

SHAUNA SINGH BALDWIN: *WE ARE NOT IN PAKISTAN*

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ABSTRACT

Shauna Singh Baldwin, an internationally acclaimed, award winning novelist is an Indo-Canadian writer who belongs to the Second Generation immigrant writers of South Asia A hybrid of three cultures: Indian, Canadian and American, Baldwin writes from the perspective of all three cultures. Darwinian 'survival-of-the-fittest' laws continue to shape human evolution in the modern age. The memory of English literary history that formally records from the time of Beowulf would affirm a prevailing tendency of adventure among human beings, both of the body and mind. Adventure signifies “ a voluntary stepping out of one’s own cozy security of home, in order to taste that which is not homely, only to return enriched in experience” (Biswas 112 The appearance of globalization created a peculiar form of dispersion which challenged the relation of home and abroad. Displacement enforces the process of assimilation. Assimilation is a progressive and ineluctable phenomena. In classical sociology assimilation is intended to mean a progressive change from a more diverse to a less diverse behavior.

The present paper would explore the concept of survival and assimilation in a metaphorical expression Pakistan which is often taken in literary world as the period of struggle, and strife, in a new world.. *We Are Not in Pakistan* (quoted as WP) is a collection of ten short stories inspired by human values and frailties. “Some expose latent fears, mistrust and prejudice, while the others underscore and repose faith, nudging the conscious emergence of truth, belief and acceptance” (Singh 3). Inhabitants of these stories are male and female, young and old, rich and poor, likeable and hateful. They are from different religions and nationalities: Jewish, Christian, Sikh, American, Canadian, Pakistani, Costa Rican, Ukrainian, Mexican, and Greek. Baldwin relates the World events such as 9/11, Chernobyl and India’s Partition with smaller-scale tragedies of families. Her engaging and enlightening prose explores the daily realities affected by horrific events in the life of estranged characters,. The study in a textual approach would see through the experiences of immigrants within home and outside home,

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Shauna Singh Baldwin, an internationally acclaimed, award winning novelist is an Indo-Canadian writer who belongs to the Second Generation immigrant writers of South Asia. A hybrid of three cultures: Indian, Canadian and American, Baldwin writes from the perspective of all three cultures. In an interview with Suparna Saraswati Puri Shauna says:

My Indian heritage is a treasure of stories, a submerged worldview that colours my view of power relations. So is my Canadian heritage. I witness it in the US also, where I live. Creativity comes from expressing silenced pain and turning it to beauty, from comprehending the marginalized from drawing new connections between events and people (Puri 72).

). The ten stories in *We Are Not in Pakistan* illuminate a paradox: love and fear draw us together, yet drive us to extremes of separation. Eliciting amusement, curiosity, and wonder mingled with sadness for a post-9/11 world, Shauna Singh Baldwin lures us toward the displaced men, women, who populate these stories. She writes about the areas of silence and hypocrisy, which can be observed across the world. She opines that a woman or a man or a community can be devalued on the basis of her/his gender, race and socioeconomic status. Baldwin brings out several interrelated issues of race, gender, ethnicity and immigration by interpreting and evaluating the immigrant experience particularly of the Punjabi Diaspora. The Punjabi Diaspora refers to the descents of ethnic Punjabis who emigrated out of the Punjab region to the rest of the world. Punjabis are one of the Pakistani and Indian Diasporas. The post -1947 periods has seen some general acceleration in migration from all parts of India; some regions are far more heavily involved in the emigration process than others. In the immediate post-1947 period, Britain became a major destination; and then, in the 1970s Canada and USA have been added to the list of most desirable countries. "Baldwin displays an uncanny knack for getting under the reader's skin and stirring a potent cocktail of empathy, sadness, pity and rage. She has a gift for dialogue — an almost musical ear. Her writing is so strong and so consistent that she'll make you forget you're reading. And that alone is worth the price of entry." (*Montreal Gazette* 2013-01-21)

