the-day" at his grandparent's home. Jazeel and Gopinath both have excellent analyses of how the home operates within the first chapter as a private sphere that is closely linked to the public sphere and the enforcement of hetero-normative values, and while they provide wonderful readings of the human actions that take place within the space, they do not seem to focus on it as a physical construct. Describing the house at the very beginning of the first chapter, Selvadurai writes:

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<sup>1</sup> See "Chronology for Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka." *Refworld*, 2004, <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38df24.html>>.

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The first thing that met our eyes on entering our grandparents' house, after we carefully wiped our feet on the doormat, would be the dark corridor running the length of it, on one side of which were the bedrooms and on the other the drawing and dining rooms. This corridor, with its old photographs on both walls and its ceiling so high that our footsteps echoed, scared me a little. (*Funny Boy* 9)

The description of the interior seems to be emblematic of the grander themes in the work. The split between the bedrooms and the drawing and dining rooms can be seen as the split between the private and public spheres, yet the presence of the “darkness” in the corridor obfuscates the split, creating a line that seems transparent and calling for the inevitable permeability of the two spheres. The “old photographs on both walls” are coded by the seeming omnipresence of traditional values and modes of existence, which includes within its schema the values propagated by the colonizers. Arjie’s fear of this corridor, and the darkness, or the inevitability of the interference from events belonging to the grander political landscape into the household, precipitates his other fears throughout the text, from the older boys on the beach to the imposing presence of Black Tie on the balcony. Arjie’s individual fears seem to be appropriately placed, as those fears immediately mark the locations of individual repression from the family, the school, and his peers, which are consequently formed into moments of resistance.

Returning to the first chapter of the novel in this light, one can see the forces of a newly formed procreative state operating within the home space, in the girls’ game of Bride-Bride, the game they played during the days they spend at his grandparents. We are introduced to a space which is territorially divided between the boys in the field and the girls in the house, with the exception of Arjie who preferred to play with the girls. Arjie claims that “the primary attraction of the girls’ territory was the potential for the free play of fantasy” (*Funny Boy* 10). He is selected as the girls’ leader to the force of his imagination (and plays the role of the Bride), yet his role is disrupted by a visiting cousin from the USA derogatorily called “her Fatness”. Marked by terms of neocolonial capitalism, “her Fatness” attempts to win the girls’ friendship with dolls purchased abroad and causes Arjie to be ejected from the girls’ territory through the force of her parents. The readers are introduced to a chain of subjugation and exploitation, as her Fatness’ mother, Kanthi Aunty was “forced to work as a servant in whitey’s house to make ends meet” (*Funny Boy* 12). Arjie eventually returns to the game and is allowed to assume the most insignificant role of the groom by her Fatness. As Arjie attempts to help with the playful cooking for the wedding, “her Fatness” claims that grooms “go to office” (*Funny Boy* 24). Arjie is forced to not only take up the position of the heteronormative masculinity as the groom, but as the subject of the “procreative” masculine worker. As a resistance to this representative neocolonial influence, he takes up the position, yet in gender-bending acts, starts acting the role of the owner of the means of production, calling one of the girls “boy” and telling her to meet a manager, and another girl “miss” and demands her to take diction. Selvadurai presents the diverse maneuvering capability of Arjie’s individual identity, as he is able to perform not only the role of the bride, but the groom as well, in order to resist the demands of “her Fatness”. Arjie’s constant centrality can be critiqued for its male-centric power politics, yet if we consider it in terms of his intimacy with the girls he plays with, it becomes a moment of resistance against an outside, invasive force. The game, after all, is ruled by the one with the strongest force of imagination, and it is Arjie’s desire to act upon his imagination that allows him to maneuver through traditional gender roles and resist external elements.

