Chapter 5

Radicalism Begins at Home: Fundamentalism and the Family in My Son the Fanatic

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Introduction

On December 22, 2001, a Paris-to-Miami flight made an emergency landing in Boston after a passenger tried to detonate bombs hidden in his sneakers. The terrorist, British citizen Richard Reid, was arrested. In a US court Reid, dubbed the "shoe bomber," pleaded guilty and declared: "I know what I've done... At the end of the day, I know I done the actions."[1] Even though Reid apparently was fully aware of his actions and the reasons for his actions, the media turned their attention to Reid's family history for a possible explanation for his behavior. Reid was born in England, the son of an English mother and Jamaican father. He grew up in the London suburb of Bromley, a place that is, according to the BBC, "hardly a natural breeding ground for dissidents".[2] Perhaps then, the explanation for Reid's terrorist act could be found in the absence of his father during his childhood. Even though it seemed as if Reid's father was willing to take the blame, by stating that "I was not there to give him the love and affection he should have got", he did not take any responsibility for his son's beliefs. Muslim extremists were to be held responsible for the brainwashing of his son, and more importantly: Richard Reid had been motivated by religious beliefs, not the belief of the Reid family: "They are two very different things. If he had done it through family beliefs I would have found it very hard to understand."[3]

The explanation Richard Reid's father gave for his son's behavior – the strict acting out of religious beliefs – fits in with common conceptions of fundamentalism and more specifically, Islamic fundamentalism. In their book *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri elaborate on the recurring characteristics of

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1 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/2298031.stm, available October 21, 2004.
2 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1731568.stm, available October 21, 2004.
3 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2300671.stm, available October 21, 2004.

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(Islamic) fundamentalism. Hardt and Negri claim that fundamentalism is often reduced "to a violent and intolerant religious fanaticism that is above all 'anti-Western'".[4] It is this feature of religious fanaticism, which is fundamentalism, as opposed to what Reid's father called "family beliefs", that is usually singled out as a possible explanation for terrorist behavior. This common conception of religious fanaticism in fundamentalism, however, obscures the incentive for fundamentalism. According to Hardt and Negri, fundamentalism is not so much a movement driven by an envisioned return to a pre-modern, or traditional, past; instead, fundamentalism is really directed against the present social order.[5] Fundamentalism as a movement, Hardt and Negri argue, seems to appeal to those "who have been further subordinated and excluded by the recent transformations of the global economy".[6]

The exclusion of certain groups or individuals seems to imply a sense of non-belonging, of being kept out of something, of being out of place in the present order. Fundamentalism then could function as a means to claim a position, or put differently, a space, in the present social order.

The film MY SON THE FANATIC (1997) tells the story of a Pakistani family divided by the fundamentalist tendencies of its only son.[7] The film shows how Islamic fundamentalism is the son's way of claiming a place for himself, against the present social order, which gradually disrupts the family. Yet, careful analysis shows

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4 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 147. Hardt and Negri also refer to Christian fundamentalism in the United States. They are interested in fundamentalism as a reaction to contemporary social structures. This perspective on fundamentalism is shared by David Morley, who points out that anti-immigrant feelings in Europe have lead to a nostalgic variety of fundamentalism: "cultural fundamentalism" ("Bounded Realms: Household, Family, Community, and Nation". In *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, edited by Hamid Naficy. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 151-168, pp. 163-4).

5 Ibid., p. 149.

6 Ibid., p. 150.

7 Directed by Udayan Prasad, screenplay by Hanif Kureishi. Synopsis: Parvez is a Pakistani cab driver in Northern England who chauffeurs prostitutes around town and makes just enough money to support his wife Minoo and his beloved son Farid. The relationship between Parvez and Farid, in whom Parvez had invested all his hopes and expectations for a better future, turns sour when, on the verge of becoming engaged to the daughter of the chief of police, Farid unexpectedly cancels the engagement and aligns himself with a group of hard-line Islamic fundamentalists. Parvez, who has rejected religion, is deeply upset by this turn of events, and matters become worse when his wife Minoo endorses Farid's beliefs. His mother's support prompts Farid to invite a spiritual leader into the household, much to Parvez's chagrin. Feeling alienated from his family, Parvez turns to Sandra, a prostitute with whom he strikes up a friendship that becomes a love affair. The situation takes a turn for the worse, when Farid's group decides to "clean up the neighborhood" by assaulting the local prostitutes, among them Sandra. An enraged Parvez kicks Farid and his friends out of the house. Parvez's affair, however, has come out and Minoo decides to leave him to return to her family in Pakistan. The film ends with Parvez in the deserted family home, uncertain about what the future will bring.

