

MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM: “MY SON THE FANATIC” BY HANIF KUREISHI

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ÖZET: Çokkültürlülük, birden fazla kültürün eşit şekilde tanınmasını, saygı gösterilmesini ve teşvik edilmesini öngören sosyopolitik bir akımdır. Çokkültürlülük politikalarını benimsemiş çokkültürlü bir toplumda, birbirinden farklı etnik, dini ve kültürel gruplar birbirlerine eşit kabul edilmek zorundadırlar. Günümüze dek, pek çok Batı ülkesinde çokkültürlülük uygulamaları bazı problemler yaratmıştır. Siyasi bir doktrin olarak çokkültürlülük, İslami köktendinciliğe yol açmakla suçlanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Pakistan asıllı İngiliz yazar Hanif Kureishi'nin 1994 yılında kaleme aldığı “Fanatik Oğlum” isimli kısa hikâyesinde yansıttığı İslami köktendincilik ve çokkültürlü toplum ilişkisini araştırmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çokkültürlülük, Çokkültürlü Toplum, Köktendincilik, Hanif Kureishi, “Fanatik Oğlum”.

ABSTRACT: Multiculturalism can be defined as a sociopolitical movement which equally appreciates and promotes multiple cultures. In a multicultural country adopting multiculturalist policies, distinct ethnic, religious and cultural groups must be considered 'equal'. So far, the practices of multiculturalism in various Western countries have caused many problems. As a political doctrine, multiculturalism has been accused of causing Islamic fundamentalism. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between a multicultural society and fundamentalism reflected in “My Son the Fanatic” (1994), a short story written by Hanif Kureishi, a famous Pakistani-British author.

Key Words: Multiculturalism, Multicultural Society, Fundamentalism, Hanif Kureishi, “My Son the Fanatic”.

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of various sociopolitical movements led by groups, such as “the indigenous peoples, national minorities, ethno-cultural nations, old and new immigrants, feminists, gay men and lesbians, and the greens” (Parekh, 2006: 1), all of which have their own ways and views of life and their own culture. As each of these diverse groups wants society to recognize and respect its identity-related differences, from the 1970s onward, many countries in Europe and America have had to produce and practice the theories of multiculturalism, as a current sociopolitical movement which “sees all cultures, their mores and institutions, as essentially equal” (Schmidt, 1997: 3). Multiculturalism can be defined as a sociopolitical movement which equally appreciates and promotes multiple cultures. In a multicultural country adopting multiculturalist policies, distinct ethnic, religious and cultural groups are considered to be 'equal'. So far, the practices of multiculturalism in various Western countries have caused many problems. As indicated by Tariq Modood in his 2007 article entitled “Multiculturalism, Citizenship and National Identity”, the idea of

multiculturalism has faced “intense criticism from voices who blame it for accentuating social division, reinforcing Muslim separateness and undermining national identity” (Modood, 2007). As indicated by Tariq Modood, multiculturalism has most particularly been accused of causing Islamic fundamentalism, a militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements (Modood, 2007).

Britain is one of the Western countries that have faced similar multicultural problems for the last forty years. During the last decades, a large number of immigrants from the former British colonies such as Pakistan, India, and the Caribbean have become British citizens, and the British government - especially the Labour Government of Tony Blair, who served as the Prime Minister of the UK from 2 May 1997 to 27 June 2007 - had to adopt multiculturalist policies from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. As a multicultural country, Britain has faced many cultural and moral disagreements and conflicts between its different cultural communities. Most of these disagreements have been so much related with Islamic religion that many politicians and authors started to wonder “if Britain had not made a ‘mistake’ in letting in ‘too many’ Muslims” (Parekh, 2006: 301). Because of these disagreements and conflicts which are mostly related with Islam, multiculturalism has been considered to be a dangerous doctrine.