The culmination of the moral tensions created by neocolonial exploitation arguably becomes clearest in the “Small Choices” chapter, as we are enlightened to the nature of some of the business practices of Arjie’s father’s hotel. Named in an extremely generic fashion, “Paradise Beach Resort” is the hotel that is under the co-ownership of Arjie’s father and Sinhalese Sena Uncle. The hotel is a space birthed from opportunities in free-market expansion and the sectioning off of land that is repurposed in a way to make it palatable for foreigners. Selvadurai dismisses the notion that a partnership within a growing market can soothe ethnic tensions as they are deeply rooted in a colonial past and consequently, class. Arjie observes that the town near his father’s hotel is in a destitute state and its residents live on selling trinkets to tourists or working at one of the many hotels in the region. The father’s previous claim that “Sinhalese is the real language of the future” obtains the jaded meaning

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that implies more efficient control of the working classes by knowledge of their language. Selvadurai underlines the sinister nature of the hotel business when Arjie's father is questioned about the foreigners speaking to young boys on the beach and he answers "[i]t's not just our luscious beaches that keep the tourist industry going, you know. We have other natural resources as well" (*Funny Boy* 95). The scope of the issue is further enhanced as he elaborates that if he "tried to stop it, they'd simply go to another hotel on the front" (*Funny Boy* 95). Not only are we enlightened to the commodification of the bodies of young boys, but to the fact that this is a common practice among other hotel owners and that there are many other alternatives for foreigners to play out their fantasies. Selvadurai presents an environment of free market competition within which the bodies of young boys are reduced to a resource and the ones with the means to acquire the resources are not held accountable for, or held to the standard of the rules, norms, and taboos they engendered for decades. Desire in this chapter does not connote a direct act of resistance. It is, on the contrary, a showcase within which the bodies of a nation's people are subjected to foreigners' free play of fantasy, yet the revelation of the hypocrisy can serve as its own form of textual resistance.

Desire is at times manipulated for a pragmatic aspiration for power or capital gain, and at times becomes a force of resistance against colonial presence and ideology. These moments of resistance are positioned within the "decolonizing" framework of "the multifaceted, ongoing project of resistance struggles that can persist for decades in the midst of simultaneous neocolonial exploitation" (107) in Lisa Lowe's terms. Towards the end of the novel however, we notice how almost everything from the colonial remnants to varying intimacies and desires seem to collapse in the face of a violent conflict that seems to be as rooted in ethnicity as it is in class. Inter-ethnic violence in turn, is represented as a form of chaos that destroys everything, and the novel can only accept in futility the forces that assumed control thereafter. This type of destruction seems to be paralleled in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*, presenting an equally complex interconnectedness of capital gain and desires.

#### ***Cracking India and the Garden of Desire***

*Cracking India* occupies an interesting position within a postcolonial context, while it was written and published decades after India's independence, the novel itself is set in the transitional period from colonialism to post-colonialism. The temporally transitional position of the novel obfuscates the position of the colonial structures, positing whether these colonial edifices can be considered remnants or not. For the purposes of this analysis on the specific edifice of the Queen Victoria Garden, and the complexity of the connections between class, desire, and capital, the central location through which these complexities are delivered, will be considered a remnant due to the fact that its namesake had passed on 46 years before the eve of Imperial England's departure from India.<sup>2</sup> It is important to mention that resistance can occur on multiple fronts, both within the textual narrative, as well as outside of it. In his essay "Trauma and Maturation in Women's War Narratives: *The Eye of the Mirror* and *Cracking India*," Kamran Rastegar claims that these works erase the distinction between literary work and critical social history, producing in "the larger question of what history is and can be" (26). While we establish the increased significance of the role of "fictional" representation in current discourses, we should not forget the operative forces at work within the text itself. Looking at *Cracking India*, specifically the Queen Victoria Garden, through a lens that combines desires and capital interest, we can see how while the novel can contribute to a resistance against narratives of war, it could also contribute to potentially harmful perspectives that reinforces the ideologies it wishes to resist.

The Ayah is the focal point of desire for the community in *Cracking India*'s Lahore, and is the figure through which discourses on desire are initiated, coinciding with Lenny's initiation into an awareness of womanhood. Sidhwa makes this abundantly clear early in the novel as she writes:

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<sup>2</sup> See "The death of Queen Victoria – Archive, 1901." *The Guardian*, 23 Jan. 1901, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/1901/jan/23/monarchy.fromthearchive>.