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that the family home itself already holds the seeds of its own disruption. Fundamentalism, as a strong oppositional force, merely exposes the latent conflict within the family. The conflict is staged within the family home, and entails a struggle over spaces, and their purpose, in the family home.

My analysis will focus exactly on the spaces found in My Son the Fanatic, and on the ways the conflict is both staged and acted out in those spaces. In this respect, a mise-en-scène analysis is the most suitable approach. The central question will be: how will family-home settings allow both conflict and re-appropriation of space in My Son the Fanatic? Or put differently, what are the elements and patterns in the mise-en-scène of this film that will guide the viewer through conflicts fundamentally undermining the family home? My main focus will be on the balance and at the same time tension that is created between the characters of the film and the settings they are in. It is through the analysis of character versus setting that a number of binary oppositions in My Son the Fanatic come into focus, oppositions that are intricately linked with the theme of the film. The most important opposition, and the one I will deal with at length, is the opposition between the public and the private.

Mise-en-scène of Oppositions

I will start with the analysis of the opening sequence of My Son the Fanatic. This sequence lasts approximately 14 minutes and can be divided into four separate segments. The opening sequence provides the viewer with an exposé of both the main characters and the main objective(s) of the film. Moreover, in this sequence several pairs of oppositions are presented, which continue to dominate the rest of the film.

The first oppositional pair is *British versus Pakistani*; it is this dichotomy, displayed in the very first scene of the film, which introduces the characters. The film starts with a long shot of the Fingerhut mansion, home of the chief of police, his wife and lovely daughter, beautifully situated on the outskirts of the city. The first interior shot is a close-up of the Fingerhut family photo album, which contains pictures of daughter Madelaine. This shot immediately gives the viewer an important visual clue regarding the main function of this scene: the British Fingerhut's and the Pakistani family (their family name remains unknown) celebrate the coming engagement between Madelaine and Farid. Proud father Parvez seizes the occasion to take pictures of the two families and to convince Mrs. Fingerhut of the excellent character of his son. Parvez's actions seem to stress that he and his family are fully integrated members of British society. The "proof" of their integration lies in the pictures.

A closer look at this sequence reveals how the apparent integration of the two

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families is established via the mise-en-scène. All the shots of Parvez's photographs are stylistically confined to what David Bordwell has called the "same-frame heuristic". This means that if characters appear in the same frame, they are united. By positioning characters in one frame, "it reintegrates space, reunites the individual with his group to establish a sense of wholeness".[8] The act of photography seems to cement Parvez's family's inclusion in both the Fingerhut family and British society at large.

The attempts at bridging the gap between the British and Pakistani family are further underscored by the use of deep-focus. In this type of shot emphasis is placed on the dynamics between foreground and background. The foreground posits both heads of the family (again within the same frame heuristic), while in the background first Farid, then Madelaine appears. What is striking about the set-up of this shot is the emphasis on the fathers, which implies a reluctant joining of the two families (I use the word reluctant, since it is mostly Parvez who does the joining of both men), while in the background several things take place. First we see Farid, standing between Fingerhut and Parvez. This implies both his solidarity with both "fathers" and his in-between-ness. Then Madelaine's appearance in the background stresses their togetherness. The shot then briefly consists of a doubled or mirrored alliance between the two fathers and their children. However, when Madelaine attempts to put her father's policeman's hat on Farid's head, he pushes her away. Shortly thereafter, the foreground positioning of Parvez and Fingerhut has also dissolved. This is a direct reference to what will happen in the remainder of the film, and is commonly identified as an example of foreshadowing.[9] Here the film discourse, in this case the deep-focus shot, presages upcoming events. The two families will never be joined together by the marriage of Farid and Madelaine: Farid dumps Madelaine specifically because of his hatred for her policeman father (Farid could never wear a policeman's hat, as she jokingly tries to make him do).[10] Moreover, by canceling the engagement, Farid becomes estranged from his own father.