In contemporary British literature, one of the most prolific writers, who successfully depicts the problems of Britain as a multicultural country, is Hanif Kureishi (born on December 5, 1954), who is the son of a Pakistani father and an English mother. In most of his works, Kureishi explores what is to be a ‘half-caste’ in Britain and focuses on the issues such as home, homelands, belonging, inbetweenness, alienation, identity, hybridity, nationalism, racism, sexuality, fundamentalism, migration, ethnicity, and the historical and cultural conflict between East and West. One of Hanif Kureishi’s famous works is “My Son the Fanatic”, a short story which was first published in *The New Yorker* on March 28, 1994. In “My Son the Fanatic”, through a father-son relationship, Hanif Kureishi explores the themes of fundamentalism and the confluence of Islam and identity politics in a multicultural community. In this short story, the conflict between European and Muslim values results in intolerance and violence, and a family whose roots are in two distinct cultures is torn apart.

The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between fundamentalism and a multicultural society reflected in “My Son the Fanatic” by the Pakistani-British author, Hanif Kureishi. This paper attempts to investigate the way in which immigrant identities are constructed in Britain, and to search for the reason why young Muslims are being radicalized and are adopting a hate-filled ideology critical of the West.

“MY SON THE FANATIC”

“My Son the Fanatic” is one of the most celebrated works by the Anglo-Pakistani author, Hanif Kureishi. It was first published in *The New Yorker* on March 28, 1994, the screenplay for the movie version of the story was published in 1997, and the picture was released in 1998. Telling the story of the conflict between the Asian (Pakistani) father, Parvez, and his son, Ali, “My Son the Fanatic” analyzes the father-son relationship. Hanif Kureishi claims that he wrote the story “to understand what it is to be a son, what it is to be a father. What it is to live in a world where there is radical Islam” (Kureishi, 2006). Since its publication, this story has strongly attracted the attention of ethnic and Islamic groups in Britain and has been discussed in terms of its forethought about the alienation of young, radicalized Muslim

men. The movie version of “My Son the Fanatic” has also been attacked by Islamic leaders who consider it as a negative and opprobrious portrayal of Muslim beliefs and behavior.

According to Milan Kundera, “human life is bounded by two chasms: fanaticism on one side, absolute skepticism on the other” (Kundera, cited in Saynor, 2001). Hanif Kureishi successfully make these two chasms close together in his “My Son the Fanatic”. In this story, Hanif Kureishi exploits the conventional East-West theme. This theme is viewed in a family whose members are all ‘Pakis’. The character Parvez, who has migrated to England, which is perceived as a dreamland and as a country of opportunities, starts to realize some changes in the behaviors of his son, Ali: Parvez’s only child Ali has rejected acculturation, embraced his Pakistani roots and become a Muslim fundamentalist. In a short time, Ali’s tendency to the Eastern way of living and his disregarding the West turn into assaults towards Parvez. Although Parvez tries to tolerate his son’s behaviors at the beginning, at the end, he loses his temper and hits his son for having adopted the radical position of returning to their ancient religious traditions. At the very end of the story, Ali’s question, “So who’s the fanatic now?” (Kureishi, 2009a: 298), creates a paradoxical conclusion questioning the defects not only within Islamic groups but also within multicultural British society.

In his article “The Road Exactly”, an introduction to the screenplay of “My Son the Fanatic”, Hanif Kureishi indicates that “the idea for *My Son the Fanatic* was provided by my thinking about the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, announced in February 1989” (Kureishi, 2005: 53). A British Indian author, Salman Rushdie’s fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which is inspired in part by the life of the Prophet Mohammad, was published on 26 September 1988. The novel caused great controversy in the Islamic world. Soon after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, British Muslims began to campaign against it as, for Muslims, the novel was full of blasphemous references to Islamic religion and its prophet. The novel was banned in India, and a copy of the book was burned in demonstrations in Britain on 2 December 1988. The leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini “pronounced a death sentence on Rushdie on 14 February 1989, and called on Muslims all over the world to execute it” (Parekh, 2006: 300). This intellectual terror was much argued by various politicians, thinkers and men of letters at that time. Kureishi claims that:

Few commentators noticed that the objections to *The Satanic Verses* represented another kind of protest. In Britain many young Asians were turning to Islam, and some to a particularly extreme form, often called fundamentalism. Most of these young people were from Muslim families, of course, but usually families in which the practice of religion, in a country to which their families had come to make a new life, had fallen into disuse. (Kureishi, 2005: 53)

In “My Son the Fanatic”, Hanif Kureishi focuses his attention on this gap between two generations of immigrants living in Britain. He works over shifting values between a father and son whose struggle was between assimilation and separatist fundamentalism. The differences between two generations of Pakistani immigrants to Britain are well depicted in the story through two different characters: one is a liberal and secular, and the other is a ‘fundamentalist’, “a word newly minted to mean a fanatical

Muslim” (Kureishi, 2005: 55). Parvez is depicted as enterprising and degenerate whereas his son Ali is rebellious and zealous. Through these characters, Kureishi criticizes both conservatism and liberalism.

