

Task I

In her article “Mixed blessings,” which was published in “The Guardian” in August 2005, Katharina Lobeck describes the difficulties a mixed-race relationship entails.

In her opinion, people’s attitude towards mixed marriages vary greatly according to the country or even the city you live in. In Germany, for example, a lot of people made fun of Lobeck’s black daughter, thus revealing that they had certain racial prejudices. But in Great Britain, too, people are discriminated against because of their origin. In Liverpool, a black teenager has even been murdered because of his skin colour. Nevertheless, Lobeck thinks that London is the best place to live in if you have a mixed-race relationship, even though London is not free of racial discrimination, either. If Katharina Lobeck is with her daughter she is regarded as a stereotyped, voracious white woman. If her husband is with her he is regarded as a traitor to his race.

Task II

In her newspaper article “Mixed blessings” Katharina Lobeck describes why London is the best place to live for mixed-race couples. The capital of Great Britain is the only place she wants to live with her Senegalese husband and their daughter.

She uses various stylistic devices to convey her attitude.

First, Lobeck writes her article in the first-person perspective, thus suggesting that she talks about experiences she has gained herself. As a result, the article seems quite authentic and reliable.

In addition, Lobeck says that she is a “Londoner by choice” (l.1) and that she does not “manage to tear [herself] away from London.” (l. 9). These statements emphasize that she herself decided to move to London and that the city means a lot to her. At the same time, however, she shows that she is not naive but that she also sees the difficulties and disadvantages.

Those are, for example, the “dismal living conditions, its extortionate rents, [...] its general aggressiveness and its never-fulfilling promise of success”(ll.11-12). The alliteration in “There remain...” again stresses the difficulties she and her husband have to experience. Indeed, Lobeck thinks that they “might have had a much easier ride in Germany.” But although there are many disadvantages concerning life in Britain, London is the “only place” where she wants to live. She repeats her opinion in lines 15 and 17.

Lobeck describes London as being “unique among British cities” (l. 11) and thinks that it is “one of the great multicultural capitals of the world” (l.23). She stresses London’s relative openness by giving examples of other countries and cities where people are less tolerant, such as Bristol (cp. ll.9 up to 11) and Germany. In her opinion, Germany would have been “an obvious option to consider. Except that it wasn’t” (ll.18-19).

She uses a hyperbole in order to explain why she does not want to live in Germany: in her opinion, a nonwhite German is “still a completely alien one to large parts of the population” (ll.20-21). To prove this statement she describes that her black daughter was called discriminatory names such as “chocolate baby”(l.21) or “negro doll” (l.21).

Although living in London with a foreign husband and a mixed-race child does not only have benefits, Katharina Lobeck could not imagine to live in another country or city.



Task III

Xavier Naidoo, a young singer whose parents are from South Africa, was born and raised in Mannheim, Germany. His family has successfully integrated into German society becoming active members of the local church. His mother participated in the church choir, his father was a member of the men's choral society that Naidoo joined at the age of 14.

Naidoo, however, was bullied because of his origin when he was still a child. Since his mother would have only made it worse by talking to the bullies, he never talked to her about the discrimination at home.

But although he was bullied as a child, he loves Germany which is due to the language: he thinks German is beautiful – abundant, abyssal, distinct.

Visiting his parent's mother country South Africa, he perceived that differentiation of people's skin colours is still very common. That is why he still calls himself "black", he says. If others still call themselves "white" he will call himself "black".

Task IV

4.1

“In Germany, even a third generation of immigrants is not seen, and often does not see itself, as being German,” Katharina Lobeck states in her article “Mixed blessings.” She refers to the grandchildren of people who immigrated to Germany in the 1950’s and 1960’s.

According to Lobeck, for example Turkish families who are already living in Germany in the third generation, do not feel like Germans and are also regarded as foreigners - and not as Germans - by the Germans.

The beginnings of immigration in Great Britain and the USA date back to the 19th century whereas Germany was not yet an immigration country.

In the USA, immigration has become a normal part of everyone’s life. Immigrants enrich American culture by bringing their traditions, their points of view, their stories and their culture. Between 1820 and 1979, about 49 million people from countries all over the world immigrated to the USA. The USA is the country that allows more people to immigrate than all other countries in the world.