In her 2007 short story collection *We Are Not in Pakistan*, Shauna Singh Baldwin further explores the realities of Transglobal citizen ship. Though the study does not refer to the tragic event of partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 yet it communicates similar strife, pain, uncertainty and fear among people after the 9/11 terror attack in America. The contemporary terrorism and extremism is no less than the panicky partition era of 1947. Even today Pakistan stands as a terror sponsored state symbolizing shame, exile, separation, surprise and dislocation on the basis of caste, nationality or religion. The protagonists in the stories plumb the difficulty of understanding another's culture, of finding ways to adapt to the strangeness of new cultural milieu, of redefining oneself and yet retaining connections to old ways of being. *We Are Not in Pakistan* (quoted as WP) is a collection of ten short stories inspired by human values and frailties. "Some expose latent fears, mistrust and prejudice, while the others underscore and repose faith, nudging the conscious emergence of truth, belief and acceptance" (Singh 3). Inhabitants of these stories are male and female, young and old, rich and poor, likeable and hateful similar to the people during partition. They are also from different religions and nationalities: Jewish, Christian, Sikh, American, Canadian, Pakistani, Costa Rican, Ukrainian, Mexican, and Greek. Baldwin relates the World events such as 9/11, Chernobyl and India's Partition with smaller-scale tragedies of families. For Baldwin, the individual's significance is as great as the global, since "every little thing – even a moving shadow – it means something much bigger" (Reiswig 1). The author Janette Turner Hospital appreciates the well praised

collection: Trauma of dislocation is a favourite theme in Baldwin's fiction as in her first story in this collection, 'We Are Not in Pakistan'. It focuses on a Ukrainian Jewish professional family who, after suffering from the fall-out from Chernobyl, face a greater sense of alienation across the Atlantic. 'The View from the Mountain' is the story of Ted Grand, a retired American military official, who builds a resort on a scenic hill in Costa Rica and develops an interesting but unequal relationship with the locals. 9/11 reawakens a vengeful American nationalist in him as he watches the planes ramming into the World Trade Centre and boils with rage.

Shauna Singh Baldwin's collection of stories is potent, poignant, disturbing, and of immense importance at this point of time. She examines the intersection of private lives with political and cultural convulsions. She illuminates terrorism for us: not just the terrorism of the media, but the invisible and horrifically costly terrorism of racist paranoia. I can't think of a more valuable book for our dangerous times (Hospital Back cover).

The first story "**Only a Button**" opens in the Soviet Union, where a couple is forced to evacuate their apartment after the explosion at Chernobyl. The husband, Viktor who works at the nuclear plant, begins to doubt his blind belief in government policies, even as he continues to demand unquestioning obedience from his wife. After the disaster, the wife, Olena, struggles to keep her family healthy and content, preparing the best foods she can find in contaminated conditions and keeping the peace with her difficult husband and malicious mother-in-law. Olena, the marginalized heroine, is struggling to find her own voice and home. Olena's husband and child evince the signs of radiation poisoning, signs that improve once the family - including the mother-in-law - moves to the United States, but along with the radiation poisoning, an old hurt between Olena and her mother-in-law festers and poisons their relationship. Matushka, "a dried husk of a woman, incapable of love" (WP 19) pretends to be a loving mother in law, but deliberately attempts to spoil Olena's happy married life. Matushka is like "a cesium isotope, contaminating Viktor with her expectations. The love-hate relationship continues till the end as Matushka has not changed. Viktor loses his life due to radioactive effect and Olena continues living with Matushka though hates her at heart. Olena recalls:

But Viktor's face comes before her- Viktor wearing his you-know-you-love-me look. Love is a trap, a noose. A tether running from Olena's ankle to his grave (WP 50).

The story highlights that government's political ambition to become a nuclear super power, puts the civilians' life in danger. the story successfully attempts to highlight the hold of patriarchal ideology across the globe. The culture, tradition, custom or religion may vary, but the oppression, suppression, victimization and exploitation of are common all over the world.