In his 2001 article entitled “Hanif Kureishi”, Linden Peach claims that Kureishi’s works reflect that “values have to be worked out through negotiation of the conflicts created by love and desire and by the clash and fusion of cultural and religious traditions” (Peach, 2001). It is easily seen that Kureishi’s works reflect his ethnic background and suburban upbringing, and this ethnic background has been “the subject of controversy, with his mother and sister disputing his versions of it” (Peach, 2001). Kureishi was born in London on 5 December 1954 and raised in Bromley, a suburb of England. His mother was English; his father, the son of a doctor, was a lieutenant colonel in the Indian army who immigrated to England after the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947. The father also wanted to be an author but failed to obtain a publisher for any of his works. His father, who was a Pakistani immigrant, was one of those who could be well assimilated into the British society:

[...] my father was much more liberal and he liked the Pink Floyd. And he liked England and he wanted to be English. And he liked English people. And he was very curious about England. And he liked all the neighbours. He really liked being here. And was determined to fit in and join in. And he didn't feel that being an Indian somehow excluded him from knowing about England. (Kureishi, 1999)

In “My Son the Fanatic”, Hanif Kureishi portrays the character Parvez similar to his own father. This character is introduced as a liberal immigrant and a symbol of the first generation of immigrants in Britain. Bhikhu Parekh, in his *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2006), indicates that a multicultural society including two or more cultural communities may respond to its cultural diversity in one of two ways:

It might welcome and cherish it, make it central to its self-understanding, and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities; or it might seek to assimilate these communities into its mainstream culture either wholly or substantially. (Parekh, 2006: 6)

As a multicultural country with the ethnic minorities comprising over 6 percent of its population, Britain seems to have followed the second way to respond to its cultural diversity. It has tried to assimilate its diverse cultural communities into its British culture although the concept of multiculturalism is contrasted with the idea of multiculturalism, as a promotion of differences. Through Parvez character, Kureishi explores the effects of this assimilation on the first, and then the second generation of immigrants in Britain. As a member of the first generation, Parvez has immigrated to Britain from Pakistan and works as a taxi driver in a northern England city: “Parvez had been a taxi driver for twenty years. Half that time he’d worked for the same firm. Like him, most of the drivers were Punjabis” (Kureishi, 2009a: 288). For Parvez’s generation, England has been a dreamland: “His dreams of doing well in England would have come true” (Kureishi, 2009a: 288). Although he is a Muslim, Parvez doesn’t follow a traditional Islamic way of life. He doesn’t pray, instead, he has broken countless rules of the Koran: he drinks alcohol, eats pork pies and has an adulterous affair with Bettina, who is a white prostitute. Parvez seems to be well integrated and assimilated into British society, completely

disaffiliating from his ethnic origin. He thinks that they have to fit in England as immigrants: “You’re not in the village now, this is England. We have to fit in!” (Kureishi, 2009a: 293). He cannot understand why his son has converted to Islamic fundamentalism, and why he rejects Western civilization. Parvez has always worked for his family, especially for his son, to provide him a good future: “for Ali, he had worked long hours and spent a lot of money paying for his education as an accountant. He had bought him good suits, all the books he required, and a computer” (Kureishi, 2009a: 287). He wants his son “to get a good job, marry the right girl, and start a family” (Kureishi, 2009a: 288). For Parvez, there has always been a strong bond between himself and his son: “We were not father and son - we were brothers! Where has he gone? Why is he torturing me!” (Kureishi, 2009a: 288). The use of the word ‘brothers’ is particularly painful, given that young Ali now sees as his brothers the “millions of others [who] will gladly give our lives for the cause” (Kureishi, 2009a: 294).