From the opening scene one might assume that the film will deal with a conflict between cultures (British vs. Pakistani) as well as a conflict between generations:

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8 David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 179.

9 Thomas Elsaesser and Warren Buckland, *Studying Contemporary American Film: A Guide to Movie Analysis* (London: Arnold, 2002), pp. 89-90.

10 Hatred appears to be Farid's main motivation, although My Son the Fanatic does go into much detail concerning the build-up of that hatred. George Lipsitz, in ""Home is Where the Hatred Is": Work, Music, and the Transnational Economy", suggests that migrants internalize the hatred they encounter in the host country and subsequently "flaunt their marginality" (In *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place*, edited by Hamid Naficy. New York and London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 193-212), p. 210.

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old versus young (underscored by the title of the film). Furthermore, a certain kind of parallelism can be found in these two binary oppositions: British culture is presented as an old tradition in relation to which the Pakistani immigrants always are newcomers. Many films stage conflicts between generations where the modern younger generation feels misunderstood or unaccepted by the parents, REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (Nicholas Ray, 1955) being perhaps the most famous example. In MY SON THE FANATIC, however, the generational conflict is complicated culturally, most particularly by Parvez, who doesn't belong to the old British tradition and doesn't fit into his son's newly found home in religious fundamentalism either. While the opening of the film indeed suggests that father Parvez is deciding for his son in a traditional authoritative way, the point is that the film undermines and subverts the all-too convenient conceptions of generational conflicts. Even though the "cultural and age difference" themes are important with respect to the unfolding of the film's narrative, the dichotomies of British vs. Pakistani and older generation vs. youth are juxtaposed in the character of Parvez.

It is not until the second, third and fourth segment of the opening sequence that the key dichotomy of MY SON THE FANATIC is introduced: *the opposition between public and private*. Here the character of Bettina is introduced. She serves as a metaphor for the public: she is a prostitute. However, this character only functions in the public domain. Being a prostitute is just one aspect of her character; in fact, her character has two sides: the public figure of the prostitute Bettina and the private woman who goes by the name of Sandra. The two names constitute an interesting paradox: the "professional" name Bettina is widely known, yet absent from any public registers. Only those who are close to her know her "private" name Sandra, and yet it is this name that can be found in all the public registers. The juxtaposition of these two roles is also marked by a change in physical appearance: Bettina wears a blonde wig, whereas Sandra is a brunette. Her role as a character belonging to the public is immediately established by the fact that she is forced to have sex with one of her customers in Parvez's taxi, not in a private hotel room. Bettina/Sandra, moreover, appears opposite the character of Minoo, Parvez's wife.

Minoo is quite literally trapped in private space. Apart from the first scene of the film, the visit to the Fingerhut mansion, Minoo is strictly confined to the privacy of domestic space. However, just like Bettina/Sandra, Minoo is not a clear-cut character, confined to just one particular space. The paradoxical aspect of the Minoo character lies in her public function: she is married to Parvez. In a sense, Minoo is trapped in her public role of being Parvez's wife, a role that thwarts her possibilities of entering the private world of Parvez. He sees her as his spouse, not as a friend and confidante. Their estranged marriage leads to Parvez striking up a friendship with Sandra and his eventual adultery.

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Both Sandra and Minoo are characters confined to a particular space, or that is the initial assumption the viewer might have. Whereas Parvez freely moves between public and private space (a mobility which is metaphorically signified by his profession as a taxi driver), the two female characters are strongly positioned in either one domain or the other. Here the distinction between public and private space takes on a gendered dimension: some women seem to fulfill a role exclusively in public space, and others only seem to exist in a private space. Yet, the film also deals with the attempts of both women to escape from their designated space: in the end Sandra will give up being a prostitute, and Minoo will leave the house.

