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Seminar London in Literature

Essay: Multiculturalisms

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I would like to compare in this essay how two authors, specifically Andrew Norman Wilson and Terry Pratchett, deal with the theme of the clashes of the cultures in the big cities. Our world is becoming multicultural, different cultures are mixed into something transnational and this theme is described also in the literature.

A. N. Wilson in his essay London Cosmopolis says that London is similar to the big cities like New York. The mass immigration in London started after the Second World War, when the post-war birth-rate was over. The immigration unchangeably changed the image of London. But we need to have in remembrance that there are certain differences between individual immigrants. First of all we can distinguish two main types of newcomers: one came to London as poor people but they managed to start their own business and work their way up; the other came in poverty and still stay poor because they work for low wages in jobs like for example the drivers of buses. Therefore is not easy to make a unified picture of the immigrants.

On the other hand the plain fact is that there are some problems between immigrants and “real Londoners” – the murders, the disturbance on the streets, hate and prejudice. Some people think that newcomers are stealing their jobs and that they are too different. It is possible that they are a little bit scared because they do not have enough information about their culture and do not know what to think of it. Londoners have problems to accept the immigrants but the same goes for the newcomers as well.

Terry Pratchett, the second author I would like to compare, is best known for his long-running comprehensive Discworld series of comic fantasy novels. He has created completely new fantasy world “Discworld” which is parallel to our. He destroys old myths and creates a world with humour and irony. The characters and place names often contain the puns and allusions to everyday’s world. Discworld, which was created

by Pratchett, is very extensive thanks to the number of characters and concerns which are handled. Therefore I am going to pick up just an area of the capital city.

In Ankh-Morpork are more or less all “nationalities” represented - humans, dwarfs, vampires, wizards, gods, golems, undead, werewolves and others live next to each other. Some of them have different style of life, some are convinced enemies (dwarfs versus trolls) and others are dangerous for society (vampires). But one thing they all have in common – they have to adjust themselves to life in the city. It is obvious that not all problems can be solved immediately, but there are some solutions – if you cannot go to sunlight, you have to work at nights and so on.

And the best idea in my opinion how to help communities to respect other nationalities is to let them work together for example in guard, as they did in Ankh-Morpork. They have to rely on each other and maybe they can become friends and it will have a positive influence on the rest of the community.

In my opinion we can compare, and actually identify, Ankh-Morpork with London, because in both of them many nationalities are staying and trying to live next to each other in peace and mutual tolerance – this does not mean that you have to love different cultures and ways of living but you should respect that the culture is important for them.

To sum it up both cities are supranational cities, where many people are looking for new life and fulfilment. The number of different cultures is creating a picture of city of new generation, of course with some problems, but still modern, which is looking for its new national identity. It is not easy and it will need some time to get used to other cultures and people but in my opinion this is the only and best way how the society can be developing into something better.