"**Naina**", the second story presents highly unstable status of Indian women. In *Critical Responses to Feminism* Bharat Bhushan Mohanty comments, "the story is a bold and convincing attempt made by Naina to restore the unique pleasures of motherhood from an apparent male control, i.e. from the control of society, doctors, her lover Stanford, her parents, her tenants Andre and Celeste and cousin Sunita. The baby is exclusively her property" (Mohanty 228). It narrates a magic-realistic tale of Naina, an Indian girl brought up in Canada who solitarily undergoes the experience of motherhood out of wedlock, both her Canadian lover and her patriarchal, conservative Indian family having deserted her, and carries her child within her womb, refusing medical assistance of every kind till she is cajoled by her doctor into a session of hypnotherapy which finally occasions her delivery. Naina knows that her baby is a girl "only a

girl would be so comfortable in her mother's womb that coming out and needing to grow would spoil her world" (WP 54). She is afraid of the growing insecurities in the world for her daughter. As a mother, she is afraid to deliver her child in the world which has so much animosity for woman. The idea developed in the story is fictional, but the fear the author portrays is very true in the world. The present world is not secure for woman, everywhere they face serious assaults, insults, identity crisis, murders and the worst female feticide which denies birth right to females. In a hypnosis medication session Naina has a dialogue with her daughter, which is very insightful and thought provoking:

Naina- why do you wait within me? Wait, so long? Make me carry you everywhere? Baby- I wait because you are not ready to receive me. Naina- To whom shall I deliver you baby? Baby- To life, to the world (WP 63).

Naina's assert her control over her maternity. "I am not a case," (WP 53) Naina reclaims the centrality of the mother within the process of childbirth. The author exemplifies the Lord Rama's arrival to Ayodhya with Naina's pregnancy and her daughter's birth after fourteen years. This magical delivery is a notion of displacement and dislocation with partition of two souls; mother and her daughter; as if exiled into this unknown dangerous world.

"**Rendezvous**" is set in a Greek diner features the voices of three wait staff – two Mexicans and a Greek waitress, whose father owns the place. They stop to talk to their favourite regular, an Irish American lawyer, whose voice is never heard in the story. The perspective of the bride's effusive Greek family dominates and marginalizes the feelings of the reserved Anglo-American family. It consists of multiple characters from various cultures, meeting each other at a restaurant as refugees meet anywhere in the world. The author highlights various kinds of relationships like serious marriages, relations of convenience, and profit based relations with durability. She criticizes the shared term relations and insecurities crawled in such relations. The place is described as the miniature of the world, consisting people of various nations and cultures. The author portrays that the multicultural customers share the place with comfort & harmony respecting each other's individuality. She focuses on the Triviality of man-made discrimination and strongly proposes humanity, trust, faith and human relationships. She seems to suggest that this world is nothing but a 'Rendezvous' where we take birth as a human being and meet the destined people. The world is meant to live happily ignoring all the physical, geographical, cultural, man-made differences but such wisdom occurs only in those souls who experiences the pain of loss, exile and dislocation.

The story "**Fletcher**" is told in parts from the point of view of a dog as well as from the perspective of others in a series of monologues, "explores the desire for love and connection, between lovers, regardless of their sexual orientation, between a dog and its owner, between relatives, and the risk of loss inherent in the act of seeking that connection" (Source Internet). Fletcher, a Lhasa apso, finds himself involved in a game between his owner and her commitment-phobic boyfriend that results in the death of an innocent. It is an analysis of the human world and relationships through the eyes of the dog, Fletcher; its owner Colette is in relationship with Tim her boss and boyfriend. Fletcher dislikes him as it feels that the man is very professional with Colette and does not deserve her, it describes the man as, 'a man who thinks he can buy Loyalty'. The dog is portrayed as loyal and concerned with her safety and its own patronage. When she advertises for tenants in her apartment, Fletcher starts searching possible match for her in the prospective tenants. Colette rents her apartment to a non American-Martin who is a gay. In his first interaction with Tim, he understands that like many other Americans Tim also hates all non Americans who were not at

all related to 9/11 attacks. Colette uses Martine to create a false impression of a relation to jealous Tim. She wants to reinstate her relationship with him. In the course of story she understands that Martin has failed in his twenty years old gay relationship and is ditched by him for no reason. His family also abandons him for being gay. The terror of social abandonment, dejection and loneliness grows so large that he commits suicide. It causes death threat to Colette & Fletcher's life. But Fletcher's loyalty and efforts save both of them. The earlier story delineates the need of being social by exploring an individual's very personal issues and need to share life with others instead of living in ones own Pakistan, metaphorically speaking.