Mobile Spaces

Even though the balance and/or tension between character and homely settings are the main aspect of my analysis, one exception has to be made. Since Parvez is a taxi driver, he spends a lot of (screen) time in a taxi. The question arises how to label this particular space. The taxi seems an apt example of sliding boundaries between public and private space. As Philip Brian Harper argues, on the one hand, the automobile is a safe and isolated space like a home, where the driver is shielded from the outside environment. On the other hand, the apparent seclusion is often lifted at the moment when the driver has eye contact with fellow motorists. Eye contact is an immediate intrusion into the driver's private space. So, although a car (in this case a taxi) may seem like a private space, effectively it is a public space. Harper illustrates his point by using Brian de Palma's 1980 film DRESSED TO KILL. This film contains a scene wherein a woman named Kate Miller (Angie Dickinson) has casual sex with a total stranger in the backseat of a taxi. The taxi driver, who takes no action to interrupt the proceedings, witnesses the act and takes pleasure in it, via his rearview mirror. After the woman is killed, it is the taxi driver's testimony to the police that condemns her as both sexually and mentally distressed. The film clearly conveys that a woman seeking sexual pleasure in a taxi cannot be labeled anything but an indecent thrill seeker who, by ignoring the rules of conduct in a public space, has brought her death upon herself. As Harper rightfully points out, the woman's biggest mistake is her misapprehension of the taxi as a private space. One may be tempted to believe that a taxi is a confined, private space; however, the passive yet ultimately condemning presence of the taxi driver posits the taxi firmly in the domain of the public. [11]

The scene in MY SON THE FANATIC which I mentioned earlier, where Bettina

[11] Philip Brian Harper, *Private Affairs: Critical Ventures in the Culture of Social Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), pp. 64-68.

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has sex with a customer in the backseat of Parvez's taxi, can be viewed in the same manner. Here Parvez and the viewer function as spectators of a private act performed in a public space. However, unlike the taxi driver in DRESSED TO KILL, Parvez is reluctant to assume the role of the spectator. He is forced to look since he has to use his rearview mirror in order to drive his car. It appears as if Parvez would like to flee from this private act, yet his responsibility as a taxi driver (and the responsibility he feels towards Bettina) prevents him from leaving his vehicle. Moreover, he is not inclined to prevent or stop the act from taking place. This indicates again that the taxi is a public space in which it is often difficult to intervene.

A Divided Space

In her book *Postcolonial Hospitality*, Mireille Rosello reads postcolonial questions of immigration through the concept of "hospitality".[12] One of the conclusions she draws is that there should be a continuum between positions of guest and host: "if the roles of guests and hosts are set in stone, if immigrants are treated as if they always have to be guests, if hosts are always generous to their poor relations… the continuum between guests and host disappears."[13] But most importantly she concludes that hospitality always involves a risk: "even if the guest and the host exchange places, their mutual encounter must always situate itself on the course of the pendulum that swings wildly between generosity and cannibalism… the host can always devour the guest, the guest can always devour the host."[14] Assimilation (of the identity of the guest) and exploitation (of the generosity of the host) are among the dangers that lurk beneath the welcoming of "strangers" into the "house".

The restaurant of Parvez's cousin Fizzy is an important setting, which has several functions in the film and can be read from the perspective of such questions of hospitality. First of all, it is indicative of the immigrant who succeeds through hard work. The film has several references to cousin Fizzy's success as an entrepreneur. Even though it was Parvez who lent him the money to start his own Indian restaurant, Fizzy has since become a very successful restaurant owner. Despite the attempted grandeur of Fizzy's establishment and the publicness of the locale, Fizzy's restaurant is still a home to the extended family, in which (unspo-

[12] Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001). Through a reading of several novels, poems, and films, Rosello focuses on the situation of immigrants in France. The issues she raises, however, are more generally important as well.

[13] Ibid., p. 167.

[14] Ibid., p. 175.

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ken) laws of hospitality are important.[15] However, the differences in the cousins' careers have challenged the relationship between the two. To Fizzy, Parvez is a man who could have made a successful living, yet somehow remained just a taxi driver. Parvez, on the other hand, seems somewhat jealous of Fizzy's success, although he is also proud of what Fizzy has achieved.