In England, immigration has got a long tradition, too. People from all over the world immigrated - and still immigrate - to England, especially after the Second World War when people from the former colonies came to England. Although there has always been a certain number of xenophobic people, the number of third-, second- and first-generation immigrants is much higher than in Germany.

In Germany, immigrants have been undesirable for a long time - and for some people, they still are. In about 1880, expanding industry needed more workers than available in Germany at that time. This was why many migrant workers came to Germany. But they were tightly controlled and permanent immigration was not requested.

In my opinion, Lobeck’s opinion is true. In Germany, the number of xenophobic people is much higher than in Great Britain and the USA since immigration has got a much longer tradition there than in Germany. People are used to live together with immigrants in Great Britain and the USA. They do not think that this is a disadvantage - they are grateful that their country and their traditions are enriched by immigrants.

In Germany, on the other hand, immigrants are regarded as interlopers who take away the workplaces and do not integrate. We have to become more open-minded towards other cultures to allow them to enrich our country and our traditions, too!



4.2

In her article "Mixed blessings", Katharina Lobeck describes the difficulties of living in a city as a mixed-race couple.

In her opinion, living in London is the best option for her, her Senegalese husband and their black daughter. But although London is the best of many alternatives, she and her husband have to face many problems, for example the fact that her husband does not get a long-term visa. Although she thinks that people living in London are more tolerant than others, she and her family have to face racial prejudices. In addition to the difficulties a "normal" couple would have to face, Lobeck and her husband have to deal with discrimination against their daughter, disrespect and incomprehension of their relationship, even from their own families.

Living in an urban area has got both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the number of inhabitants in a town is much higher than in rural areas. The fact that being anonymous is much easier in a town than in a small village where everyone knows his neighbour's life story might help migrants escape from gossip about their origin and racial prejudices.

But the high number of inhabitants can also be prejudicial to migrants living in urban areas. Since being anonymous is much easier there is a danger that immigrants who have moved to cities do not catch up with anyone.

Besides, more immigrants live in urban areas than in a village due to the number of inhabitants and the higher probability to find a job. This can facilitate integration.

However, the higher number of immigrants in urban areas could also be a disadvantage for foreigners since the higher the quantity of immigrants is the bigger is xenophobia.

In my opinion, it does not matter where people belonging to different cultures move - there is always a certain amount of xenophobic, racist people. The whole society has to be more open-minded. We have to accept everyone - regardless of his or her religion, origin and culture.

4.3

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subject: Challenges migrants face in today's globalised world

Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm writing to give a comment on Katharina Lobeck's article "Mixed blessings," which was published in August 2005 in your newspaper.

In the last session of our English course, we read Lobeck's article in preparation for our final exams.

We all thought that it really was interesting, particularly because Lobeck writes about experiences she has made herself - and not about stereotyped opinions concerning immigrants.

Since we are going to write the "Abitur" in about five weeks we have read up on globalization and immigration.

We all think that on the one hand Lobeck's experiences are typical of challenges migrants have to face in today's globalised world, but on the other hand they are non-typical.

The racial comments made about her mixed-race daughter are – unfortunately – too common in today's society. Mixed-race relationships are still quite rare. Since people tend to accept only what they know and what is familiar to them they react with denial and hatred to those relationships – regardless of which country they live in. Regrettably, racism can be encountered everywhere around the world - in Germany as well as in Great Britain. Consequently, all of us could understand why London is a multi-cultural city, but it is not free of racial prejudices. She experiences this when she walks through Brixton market with her daughter. London is the least evil, but nevertheless it is not the perfect place to live for Lobeck and her family. The fact that her husband does not get a visa to be with his family permanently is another difficulty Lobeck has to manage.

But there are also experiences Lobeck has made which are not typical.

Not typical, for example, is the fact that she is flexible concerning the choice of her – and her family's – habitation.

Being locally flexible is a privilege available only to few immigrants. Unfortunately, many immigrants still have to deal with poverty due to low-paid jobs, a low social status, discrimination against them and the hatred of society – and the prospects for an improvement of their current situations are bad.

However, all of us would appreciate to live in a world without discrimination against immigrants and racial prejudices.

Sincerely yours,

Felicitas Müller on behalf of the English course of Humboldt-Gymnasium Karlsruhe, Germany