

Extremism

Dieser Vorschlag bezieht sich auf Hanif Kureishi: My Son the Fanatic.

Aufgaben

Der vorliegende Vorschlag enthält in Aufgabe 3 alternative Arbeitsanweisungen.

- 1 Outline Ahmad's criticism of his teachers and fellow students. (Material) **(30 BE)**

- 2 Compare the excerpt (Material) to Hanif Kureishi's short story "My Son the Fanatic". **(40 BE)**

- 3 Choose one of the following tasks:

- 3.1 Later on in the novel, Ahmad is told: "Hey, come on, we're all Americans here. That's the idea, didn't they tell you that at Central High? Irish-Americans, African-Americans, Jewish-Americans; there are even Arab-Americans."

Taking the quotation as a starting point, assess the usefulness of such a hyphenated approach to identity, also referring to the text at hand (Material).

or

- 3.2 John Updike, a non-Muslim white American, has been criticized for writing much of his novel "Terrorist" from a Muslim perspective. US cultural critic David Walsh, for instance, has criticized Updike for doing this, coming to the conclusion that "an artist is not free to do as he or she pleases".

Referring to material dealt with in class, write a letter to David Walsh commenting on his criticism.

(30 BE)

Material

John Updike: Terrorist (excerpt from the novel, 2006)

Ahmad Mulloy is the son of an Irish mother and an Egyptian (absentee) father. Growing up in New Jersey, Ahmad develops an infatuation with Islam and comes under the influence of Shaikh Rashid, a local imam who is instrumental in recruiting him to take part in a terrorist attack.

Devils, Ahmad thinks. These devils seek to take away my God. All day long at Central High School, girls sway and sneer and expose their soft bodies and alluring hair. Their bare bellies, adorned with shining navel studs and low-down purple tattoos, ask, *What else is there to see?* Boys strut and saunter along and look dead-eyed, indicating with their edgy killer-gestures and careless scornful laughs that this world is all there is [...].

The teachers, weak Christians and nonobservant Jews, make a show of teaching virtue and righteous self-restraint, but their shifty eyes and hollow voices betray their lack of belief. They are paid to say these things, by the city of New Prospect and the state of New Jersey. They lack true faith; they are not on the Straight Path; they are unclean. Ahmad and the two thousand other students can see them scuttling after school into their cars and on the crackling, trash-speckled parking lot like pale crabs or dark ones restored to their shells, and they are men and women like any others, full of lust and fear and infatuation with things that can be bought. Infidels, they think safety lies in accumulation of the things of this world, and in the corrupting diversions of the television set. They are slaves to images, false ones of happiness and affluence. [...] The teachers revel when they are away from the school. Some have the pink lids and bad breaths and puffy bodies of those who habitually drink too much. Some get divorces; some live with others unmarried. Their lives away from the school are disorderly and wanton and self-indulgent. They are paid to instill virtue and democratic values by the state government down in Trenton, and that Satanic government farther down, in Washington, but the values they believe in are Godless: biology and chemistry and physics. On the facts and formulas of these their false voices firmly rest, ringing out into the classroom. [...] Only what we can measure and deduce from measurement is true. [...]

The halls of the high school smell of perfume and bodily exhalations, of chewing gum and impure cafeteria food, and of cloth – cotton and wool and the synthetic materials of running shoes, warmed by young flesh. Between classes there is a thunder of movement; the noise is stretched thin over a violence beneath, barely restrained. Sometimes in the lull at the end of the school day, when the triumphant, jeering racket of departure has subsided and only the students doing extracurricular activities remain in the building, Joryleen Grant comes up to Ahmad at his locker. He does track¹ in the spring; she sings in the girls' glee club². As students go at Central High, they are "good." [...] She is short and round and talks well in class, pleasing the teacher. There is an endearing self-confidence in how compactly her cocoa-brown roundness fills her clothes [...]. She sings in assembly programs, songs of Jesus or sexual longing, both topics abhorrent to Ahmad. Yet he is pleased that she notices him, coming up to him now and then like a tongue testing a sensitive tooth.

"Cheer up, Ahmad," she teases him. "Things can't be so bad." She rolls her half-bare shoulder, lifting it as if to shrug, to show she is being playful.

"They're not bad," he says. "I'm not sad," he tells her. His long body tingles under his clothes – white shirt, narrow-legged black jeans – from the shower after track practice.

"You're looking way serious," she tells him "You should learn to smile more."

¹ to do track – to do track-and-field sports

² glee club – a club organized for the singing of choral music

“Why? Why should I, Joryleen?”

“People will like you more.”

40 “I don’t care about that. I don’t want to be liked.”

“You care,” she tells him. “Everybody cares.”

45 “*You* care,” he tells her, sneering down at her [...]. The tops of her breasts push up like great blisters in the scoop neck of the indecent top that at its other hem exposes the fat of her belly and the contour of her deep navel. He pictures her smooth body, darker than caramel but paler than chocolate, roasting in that vault of flames and being scorched into blisters; he experiences a shiver of pity, since she is trying to be nice to him, in accordance with an idea she has of herself. “Little Miss Popular,” he says scornfully.

50 This wounds her, and she turns away, her thick books to take home pushing up at her breasts, making the crease between them deep. “Fuck you, Ahmad,” she says, still with some gentleness, tentatively, her lower lip of its soft weight hanging loose a little. The saliva at the base of her gums sparks with reflected light from the overhead fluorescent tubes that keep the hall safely bright. To rescue the exchange, though she has turned to end it, Joryleen adds, “You didn’t care, you wouldn’t pretty yourself up with a clean white shirt every day, like some preacher. How’s your mother stand doing all that ironing?” [...]

55 He senses that Joryleen is not just trying to be nice: he arouses curiosity in her. She wants to get close to smell him better, even though she already has a boyfriend, a notorious “bad” one. Women are animals easily led, Ahmad has been warned by Shaikh Rashid, and he can see for himself that the high school and the world beyond it are full of nuzzling – blind animals in a herd bumping against one another, looking for a scent that will comfort them. But the Qur’an says there is no comfort but for
60 those who believe in the unseen Paradise and who observe the injunction to pray five times a day, which the Prophet brought back to Earth after the night journey on Buraq’s³ broad, blazingly white back.

(950 Wörter)

John Updike: Terrorist, New York 2006, S. 1–8.

³ Buraq – a horse-like winged creature with human features who transports the prophet Muhammad on his back