A second function of Fizzy's restaurant is that in several scenes it explicitly provides the setting for a cinematic critique of the dichotomy between public and private. The restaurant is the backdrop for two key scenes in the film. The first scene shows Parvez and Farid discussing the dinner party for Farid's wedding, for which cousin Fizzy is going to supply the food. At this point, Parvez is convinced that the engagement is still on, even though he should know better. Parvez and Farid are given a prominent table in the middle of the dining room of the restaurant. In a conventional shot/reverse shot sequence, the slumbering conflict between Parvez and Farid is rapidly reaching a climax. It is important to note that because their discussion takes place in a restaurant, a public space with a permit to sell alcohol, Parvez can drink a lot of whisky. This livens up their discussion to the point where cousin Fizzy interrupts them and urges them to tone it down. The uncomfortable position of Fizzy as a host is emphasized by the fact that he is not receiving his guests at home but in the public space of his restaurant. For Fizzy, Parvez is not a stranger; indeed, Parvez is family. Yet, Parvez is a guest in the public space of the restaurant.

Moreover, the restaurant scene also stresses the differences between Parvez and Farid. Parvez is presented as the Muslim who is not a real Muslim anymore, since a good Muslim abstains from alcohol. Farid's refusal to drink any kind of alcohol underscores his determination to be a good Muslim. More importantly, the alcohol affects Parvez's behavior to the point that he is unable to drive, which is, of course, his public function. It is in this context that Parvez begins to lose control, not only over his car (his public space), but also over his private home. For it is under the influence of alcohol that he agrees to provide shelter for the "wise man from Lahore" whom Farid has invited to stay in their home. Unbeknownst to him, Parvez, by inviting this guest, has put himself at the "risk of hospitality." This idea will become clearer later on in the film.

The other key restaurant scene confirms the fact that it may be acceptable to get a little drunk in a restaurant, but bringing a "public woman" into a well-respected establishment is considered unacceptable behavior. This scene is an il-

[15] Rosello argues that assimilation for many immigrants in France, especially North African immigrants, was a way of changing their status from guest to host. Although Fizzy is certainly not completely assimilated into English culture, his success as a businessman can be seen as such – which would further help explain his hospitality.

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lustration of public opinion obstructing Parvez and Sandra's blossoming romance. By inviting Sandra to a quiet dinner in his cousin's restaurant, Parvez not only tests the limits of Fizzy's hospitality and their allegiance as cousins, but he also overestimates public acceptance of the distinction between "Bettina, the prostitute" and "Sandra, the private woman". Parvez is able to distinguish between the two, but the public does not see "the woman behind the prostitute". It is immediately apparent that Fizzy and one of his waiters recognize Sandra as Bettina the prostitute, despite the fact that she is not wearing her blonde wig. In order to not undermine the restaurant's reputation, Fizzy first tells Parvez that the restaurant is fully booked. Parvez throws a fit, testing Fizzy's loyalty as his cousin. The solution is how Fizzy renegotiates his public space. He gives Parvez and Sandra a table in a separate, undecorated room of the restaurant. Thus, Fizzy denies them a space in the public eye: they are literally removed from sight, so that the restaurant can remain a public space, open to "everyone".

The consequence of Parvez's date with Sandra in a public space is that Parvez and Sandra's friendship can no longer be just a private matter. To return to the example of DRESSED TO KILL, this scene exemplifies a similar misapprehension of the difference between public and private space. Here, cousin Fizzy functions as the negotiator between the two domains, although his role is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he facilitates a quasi-private space and helps Parvez, even though one can argue that he does so out of self-interest. On the other hand, he judges Parvez, and he also does not feel the need to keep his mouth shut about what has happened in his restaurant.

This House Is Not a Home

This restaurant scene is indicative of the complicated nature of what constitutes a private and a public persona as seen in the character of Bettina/Sandra. Even though this ambivalence seems personified by and confined to Bettina/Sandra, it recurs in a more intricate and far-reaching manner in the most important setting of the film: Parvez's house. Through the analysis of the mise-en-scène of the house, I claim that the seed of disruption in the Parvez family lies in the family home itself. This assertion would counter the more common notion that forces of disruption move in from the outside and bear heavily upon a protected and shielded inside. The status of the house as a private space is gradually and systematically destabilized, eventually making the house a public space.

