Diasporic Study in Uma Parameswaran's *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees*

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Abstract

Many people in India are migrating from their homeland to various parts of the world and face many diasporic problems. Most of people express are their experience of being immigrants. A few express through words and art form. One among them is Uma Parameswaran through her creative writing created a special place in literature. She was born in Chennai and brought up in Jabalpur and Nagpur. Later, she moved to Canada. Her first-hand experience as immigrants is reflected in her work *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1998). This play expresses the difficulties faced by emigrants in their host land. The characters in the play has divided into two different issues, the one set is trying to adopt migration. The second set are trying to mingle with the native people in the host land. This paper tries to make an attempt to study the portrayal of diaspora in Uma Parameswaran`s *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees*.

Key words: diaspora, rootlessness, alienation.

Migration began long before the dawn of civilization. In search of food and shelter man began to move from place to place to develop civilization. The first step became successful by leading a nomadic life style which ended up in forming of towns and cities. Later, man improved from the lifestyle of hunting animals for food and cutting down trees for their survival. Man reached the final stage in migration whose goals were search of knowledge, material gains, racial and religious oppressions leading to, imperialism through military conquest and so on. There by the Diasporas came into existence.

There are many Indian diasporic writers who expose their diasporic issues in the form of a novel. They received name and fame with their creative writing expressing their longing

for their homeland from an alien land. Their experiences in the host land and their sensibility with which they react to the circumstances is remarkable. However, few writers tried their talents in exploring the dramatic representation of Diasporic peoples' problems. Uma Parmeswaran is also one of the prodigious talents among these writers. She is born in Chennai and brought up in the cities of India like Nagpur and Jabalpur. She migrates to United States for her higher education in 1963 which offers her first-hand experience of a Diasporic individual. Being the resident of Winnipeg and an immigrant, she tries to explore the sense and sensibility of the Diasporic people in her creative writing which becomes a huge success in her career

Uma Parameshwaran divided the play *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* (1987) into three acts which uncovers the feelings of rootlessness, alienation, search for better future and feel their problem of assimilation in the host land. Indian emigrants search for their identity and identity crises. It analyses in different perspective which relate to the personal experience of individual. The distinctive formation of identities and their preservation are consequences of survival instincts are a perennial problem for the immigrants from time immemorial. They feel that they are a dis placed race.This is a domestic play which focuses the diasporic feelings and experiences of Bhave and Moghe family. The plot of the play moves from Winnipeg to Fort Richmond and again back. Bhave family comprises of five members: Sharad, the father, Savitri, the mother, Jayant and Jyothi are the grown-up children and Krish is young . Jyothi falls in love with Andre, a white boy. The displacement of Moghe and Bhave family changes the life of all the members. The feeling of rootlessness is very dominant in these members. It minutely notes the effect of rootlessness among the characters of the play.

A chronological study of Uma Parmeswaran's works reflects their recent reality issues faced by emigrants in the host land. The feeling of alienation is very dominant in the character of Sharad. He worked as a scientist in Trombay, India.Because of the dirty politics in the institute he resigns his job and migrates to Winnipeg. Unemployment makes him alienated feel and the situation around him turned worst in Winnipeg. He becomes an estate

broker after his displacement to Winnipeg. He feels uncomfortable in the host country thoroughly, he reveals his alienation as:

> "It upsets me profoundly to find myself in a crowd. All those alien faces staring at… who are these faceless people among whom my life is oozing away? Each so self-contained, so complete, look at me as though I shouldn't be there" (82).

Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees is the symbolic play by Uma Parameswaran. Critics states that *Mangoes on the Maple Tree*, the novel is the extension of the play - *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees.* Uma Paramewaran used symbolization as a technique to highlight difficulties faced by emigrants like the desires, efforts and pains of the immigrants. Sarad feels rootlessness, in the next generation but fails to instill their native culture. Jayant is trying to convince his father:

> Jayant: Our people, our old country. Dad there's no our people and no old country for anyone in the world anymore. Least of all for us. This is our land and here we shall stay.
>
> Sharad: Roots, son, roots. Can we really grow roots here?
>
> Jayant: Sure Dad. (34)

There is a bitter argument between Jayant and Sarad, his father. Jayant feels comfortable in the host land, as he grew up in it. Sarad misunderstood his feelings. It results in high contestation. Sarad feels that roots cannot grow elsewhere. Roots can adopt but can't grow in host land. Sarad cannot understand the reality. The emigrants from the native chopped the roots. Even those roots cannot grow in the native land as same.

> JAYANT: opines that our people, our old country.
>
> Dad: There's no 'our people' and 'Our country' for anyone in the world anymore, at least all for us. This is our land and here we shall stay. When the

> father distressingly points out the absence of roots, the son assures him that they can grow roots in their adopted land
>
> JAYANT: Sure, Dad, just look outside. The monstrous new apartment block out there – they have twenty-foot trees around the patio and there five footers inside the quadrangle, all set up overnight and flourishing like crazy.
>
> VITHAL: If the temp. Goes up to zero degrees midweek, as they expect, that would be the end of that (He waves at the tree)
>
> JAYANT: so, what? (Vehemently) what does it matter how long it stands? The point is that it is there, beautiful and green for the length of its life? A day, a hundred thousand days, it is a question of what we do and are, during that time. (54)

Sharad's character exhibits the feeling of rootlessness in an intense manner. He asks his son Jayant, "Can we really grow roots here?". This reveals his dilemma that being the migrants they are undergoing many problems and he is not sure of his existence in the host land. But in the next few pages of the play he appears quite optimistic and he cites the example of banana tree which multiplies its roots in the ground and rears the young one in its shade. Dilip asks Vithal, the son of the Moghe family that they have to change according to the modern manners and the life style of the host land. Dilip's attitude is to assimilate thoroughly with the host culture. "… this is your country, the only land you know… you have to try to assimilate …The whites would appreciate that effort" (97). However, Vithal is not of the same opinion. He thinks that the whites don't allow the immigrants to assimilate with them. They don't want to assimilate. "They want us out… They've never wanted us and now we are a threat … we have to stay separate from them that we have as much right to be here as the pissed-off whites … We've got to stay apart, stay together" (98). The above quote highlights the predicament of the Diasporic people in the host land. The basic problem of assimilation makes them restless and insecure.

In the present play she focuses on the transformation of characters from a Diasporic being to the reconciled member of an ethnic group in the host land. The immigrants have to flourish in the host land though they have not all their roots in the new land. They have to accept the new land and their ideology being the residents. Thus, *Rootless but Green are the Boulevard Trees* is the play which throws light on the Diasporic sensibility of the immigrant characters. It basically highlights the feeling of rootlessness, alienation, and the search for better future and assimilation.

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