While examining the roots of the conflict between Islam and the West in his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (2002), the famous American political scientist, Samuel P. Huntington claims that:

[Muslims] stress the differences between their civilization and Western civilization, the superiority of their culture, and the need to maintain the integrity of that culture against Western onslaught. Muslims fear and resent Western power and the threat which this poses to their society and beliefs. They see Western culture as materialistic, corrupt, decadent, and immoral. They also see it as seductive, and hence stress all the more the need to resist its impact of their way of life. Increasingly, Muslims attack the West not for adhering to an imperfect, erroneous religion, which is nonetheless a “religion of the book”, but for not adhering to any religion at all. In Muslim eyes Western secularism, irreligiosity, and hence immorality are worse evils than the Western Christianity that produced them. (Huntington, 2002: 213)

Samuel Huntington’s ideas are strengthened by Kureishi in “My Son the Fanatic” through the character Ali. As opposed to Parvez, his son Ali, a member of the second generation of immigrants in Britain, turns to a form of belief that denies him the pleasures of the society in which he lives. Although he has been brought up in secular Britain, he now supports “a new theocratic age” in which “repression is returning. Religion has come back to the West – with a vengeance” (Kureishi, 2009b: 302). Reflecting completely anti-multiculturalist ideas, Ali hates Western civilization, and he accuses his father of being “too implicated in Western civilization” (Kureishi, 2009a: 293). For Ali, “the Western materialists hate us [the Muslim immigrants]” (Kureishi, 2009a: 293), “Western education cultivates an anti-religious attitude” (Kureishi, 2009a: 295), and “the West was a sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug takers, and prostitutes” (Kureishi, 2009a: 293-294).

“Is there a particular event which influenced you?”

“Living in this country.”

“But I love England,” Parvez said, watching his boy in the mirror. “They let you do almost anything here.”

“That is the problem,” he replied. (Kureishi, 2009a: 294)

The character Ali considers the Western culture as materialistic, corrupt and immoral. The West is a place full of things he hates, and the freedom the West has provided for him makes him feel insecure because “if there was too much freedom you had to make less of it” (Kureishi, 2005: 55).

Ali’s hate-filled ideology critical of the West leads him to Islamic fundamentalism, whose roots are in the fourteen-hundred-year-struggle between Islam and West and in Western colonization. As indicated by an Egyptian journalist, Muhammed Sid-Ahmed, “colonialism tried to deform all the cultural traditions of Islam” (Sid-Ahmed, cited in Huntington, 2002: 213), creating a conflict not between religions but between civilizations. Samuel P. Huntington states that “some Westerners... have argued that the West doesn’t have problems with Islam but only with violent Islamist extremists” (Huntington, 2002: 209). But, according to Huntington, fourteen hundred years of history has demonstrated that this idea of Westerners is wrong. There has always been a struggle between Islam and the West, as two different cultures with natures wholly alien to each other:

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture and believe that their superior, if declining, power imposes on them the obligation to extend that culture throughout the world. These are the basic ingredients that fuel conflict between Islam and the West. (Huntington, 2002: 218)

The character Ali is depicted as a symbol of the young generation of immigrants in Britain, and his ideas mostly reflect the colonial background of these immigrants. Kureishi argues that “it mustn’t be forgotten that the backgrounds to the lives of these young people includes colonialism – being made to feel inferior in your own country” (Kureishi, 2005: 57). As indicated by Kureishi, Ali’s problems seem to be more related with Western colonization rather than Britain, as a multicultural country. The following quotations prove that, in the Western countries, the roots of the problems related with fundamentalism should be searched in the colonial past of the Western countries:

On one occasion Ali accused Parvez of “groveling” to the whites; in contrast, he explained, he was not “inferior”; there was more to the world than the West, though the West always thought it was best. (Kureishi, 2009a: 295-296)

Or in another example:

My people have taken enough. If the persecution doesn’t stop there will be jihad. I, and millions of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause. (Kureishi, 2009a: 294)

As understood from the quotations above, Ali blames the West for its colonial past. These quotations must be examined in terms of postcolonial discourse. In his famous *Orientalism* (1979), Edward Said discusses that “the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 1979: 7). This idea of Said is also strengthened by Frantz Fanon when he maintains “white men consider themselves superior to black men” (Fanon, 2008: 3). In “My Son the Fanatic”, Ali still feels the effects of the colonial past of the West in a postcolonial, multicultural country: “All over the world our people are oppressed” (Kureishi, 2009a: 297). He cannot accept the idea of the ‘superior’ European versus the ‘inferior’ non-European, and he feels insecure in a country which makes him feel inferior.