Before I move on with my analysis of the various spaces in Parvez's house, it is important to note that the entire film does not contain a single scene where all the members of the family share the same space in their family house. We see Parvez and Minoo as well as Parvez and Farid share several spaces together (both interi-

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or and exterior), but never all of them together. In fact, the only scene in which the family is spatially united is the opening scene of the film, set in the Fingerhut mansion. It is most important to note that during and after their visit to the Fingerhuts, the signs of the disruption of the family become apparent for the first time.

The few exterior shots of Parvez's home suggest a typical terraced house. Furthermore, we learn that the neighborhood is fairly lower class. The prostitutes in this neighborhood are blamed (by Farid) for the low status of the area.

The interior shots of Parvez's house establish five explicitly specified spaces: the living room, the kitchen, Parvez and Minoo's bedroom, Farid's bedroom, and finally the basement. The latter two rooms are the most distinctive from the perspective of a mise-en-scène analysis. Farid's room is located at the top of the stairs. The room is both light and empty, since Farid has decided to sell all his worldly possessions. Farid's room stands in sharp contrast to the basement, Parvez's hangout. The basement is a dark and stuffy room where Parvez plays his Louis Armstrong records and drinks his whisky. Located at the bottom of the stairs, the basement creates a spatial tension between the two characters and the spaces they occupy. A basic mise-en-scène analysis of the way in which these two spaces are presented might lead one to conclude that the mise-en-scène mirrors the emerging conflict between father and son. Moreover, one might be tempted to assume that the clash between father and son initially will be confined to their respective rooms, from which the conflict proceeds to spread, like wildfire, throughout the entire house. Both assumptions are based on a partial analysis of the mise-en-scène of the house and are incorrect. Instead, I want to propose that the house's mise-en-scène does not so much reflect the conflict, as let the conflict act itself out as a conflict between the private and public dimensions of the family home.[16] The conflict between public and private is ingrained in the family itself.

The first signs of conflict between Parvez and Farid seem rather innocent: Parvez, relaxing in his basement, is disturbed by music coming from Farid's room, a common situation in any household shared by children and parents. Parvez sneaks up the stairs and discovers that the noise is not music, but Farid's instruction tape on how to pray correctly. Parvez is put off by this, but respects what Farid wants to do in his private space and leaves quietly.[17] The act of praying, or even learning how to pray, seems such a private matter that Parvez does not dare to intrude. However, the act of praying as a private matter is questioned in a

[16] For linguistic backgrounds concerning the distinction between "house" (usually denoting a building), and "home", (usually indicating a life-style not necessarily bound to a building), see Joseph Rykwert, "House and Home" (*Social Research*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1991, pp. 51-62).

[17] Later on in the film, Parvez will rebel against Farid and the "wise man", by playing his jazz records very loudly. This is a good example of the reversal of behavior and age between Parvez and Farid, whereby the latter almost acts as a father to the former.

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subsequent scene, when we see the transformation of both the act of praying and the space in which this prayer takes place. Farid and his friends gather in his room to read the Koran and pray. This then is no longer just some private individualistic act; it has become a group act. Moreover, even though this gathering of men may still resemble a private act, performed in a private space, it has an important consequence: by turning the room into a place of prayer for a restricted group, Minoo, being a woman, is no longer allowed to enter the room. Minoo's gradual exclusion from important spaces in the house takes on greater significance in the scenes that follow.

The entrance of an important public figure further disrupts the balance between the public and the private within the family. Farid has invited a "wise man from Lahore", a spiritual leader, into the household. This act of hospitality clearly brings a "devouring" guest into the house. His arrival necessitates a drastic rearranging of the house: furniture is moved, the house is thoroughly cleaned, and pictures are removed from the walls and replaced by more suitable ones. This overhaul signals a change in the house's function: it loses its personal touch and becomes an accommodation, a gathering place for a large number of people. A telling scene in this regard is when Parvez discovers that Farid's friends have taken over the ultimate private space: the nuptial bedroom. This takeover has two implications. First, it serves as an ironic observation on Parvez's infidelity: in the previous scene Parvez was seen having sex with Sandra. Secondly, it declares that Parvez and Minoo's marriage is nothing but a farce. Up until this point, the shared bedroom was an important symbol of their marriage. The invasion of this private space, with its publicly marked signification, turns it into a public dormitory.