“**The View from the Mountain**” brings out “the pain and guilt of a man; his loneliness as he lives through "all his days of sadness", believing he may have been able to save his wife and daughter from the inferno that reduced his house to a rubble” (Source Internet). The story depicts the pre and post 9/11 life and responses of an introvert American and the other society members. ‘The view from the Mountain’ is a simile for Americans’ disinterest towards another world and their introvert nature. Ted, the central character of the story, builds a hotel Buena Vista, in San Jose, Costa Rica and introduces the town with various advanced technologies such as satellite T. V., low fat food products, good quality beauty products and also an Internet cafe before anyone else introduces. He transforms the calm, peaceful town into a tourist place for his benefit. If something damages then instead of repairing he changes the entire thing and says, “Destruction is an opportunity for change... change sends a signal to customers that we are growing, not standing still” (WP 123). He always appreciates change, growth and inventions but at the same time ignores simplicity, relations, sympathy, affections and concern. He develops professional connections with many people in the town, but fails to develop any emotional attachment with those people. So when the World Trade Centers are attacked, he experiences the pain and devastation for the first time, which rest of the world is experiencing for a long time. The author verbalizes:

Ted was only following what had happened or was happening in los Estados, and he seemed to believe no people ever, anywhere, at any time, had suffered as great a tragedy as North Americans. ...All he ever read was USA Today.... No North Americans, no story. As if the rest of the world was inhabited by non-persons and monkeys” (WP 130).

He becomes unresponsive to the rest of the world other than America. The story also describes that American Bush government changes its immigrants’ policy and in those days anybody can be jailed under slightest suspicion of terrorist connection or misidentification.

The title story “**We Are Not in Pakistan**”, is about a Pakistani-American Miriam who along with her American husband, has been settled in the United States. Kathleen is her granddaughter whom she daily accompanies to her school, whereas the grandpa, Terry, is often busy watching football matches on television and is a retired diplomat. Terry and Grandma had met a long time back in the US embassy’s dance party in Pakistan and got married and moved to the Midwest where their daughter, Safia, married a local man. On a normal day Grandma disappears and the entire house initially takes it rather lightly, expecting her return any time but after a day or two Kathleen, Terry and Safia all become immensely concerned. Safia, because of her employment at the airport, remembers that the Home Security and the Immigration Service often connive to arraign unsuspecting residents of Pakistani origin. She is convinced that her mum had been whisked away by the same people. The story is about the aftermath of 9/11 and the memories of the past. Miriam is a Christian and came from a predominantly Muslim country,

where she faced exile when her family realized “people in Pakistan didn’t want us... We’re Christians” (WP 140). Miriam’s religion in Pakistan defines her as a minority within a predominantly Muslim society, while in America it defines her as belonging to a religious majority. But as a Pakistani national living in America she is still in a minority as American values on identity are primarily determined in racial and national terms. She is well connected with friends and relatives, who like her, are migrants and Christian Pakistanis and it is the main form of rootedness available to diasporic people like her. She still has one of her older address books containing the names and contacts of her close relatives and friends from Pakistan who have been living in the United States, and quite a few of them ‘disappeared’ following 9/11 as the Home Security and the US Immigration Service personnel chased them up with one excuse or the other. Some of them have already been repatriated to Pakistan; several are languishing in detention centers unknown to many of their relatives, while other harassed individuals are seeking asylum in Canada. In Miriam’s highly active social networking, distance, location and the absence of physical contact are no hindrance. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson suggest:

Something like a transnational public sphere has certainly rendered any strictly bounded sense of community or locality obsolete. At the same time, it has enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount (Gupta 9).