While introducing the new era in world politics and discussing on today’s multipolar and multicivilizational world, Samuel P. Huntington claims that:

In the post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political or economical. They are cultural. Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question humans can face: Who are we? And they are answering that question in the traditional way human beings have answered it, by reference to the things that mean most to them. People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations. People use politics not just to advance their interest but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often when we know whom we are against. (Huntington, 2002: 21)

As indicated by Samuel P. Huntington, in the second half of the twentieth century, peoples have started to define themselves mostly in terms of religion and religious communities. This tendency has increased the tension between Islam and the West, causing lots of conflicts which seem to give rise to Islamic fundamentalism. In “My Son the Fanatic,” Ali attempts to identify himself in terms of his ethnic origin and religion, but to construct his identity and to provide recognition of this identity in a postcolonial country he chooses to follow a radical way: he converts to Islamic fundamentalism. Kureishi represents Asian culture both as a separate culture or as part of the process in which all cultures are mixed together: “the separation and this mixture. And in this separation, there’s mixture too. And that’s why fundamentalism is interesting” (Kureishi, 1999). For Kureishi, the young generation of immigrants are choosing fundamentalism because:

It [fundamentalism] is an attempt to create a purity. It's to say we're not really living in England at all. We're going to keep everything that's English, everything that's capitalist, everything that's white, everything that's corrupt, it's going to be outside. And everything that's good and pure and Islamic, you know, it's going to be in here, with these people. And you can see that mixing, you know, was terrifying, just as racists find mixing terrifying. (Kureishi, 1999)

As understood from the quotation above, fundamentalism seems to provide the security that young people need. But Hanif Kureishi claims that he doesn't consider the events from a Muslim point of view because he doesn't believe in Islam. He claims that "fundamentalism is dictatorship of the mind" (Kureishi, 2009b: 308) as it kills man's power of imagination considering God as the only imaginer. He considers not only Islamic fundamentalism but also all forms of religious omnipotence extremely dangerous:

I would say the concept of truth is very dangerous. And the idea that the truth is contained in the Koran—being the word of God—is very dangerous. Subservience is very dangerous, because it stops thinking. There's always a moral authority who's greater than you, whose ideas oppress you. But I don't think it's only Islam that's dangerous. All forms of religious omnipotence are. In that sense Marxism and Fascism are dangerous. (Kureishi, 2006)

Both quotations above suggest that fundamentalism should be considered as "an aberration, a desperate fantasy of worldwide black brotherhood; a symptom of extreme alienation" (Kureishi, 2005: 21) the young generations are exposed to. As young people feel inferior in the country where they were born and brought up, they are converted to fundamentalism as a form of extreme alienation. Their aim is to exclude the others who have excluded them: "If you feel excluded it might be tempting to exclude others" (Kureishi, 2009b: 305).

Through "My Son the Fanatic" Hanif Kureishi does not only criticize Islamic fundamentalism but also liberalism. At the end of the story, Parvez, the long-settled immigrant father, eventually loses his temper with his fundamentalist son, and hits him:

Parvez kicked him over. Then he dragged the boy up by his shirt and hit him. The boy fell back. Parvez hit him again. The boy's face was bloody. Parvez was panting. He knew that the boy was unreachable, but he struck him nonetheless. The boy neither covered himself nor retaliated; there was no fear in his eyes. He only said, through his split lip: "So, who's the fanatic now?" (Kureishi, 2009a: 298)

With the question "So, who's the fanatic now?" at the end of the story, Hanif Kureishi questions the father's own secular liberal tolerance. So, the end of the story indicates that all ideologies as politics can become a dogma. In an interview with Hanif Kureishi, made by Hirsh Sawhney in 2006, Kureishi expresses his ideas about liberalism as a dogma as follows:

Liberalism can [become a dogma]. The story 'My Son the Fanatic' is about that. It's like Bush bombing Iraq and saying, "We're bringing you democracy," and you see thousands of bombs and people shooting at you. This is liberalism turned on its head. It's insane. This is liberalism as fascism. The end of 'My Son the Fanatic' was about these ironies. How systems of liberation turn into their opposite as we see with Marxism, Fascism, radical Islam—and liberalism too. (Kureishi, 2006)

While criticizing both liberalism and Islamic fundamentalism, Hanif Kureishi also shows ways to provide healthy multicultural communities. For Kureishi, there is no need for the struggle between Islam and the West because these two are connected:

These seemingly opposed philosophies – one based on moral absolutes and the unshakable authority of one book, the other on skepticism, doubt, and flux – are not alien to one another in the way we might think. There is mutual fascination. These two groups have produced and require each other in some way. They both have fantasies about each other. We have fantasies about the order and strictness of fundamentalism. The fundamentalists have powerful fantasies about those dirty people in the West who are having sex all the time, stoned out of their heads, and living in toilets. Huge envy and love on both sides, for order and for disorder. (Kureishi, 2009b: 304)

Hanif Kureishi argues that, while these opposite forces reflect on each other, religion cannot be considered as the Achilles' heel of a multicultural country. He says that multiculturalism is much better than monoculturalism because a pure and unmixed world will lead to fascism. For Kureishi, “an effective multiculturalism is not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas” (Kureishi, 2009b: 304), and to provide ‘a robust and committed exchange of ideas’ in a multicultural community, “people have to treat one another with respect” (Kureishi, 2009a: 296). With these words, he proves the correctness of the ideas of Tariq Modood, who claims that “multiculturalism is not the cause of the present crisis but part of the solution” (Modood, 2008: 154).

CONCLUSION

In the second half of the twentieth century, the practices of multiculturalism have caused some problems in various Western countries. Because of these problems, multiculturalism, as a current sociopolitical movement, has faced intense criticism and has been accused of causing Islamic fundamentalism. In his short story “My Son the Fanatic” (1994), through a father-son relationship, Hanif Kureishi, one of the most prolific Pakistani - British authors, focuses his attention on one of the most troublesome issues of our day - the relationship between fundamentalism and multiculturalism - and proves that multiculturalism cannot be considered as a cause for the present crisis created by Islamic fundamentalism.

In “My Son the Fanatic”, Hanif Kureishi, as a hybrid Englishman, a Pakistani-Briton, focuses on the changing attitudes of young people in a multicultural country, Britain, in the twenty-first century. He examines the reasons why young generations of immigrants in Britain are being converted to Islamic fundamentalism. Kureishi proves that fundamentalism is a form of extreme alienation of the young generation, and it is being used by the young as a way of excluding the other cultures who have excluded the culture of this young generation. Through successfully chosen characters, the father Parvez and his son Ali, Hanif Kureishi reflects the rising tension between Islam and the West, and also finds a chance to criticize both fundamentalism and liberalism. Kureishi, as a postcolonial author, tries to redefine English national identities in Britain. His story shows that the roots of today's problems related with Islamic fundamentalism can be found in the colonial history of the West, and it is not easy for the

colonized to forget what the colonizer did in the past. Kureishi not only criticizes the West for its colonial past but also warns the British Muslims about their religious practices. He attempts to attract the attention of the British Muslims on Islamic religion and its applications in the modern world. With “My Son the Fanatic”, he shows that an old religion in the modern world may cause a great deal of problems. For this reason Islamic religion needs some revisions and it has to evolve.

In “My Son the Fanatic”, Hanif Kureishi indicates the fact that multicultural societies have developed under colonial and imperial rule during the twentieth century, but in the twenty-first century they have to be ethnic and religious potpourris in the West. Today, none of the religions on the earth can be considered as the Achilles’ heel for the problems of multicultural communities, and multiculturalism has nothing to do with the problems related to Islamic fundamentalism. Multiculturalism can thus be the only solution for these problems, rather than the cause of them.

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