In the final scenes of My Son the Fanatic, the aforementioned exile of Minoo to limited parts of her own house is related to the ever-increasing expansion of the influence that the "wise man" is exerting in the house. Whereas the male characters – the "wise man", Farid and, to a lesser extent, Parvez – control and dominate the house, Minoo is locked up in the kitchen, a continuation of the aforementioned engendering of space. The division between male and female spaces is acted out in the key scene that takes place in the house. Parvez, the "wise man", and Farid are in the dining room. The positioning of the three characters is another example of same-frame heuristics: the "wise man" and Farid are in one frame, which emphasizes their union, countered by Parvez in the reverse-shot frame. Parvez asks Farid: "Where's your mother?" In the following shot, the male characters are all captured in the same frame. This seems to strengthen the unified position the male characters hold (against the absent female character); however, the same-frame heuristic is destabilized. Farid and the "wise man" are located further in the background of the frame, against a striking piece of wallpaper with vertical lines. Parvez is positioned in the foreground of the frame, against

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a nondescript background. This results in a split of the same frame into two separate spaces, which expresses a breach of the male alliance. One could even say that the vertical lines of the wallpaper, against which Farid and the "wise man" are positioned, emphasize their unwavering characters. Despite the subtle division within the frame, Parvez has become a member of the male alliance, an alliance he would rather not be part of. Minoo's refusal to come out of the kitchen or let Parvez enter the kitchen emphasizes the fact that according to the new rules of the house, Parvez no longer is in the right place when he enters the gendered domain of the kitchen. Caught between the dining room and the kitchen, Parvez is out of place in his own home.

In the end, the house is not a home to anyone. By letting public functions take over the private spaces of the house, a slumbering conflict is brought to an inevitable climax: each of the characters must first reclaim some private space, before they can return to the house for a possible reconciliation. This reconciliation is, however, not shown in MY SON THE FANATIC. Farid is literally kicked out by Parvez, even though Parvez assures Farid that he will always be welcome to return.[18] Minoo leaves of her own accord, seeking solace by returning to her family in Pakistan. It is up to Parvez to reclaim the house, which he tentatively proceeds to do by moving his chair back to its old place.

The final scene of the film offers no indication of whether or not the family will ever reunite. Reconciliation between father and son seems almost impossible or at least a long way off; the seeds of disruption have taken root. Farid's fundamentalism has hardened, signaling a fatherless period in Farid's life. But unlike Richard Reid's terrorism, presented as an inevitable result of the fatherless society, MY SON THE FANATIC is more hopeful. Remarkably, this glimmer of hope does not involve the younger generation; instead, it pertains to the father. In the final scene, MY SON THE FANATIC OPENS up a new space, a sixth space in the house. Parvez, previously out of place in his own home, finds himself at home in a place of transition. He turns on all the lights, puts on his music and climbs the stairs. At the top of the stairs, which leads from the ground floor to the basement, there is an expedient space of transition, which at least offers some, however ambivalent, hope for the future.

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[18] George Lipsitz has described the consequences of internalized hatred, exemplified in MY SON THE FANATIC by Farid's fundamentalism. In "Home Is Where the Hatred Is", Lipsitz has analyzed Mexican cultural identity in California. He points out that migrants aggressively exaggerate their Mexican roots, but not in an attempt to return – neither physically nor spiritually – to Mexico, but merely to taunt the Americans. Their chant was "*aqui estamos, y no nos vamos*" (we're here, and we're not going away, p. 210). Transposed to Farid's internalized hatred, his angry departure, it will ultimately most likely not lead him to follow his mother back to Pakistan. Even the "wise man from Lahore" is here to stay.

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Filmography

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