Generational conflict is also shown through the relationship between grandmother and her granddaughter. Their relationship exhibits cultural and generational divides. Kathleen is an American-born teenager, the daughter of an Irish-American father and a Pakistani-American mother. She is not interested in Miriam’s “third world” (WP 135) and clears that “I’m glad we don’t live in your world” (WP 137). In their daily conversations Kathleen’s refrain, “We are not in Pakistan” (WP 136), is frequently repeated across the story to quickly dismiss her association with Pakistan and her Pakistani grandmother. Thus the story brings forth the dilemmas of first and third generation immigrants in America. Certainly, this is an untold chapter of a recent unwritten history where a large number of Muslims, especially Pakistanis, in the United States have ‘disappeared’ and, unknown to their relatives and authorities, are lost somewhere in no-man’s land. Shauna’s characters emerge from the situation as better individuals, like Kathleen who from a cynical approach to all those who are not pure whites, though she too has a mixed heritage, attempts to be inclusive and reach out to them, or then take charge of their own lives and set out in search of their own distinct identity, which though separate may not necessarily be separatist.

“**Night of the Leonids**” revolves around a couple Tania and Dr. Philip. Dr Philip marries Tania for her looks and Tania marries him for his wealth. Philip is ten years older than Tania. Tania has left everything for her husband. But after few years of marriage her husband grows indifferent to her desires, needs and presence and she merely remains his possession, to be showed off, so in the end, she makes a breakaway, casting off her role as Mrs. Philip Trent. Baldwin depicts a female psyche with its Innermost feelings of terror, despair like that of a refugee in an unknown land, turning into joy and self-acknowledgement. Her life “was going to be a dirt-track stock car race, obstacles and pitfalls everywhere” (WP 162). The story depicts the typical patriarchal male dominated mentality where women are considered as an object of prestige with her beauty. Once he takes her to a street festival in Toronto and stays with her every minute, “pincer- grip on her elbow, steering firmly” (WP 174). Sometimes he takes her to official dinners where he needs a wife beside him. Philip is an anesthesiologist who knows how

“to switch a mind off, switch it on” (WP 170) and he loves to do this with his wife. She gives up modeling after her marriage and becomes a dutiful wife “the way he and all his “gentlemen” buddies wanted her to be” (WP 168). But in due course of time she understands his introvert, self centered nature and introspects herself for her own happiness. On the “night of the leonids”, she finds herself contemplating her life; wishing for living every moment like a leonid ... with passion, intensity and awareness ... “live like you’re on the path of a fireball” (WP 175). The revelation is accentuated with the thought that “happiness doesn’t always come in a blue (jewellery) box” (WP 175). She drives off in her husband’s car to a future where she knows she can be herself, determined and exhilarated by the thought – “Just imagine Philip’s face when he finds his car gone” (WP 177). She chooses a meteoric exhilaration, happiness and leaves terror of despair no less than the metaphor Pakistan that is Philip’s house to live a free, independent and happy life.

The next story “**This Raghead**”, while horrifyingly exploiting nearly every available xenophobic stereotype, sees the main character, Larry Reilly, through his day as he encounters his neighbors: a “kike,” a “kraut,” a “raghead” and all of the other “unsavory” characters that white men of his kind may fear or want to avoid. It highlights a very crucial issue of identity and racial politics, which has entered the skin of the American society in the post 9/11 period similar to the distrust and pain of partition era. It takes place in an Old age home, in America where multicultural and multi-racial people sheltered for their rest of the life. Larry Reilly is a retired veteran. He lost his brother in World War II and then got married to his girlfriend Trudy. He is deeply a racist. He occupies one condo with his life partner Gertrude. He is happy for getting blessed to live “in the best country in the world” (WP 180). He gets into an argument with an unnamed woman who resists him to stick Bush’s poster on the wall near her room door. He tells her that he participated in the war for Bush government and is in sustenance for him. He suspects Dr. Bakhtiar as a terrorist due to his Muslim name. But when his pacemaker fails Dr Bakhtiar helps him. Larry hates immigrants and identifies people with their colours. He opines that only whites have right to live in the land of prosperity and suspects all the migrants. He considers coloured people as conspirators against peace and prosperity of his country. “May be the raghead kills Americans slowly, turning up the heartbeat, turning up the pace, till millions of hearts drop dead from exhaustion” (WP 184). When he visits Dr. Bakhtiar’s clinic he calls him “terrorist” (WP 182). The author introduces Larry’s conservative mindset when he objects his grandson; Ronan’s union with a Mexican girl. Baldwin criticizes this self centered, colour and race consciousness through Larry’s character. He represents the people, who identify human beings by their colour, race, physical appearance, nationality and other materialistic identity markers. But his attitude changes when he gets a heart attack. ‘The coloured guy’ and Dr. Bakhtiar- to whom he assumes as a terrorist, raghead- help him to recover from the critical situation. In the end Larry accepts every immigrant who is with him- a kike, a kraut, Ronan’s Mexican girlfriend Maria and also the raghead Dr Bakhtiar. So the story brings forth the pain of a brother who lost his elder brother for his country’s pride and also shows how this pride becomes a reason of his hate of ragheads .

