

Shauna singh
baldwin's short story
"rawalpindi 1919"
essay sample



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Shauna Singh Baldwin's short story "Rawalpindi 1919"

Essay Sample

Paragraph 1

The process of dough making in third paragraph on page 137 symbolically conveys the process of nurturing one's own sibling and shaping his/her personality. Sardarni makes a dough-ball and shapes it more rounds by patting it. She then set aside small dough-ball out of the large one and shape by rolling it. The whole process has symbolic connotations as Baldwin juxtaposes old values against the new one and shows the uncertainties of cultural alienation and distancing of young ones. Baldwin conveys the course of development of one's physical and psychological being.

Like small dough, Sardarni gave birth to Sarup (her younger son) that was once a part of her own physical being as small dough was a part of large dough. He was raised with care and love as sardarni shapes the small dough. But a stage comes when he starts thinking and acting independently. Here Baldwin uses a second series of socio-cultural symbolism in the paragraph. Sardarni looks at the small dough and thinks that it can still be blended to the larger dough. Sarup has developed habits different from his cultural roots. Unlike his father, Sarup does not mind shaking hands with Angrez (British). She thinks that he has not gone too far and can be blended back with his own origin as small dough can be merged with large dough. Baldwin here uses the symbol of kneading that is a painstaking manual work but a sub-continental woman is expert in this process. So she is positive and confident that she can bring back him to his roots.

Paragraph 2

From Shauna Singh Baldwin's short story "Rawalpindi 1919".

The process of preparing a chapatti in the third paragraph on page 138 symbolically conveys the troubles that one undergoes during the process of development. Sardarni roll the dough and slaps it between palms in order to make a chapatti. She then put it on the "tava" (baking pan) in order to cook it. Baldwin epitomizes that road that leads to a successful life is full of thorns. In this process of development, one is bound to experience severe physical and mental pains and efforts.

Baldwin correlates success and achievements with strenuous effort. Rolling the dough and then developing it into a "chappati" is all marked with tough route that dough takes to get converted into chapatti. This further requires emotional and psychological changes on the part of the individual to adjust according to the new socio-cultural milieu. If one has the flexibility and adaptability like the rolling dough that shapes itself according to requirements, he/she can be unbeaten. Additionally, Baldwin implies that one can only be transformed into a chapatti, the end product (a symbol of final completion of a process) if he bakes himself in the fire of hardwork and on the "tava" (baking pan) of experience of an unfamiliar world and society. "Tava" is an important symbolic tool that represents to darkness (owing to its black color). It refers to initial dark days ahead for Sarup when he has to live with unfamiliar faces in unknown places. But as dough remains on "tava" for a small moment, so this unfamiliarity is instantaneous and he will come out successful person like the end-product "chapatti".