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The covetous glances Ayah draws educate me. Up and down, they look at her. Stub-handed twisted beggars and dusty old beggars on crutches drop their poses and stare at her with hard, alert eyes. Holy men, masked in piety, shove aside their pretenses to ogle her with lust. Hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes, pushing my pram with the unconcern of the Hindu goddess she worships. (*Cracking India* 12)

We notice within Lenny's early sexual education the disorientation of the *bildungsroman*, as a certain sexual awareness is acquired that is not attached to either class or moral/religious sensibilities. It is in a following passage in which the desirous looks Ayah draws due to her sexuality becomes connected to her clothes, as Sidhwa writes that she "has a rolling bouncy walk that agitates the globules of her buttocks under her cheap colorful saris and the half-spheres beneath her short sari-blouses" (*Cracking India* 13). The saris and the sari-blouses that complement Ayah's physique thus become connected to her position at the centre of communal desire. It is not the "cheapness" of her colourful saris that connects this communal desire to capital interests, however, but her salary as an Ayah. When questioned by Ice-candy-man as to why Ayah doesn't wear a *shalwar-kamize* as characteristic of her Punjabi identity that is structured by Ice-candy-man's desire to categorize people according to ethnicity/faith, Sidhwa writes:

"Arrey *baba*," says Ayah spreading her hands in a fetching gesture, "do you know what salary ayahs who wear Punjabi clothes get? Half the salary of the Goan ayahs who wear saris! I'm not so simple!" (*Cracking India* 38)

Rastegar also includes this moment in his analysis as a rationale that is "one of economy" (27), and presents the economic perspective as a means of evading and detaching from the traditionally patriarchal and nationalistic categorization Ice-candy-man attempts to place Ayah in. Here we are moved to focus on the Ayah's rejection of implied "simplicity" through multiple layers. Is it a "simplicity" that implies an underlying rejection of arbitrary restrictive values attributed to religious connections, or a "simplicity" that undermines the people who are closely attached to their spiritual, or ethnic values. While Ayah's capital interests as a member of the working class and evasion of Ice-candy-man's questioning can be seen as an attempt to break the conventional assumptions that are associated with ethnicity and faith, what I would like to focus on is how her capital interests, that seem to be represented by her saris are as attached to her body as the desiring stares of the men in the community. The connections between desire, intimacy, and capital self-interest become even clearer as we move on to Queen Victoria Garden and the connections between Lenny, Ayah, Ice-candy-man, as well as the other admirers. Ambreen Hai, in her article "Border Work, Border Trouble: Postcolonial Feminism and the Ayah in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India*" recognizes Lenny's education and attributes it to her privileged, neutral position within the ethnic tensions in the nation. Hai argues that Ayah "acts as both an idealized self and other—beautiful, desired (before Independence) by men of all religious and class backgrounds—an adolescent body through whose adventures the narrator vicariously acquires dangerous knowledge from a safe distance" (390-1). Hai's critique is one that seems to reveal the novel's arguable practices of conveying certain judgments and moral positions that seem to highlight the role of the socio-economically privileged at the expense of the lower classes (primarily Ayah). The "dangerous" nature of this knowledge can work on multiple fronts as we consider the interests that revolve around the many individuals involved with Ayah. Partially, there is the complex nature of the intimacy between the narrator from a position of privilege and Ayah the caretaker, a connection that is "stronger than the bond of motherhood. More satisfying than the ties between men and women" (*Cracking India* 13). The secondary "dangerous" implication of Lenny's sexual education is beyond the breaking of conventional morals that are associated with the relationship between a girl and her nanny, be it in terms of the boundaries of gender or class. The secondary implication of said sexual education is enlightened as Lenny gains awareness of the possibility to commoditize desire in the Queen Victoria Garden.