“**Nocturne for a Blue Day**” has a melancholic tone portraying dejection in the life of a daughter, a wife due to (self centered) autistic father, husband or a successful musician. Jon is a successful musician who prefers music over his family relations. Fay, his daughter, criticizes her parents' conjugal life and criticizes that “her mother was buried in her whole life. She was a star pianist at the conservatory when they met, but dad always treated her as if she didn’t know anything about music” (WP 196). Her mother never argues for the treatment she receives

because she seeks peace at any cost. Jon disappointed his daughter by demoralizing her composition spirit saying, "...-a woman's place is in the kitchen, not in a symphony orchestra. And that was end of my (Fay's) composing" (WP 204). Unlike her mother, Fay is portrayed as an outspoken, straightforward liberal woman who cannot stand injustice. She rebels in her dissatisfying marriages and divorces to keep her soul satisfied instead of tolerating suppression rest of the life and living a life of the dead. Fay develops a wrong ideology from the observation of her parents' married life. The story reflects both sex discrimination and equality. The author criticizes the male dominated society's mentality which expects that women should complain neither for the basic rights, for the fair and equal treatment nor for the discrimination and exploitation. And then women keep on fighting with their own created and accepted Pakistan in the patriarchal structure which is no less than the trauma of partition.

"**The Distance Between Us**", the longest story in this collection is a "reaffirmation of a father-daughter relationship" (Singh 1). Karanbir Singh, a Sikh professor in the US, strikes a marriage deal for two years for a green card. Many years later, a mail from a woman claiming to be his daughter has him unsettled. He allows her to come visiting him and soon the word father takes root somewhere at the base of his spine. She can't relate to most of him, but a common thread tugs at their heart. Racism, fear of losing everything and blood ties help forge a bond which won't lose itself even as his daughter boards a train to return home. The author delineates that in USA marriage of convenience is a common phenomenon. Likewise, Karanbir Singh makes a contract marriage with a German Rita Ginther for green card and after two years of contract both of them gets separated forever because Rita "never wanted a husband for life" (WP 212). Their marriage was a "transaction, for god's sake. Just a transaction" (WP 210). Dr Karanbir Singh is a displaced Sikh living as a resident alien in California and supports himself against isolation in email communication with his extended family in India. Like so many immigrants Karanbir Singh, "only a faculty member with turban and beard" (WP 219) migrates to America for "economic freedom, intellectual freedom" (WP 232-233). His grandfather shifted to Delhi after Partition. Karan compares everything with his homeland. Karan's struggle to make his home and carve out a better life in a place where he is faced every day with racist slurs, with interviews with Homeland Security; with the desecration of his property and the ongoing threat of violence for being a man with turban. He becomes a victim of racism number of times as people mistake him for a Muslim. After 9/11 he has very bad times. He sat alone in a cell for five days. In another incident a man asks him "go home, Bin Laden!" (WP 221). But his fears make sense after racists' burn down his home and he is left without ID:

Boundaries of skin and time fall to thin lines. His eyes burn and
tear. He is on fire as his home burns (WP 253).

Karan had also been investigated for having visited Pakistan once with his ailing mother who had been born in Multan and wanted to see her birthplace before her death.

