

## Task I

The given text is an excerpt from Stella Duffy's novel "The Room of Lost Things" and describes the memories a young British Muslim has of his trips to Pakistan.

When he was a child Akeel used to fly to Pakistan many times. But since he is married and his work is taking a lot of time, the flights to Pakistan become less and less.

He is not sure if the memories he has are all true or if he mixed them up with pictures he saw on TV.

He did not really enjoy the trips to Pakistan because, just like in London, he was seen as a foreigner there. His relatives made fun of him because of the way he dressed, acted and spoke.

That was why he always was very nervous on his trips to the airport.

His cousin, on the other hand, was admired by his relatives and always looked forward to seeing them.

The stays in Pakistan were exhausting and nerve-racking since everyone wanted his attention and since he did not feel really welcomed: he was asked when he would return to London shortly after he had arrived.

## Task II

In the excerpt of her novel "The Room of Lost Things" Stella Duffy uses several means to convey Akeel's feelings towards Pakistan and London.

At the very beginning of the text, which is written from the point of view of an omniscient narrator, one can read what Akeel thinks about the trips to Pakistan: All of them are "endurance tests" to him (l.1).

Another way of the author to show that Akeel does not have any sense of belonging to Pakistan is the fact that Pakistan is not called "home." Many other places have become "home" for him, but not his parents' mother country Pakistan: "The house his parents still live in, the Stratford house they moved to when he was eight, Akeel believes that is home. The house he lives in with Rubeina, that's home. [...] This shop is becoming home as well" (ll. 4-6). Akeel does not mention Pakistan.

The author also explicitly contrasts London with Pakistan and again emphasizes which of the two places is Akeel's home: "At home in London" (l.14) [...] "In Pakistan, though, everything was mixed up". This also shows that Akeel does not like Pakistan because it confuses him. In London, everything is familiar to him, but not in Pakistan.



## Task III

### 3.1

The excerpt, which is taken from Stella Duffy's novel "The Room of Lost Things," describes the life of a second-generation immigrant to Britain.

Akeel never liked travelling to Pakistan since he did not feel comfortable when his relatives were making fun of him. For him, the journeys were extremely exhausting.

That is why Pakistan never meant home to him. Home are places where he feels comfortable, for example the house he and his parents moved to when he was eight or the house he and his wife live in now. The shop where he works is becoming home, too. But Pakistan has never been anything like home for him.

His parent's mother country is foreign to him while London has become his adopted country.

Many second-generation immigrants do not really feel at home in their parent's mother country. They were raised in their adopted countries and feel that these became their home. They have adjusted to new culture, new language and a different way of living.

In Qaisra Shahraz' short story "A Pair of Jeans" Miriam experiences the difficulties caused by acclimatisation. She has grown up in England and has adjusted to the new culture, also to the way English girls dress. She is a beautiful young student at university and feels at home in England. Nevertheless, Miriam accepts that her parents arrange a marriage between her and Farook, a Pakistani boy at the same age as herself. She likes Farook and is looking forward to marry him. But one day, Farook's parents see Miriam coming home from a trip with her friends, dressed in a short vest and very tight jeans. Her fiancé's parents are shocked when they see her. They think that she has integrated too much into Western culture and in the end, they break off the engagement.

The short story and the novel show very well that most second-generation immigrants have integrated into their new culture. They feel at home in the countries they are living in - and not in their parents' mother countries. Going back to the country their parents come from would be unimaginable for them.

### 3.2

Stella Duffy's novel "A Room of Lost Things" is about Akeel, a second-generation immigrant to England. He has integrated into new culture and feels at home in England. According to him, the trips to Pakistan, his parents' mother country, are extremely exhausting.

His cousin Wasi, on the other hand, enjoys them. He loves Pakistan. When he is twenty years old he moves to the country his parents left a long time ago.

Suddenly, Wasi starts writing letters to his family and tries to teach them about the evils of Western life. All at once, however, his family does not receive any more letters. Some weeks later, Wasi returns to his adopted country - accompanied by his pregnant Catholic wife who does not have any intentions to convert to the Islam. His mother cannot help but cry for two days before she begins to knit clothes for her grandchild.

In Hanif Kureishi's short story "My Son The Fanatic" a parent also has to deal with the new way of living of his child: Parvez, a second-generation immigrant to England, has noticed that his son, Ali, is changing - but he does not know why.

First, he thinks Ali might be addicted to drugs, but soon he notices that Ali has become religious: He prays five times a day, does not eat pork anymore and stops drinking alcohol.

His father tries to talk to his son about his new lifestyle but Ali does not want to talk to his "infidel" father who has integrated into Western culture. Parvez becomes more and more desperate since he does not understand his son. He is working hard to earn money for Ali's studies, but Ali has dropped out of college. The situation escalates after Ali refused to talk to Bettina, who is a prostitute and his father's best friend. Parvez is very angry. He gets drunk and ends up beating his son.

Parvez and Wasi's mother react in completely different ways in regard to the new lifestyle of their children.

While Wasi's mother is passive crying for a long time but finally accepting that her son has changed, Parvez is active: he observes his son, asks for Bettina's advice and tries to talk to Ali.

When Wasi's mother notices that her son is changing she does not do anything. She is shocked - like all other members of the family - but she does not try to convince her son that the Western lifestyle is not bad at all.

Ali's father, on the other hand, tries to convince his son of a different way of living. He does not only watch his son become more and more fanatic - he tries to make his son see reason.



### 3.3

Welcome, all of you, to the project day 2013!

My speech is about discrimination. This is not a very nice subject, but still an important one.

Unfortunately, discrimination is still a problem we have to deal with. Immigrants who speak a different language and pray to another God are often discriminated against.

But why do we act this way? Why don't we just accept others the way they are? In my opinion, this is largely due to a lack of open-mindedness.

Many people have stereotyped opinions they cannot get rid of.

Someone from Germany, for example, might be likely to think of a terrorist when he sees a muslim looking man. We have to stop thinking like that! We have to be open-minded towards everyone - no matter where he or she comes from, which language he or she speaks or to which God he or she prays!

Some weeks ago, I read a quite interesting novel: "The Room of Lost Things" written by Stella Duffy. Wasi, the cousin of the protagonist, is a second-generation immigrant to England. But when he is 20 years old he moves back to his mother country Pakistan. He starts writing letters to his parents and to his cousin Akeel in which he tries to teach them about the evils of Western life.

But suddenly, he stops writing letters. It was not clear what he was doing in Pakistan – probably, some of his relatives and acquaintances thought that he had become fanatic. A few months later, he convinced them of the contrary: he has married a Catholic wife and the couple moves back to England.

You are certainly wondering why I told you this story? Well, it is a proof of open-mindedness enriching your life!

If Wasi had still been convinced of his religion being the only right one, he would have never become happy with a Catholic woman who did not think of converting to Islam, at all.

We have to break free from stereotypes - more open-mindedness will certainly enrich our lives!