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Setting the stage for the circulation of desire is a quick description of the statue of Queen Victoria that is “cast in gunmetal, is majestic, overpowering, ugly. Her statue imposes the English Raj in the park. I lie sprawled on the grass, my head in Ayah’s lap” (28). The structure, while not exactly a remnant since colonial presence is still quite active, serves as an aesthetic reminder of that presence along with its values. While there is a hint of irony that Sidhwa writes into the park as several sexual interactions take place in front of Queen Victoria’s gaze, the danger lies within the manner in which Lenny seems to mediate and pragmatically make use of Ayah’s sexuality and the desires of her admirers for her self-interest. Within the same paragraph that describes the statue, the narrative voice claims:

Ice-candy-man is selling his popsicles to the other groups lounging on the grass. My mouth waters. I have confidence in Ayah’s chocolate chemistry ... lank and loping the Ice-candy-man cometh... I take advantage of Ayah’s admirers. (*Cracking India* 28)

It is during that moment of childish self-interest that we see the potential for tensions that exist not purely on a nationalistic level that focuses on specific ideologies of faith and ethnicity, but one that is deeply rooted in class and class exploitation. Sidhwa presents us with a complicated web of relations between desires and class exploitation, and Ayah that seems to be a “desired other” by Lenny in Hai’s terms becomes a victim of class exploitation through the manipulation of desires. This manipulation and exploitation is mirrored towards the end, as we find out that Ice-candy-man has forced Ayah into prostitution after her initial capture and rape, and Ice-candy-man becomes the one who profits off of the commoditization of desire. It is unfortunate that these class-based tensions seem to be overshadowed by the eventual implications that are made through Lenny’s family’s (specifically Godmother) provision of shelter and protection to the people, as well as Ayah’s rescue. Hai’s critique points out the failure of Sidhwa’s novel as a work of postcolonial feminism, as she writes:

Sidhwa’s postcolonial feminism cannot reconfigure this queen’s garden beyond a trimming of its edges. Indeed, it remains surprisingly uncritical of the inequalities and tensions already present in this hypothetically harmonious “garden.” Hence this feminism actually remains quite Victorian (and colonial) in its understanding of gendered spheres, its essentialization of male violence, and its reassertion of class divisions. It sees lower-class men as an uncontainable, unanalyzable problem [...]. It remains oblivious to the socio-economic circumstances and inequities that may in fact produce those tensions. (410)

In her analysis, Hai draws our attention as to how Sidhwa’s work seems to reify colonial sensibilities with regards to class by creating a setting that posits the privileged as neutral and protected, as well as elevating them to moral standards expected of colonial tradition. Partially disagreeing with Hai’s analysis, we could see that the potential for those class tensions is touched upon when we consider the economic complexity of the desires that revolve around Ayah, as well as Lenny’s exploitation of her in childish self-interest. Both Rastegar and Hai seem to place the lower-class individuals as either victims or subjects under the protection of Lenny’s family, including Ayah and Ice-candy-man at the end of the novel. The issue, however, is the fact that the aggressive nature of Ice-candy-man’s desires is constantly hinted at, and within the schema of class differences, the dangerous nature of his desire becomes evident as the movement of his toes are coded by language that implies assault (as well as the very physical threat to Adi to convince Ayah). Sidhwa’s presentation is not necessarily as one-sided as Hai seems to state, as she further complicates the issues surrounding the ethnic formation of a nation, desire, and self-interest. From the language that surrounds interactions with Ice-candy-man we are shown a darker, and jaded version of desire which manipulates a nationalist and patriarchal cause (building of a nation after Partition) to obtain his object of desire, Ayah, who is then shared communally for his capital gain. Ultimately though, Sidhwa does seem to reify and justify positions of class as the lower classes become subjects to either act upon or act for towards the end of the novel, which in turn, overshadows the moments where a self-aware narrator notices her position of privilege and power and attempts a critique through that self-awareness.

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*Funny Boy* and *Cracking India* are illuminations of situations in which rampant violence erupts from the removal of a central force that resides over a tenuous veil of harmony. The novels, whether strategically or not, utilize remnants of colonial institutions or edifices to highlight the grander shifts happening on the geopolitical landscape. While they entertain the notion that the operative forces at work in these shifts is not one of revolutionary change, whether it is the continuation of foreign exploitation through the expansion of free market trade in *Funny Boy* or Lenny's self-awareness in *Cracking India*, they do not actively acknowledge the sheer privilege of individualism afforded to them through their class, considering class is the definitive social marker that remains as the world shifts from imperial colonialism to neo-liberal/colonial capitalism and colonial institutions and edifices become mere remnants.

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