While on the way back from the beach on that Sunday, Karan and Uma are horrified to see his house gutted due to a malicious arson attack. All his clothes, books and papers, including his passport, have been destroyed in the fire and Karan is both homeless and stateless. Fire evokes all kinds of memories and brings both the father and daughter closer together. Two days later, Karan drives Uma to the train station for her return journey and then comes back to the car park to drive home his old white Toyota. It has been stolen, but he does not want to report it to the police to avoid new complications.

The story also has a bright side: his burning home brings his daughter Uma closer to him. Uma "comes up, hands him his besmirched white turban" (WP 254). Karan's story of past and his

culture brings his daughter close to his Indian heritage. She has “figured out how to wash and fold a turban” (WP 257). Uma Ginther “Indian and German” (WP 211) is his daughter from his green card marriage with Rita Ginther. Uma learns from her father about his religion and homeland. Baldwin compares two generations- on one side Karanbir Singh who because of his identity suffers a lot and on the other side Uma- the American creed who “cannot be deported” (WP 233). So she is unable to understand the fear of living without roots. The story asserts that understanding, compassion, trust and faith develop an unbreakable bond in persons to which physical differences, distances can never affect. It portrays the meaning of relationships in the first world America and cultural difference.

Conclusion

We Are Not in Pakistan tends to be oriented toward themes of power and oppression in a postmodern context. Baldwin overtly and unapologetically takes on themes of terrorism, racism and alienation on a variety of levels: socio-cultural, political, and psychological levels. The subaltern characters in the stories find themselves in a range of geopolitical settings and in a variety of psychologically unsettling circumstances similar to the partition times. The stories discuss how immigrants cope with their new environments and experience the same sense of dislocation and displacement, but for different reasons, to different extents, and consequently evolve different methods of coping. She effectively portrays that immigrants take efforts to stick obstacle and cause for humiliation in their professional and social life in a foreign land. Stories like “Naina,” “Devika” and “The Night of the Leonids” ends in a triumphant celebration, reclamation and repositioning of the silenced and marginalized women and envisage an enlightened feminist future. Baldwin offers not only a perspective on history, by tackling the concerns of the Sikhs and the diasporics and the treatment of the Sikhs in Diaspora, but also touches upon the major events recorded in mainstream history, casting on them a light different from what would find itself as the version that is recorded in official documents. For example “The View from the Mountain” deals with Ted Grand, an American, who had served in the war, who sets up a hotel in Costa Rica, becoming a part of the place and its people, till he hears the news of the 9/11 attacks, which reveals a different side of him – from being a jovial and outgoing person to becoming a fanatic. There are some stories which highlights the trauma of 9/11 and show how an attack change the status of immigrants from American citizens to terrorists similar to the extremists during partition. The author has effectively weaved in the stories- the post 9/11 Islamo phobia, hate attacks, U. S. government’s hypocritical revengeful attitude affecting innocent civilians’ and immigrants’ life. The author speaks about numerous unknown detentions, domestic attacks on immigrants and immigrant families’ in dreadful conditions. They are multi-cultural people who, like Willa Cather’s pioneer immigrants, are struggling against the regimented forces of official and private dehumanisation and in the process seek strength from their own inner humanity and traditional values. These might be tragic characters but they are valiant, sober and resolute people in a modern world, which is often callous and too exacting.

Shauna Singh Baldwin’s writing has distinctive flavor even though she occupies intersectional space. Reflecting upon the issues that concern women and their treatment her stories deal sensitively with their emotions, dilemmas, perspectives, points of view, concerns, treatment and their portrayal, whether it is the form of tackling their regular chores, like washing a turban, which pose their own challenges in a foreign land, given the lack of space to dry the turban or even wash a sari or more serious adjustments they have to make by changing their lifestyle In fact, her characters either emerge from the situation as better individuals, like

Kathleen in “We Are Not in Pakistan” and Larry from “This Raghead” who from a cynical approach to all those who are not pure whites. Her engaging and enlightening prose explores the daily realities affected by horrific events in the life of estranged characters. But human strife for survival and assimilation of culture, region, language, religion, and race always supersedes to build a harmonious world in her oeuvre of short fiction.

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