

Riddance of Societal and Humane Ethics in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*

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Abstract- Women in the recent decade earning their equal rights and position as men and moreover people speak of women empowerment. However, which is still interrogated as it is not achieved the purpose on their lives. The reason is women are inferior and comparatively accused for characters, physical appearance and primarily to the economically degradations. They are forced to do many works which society will look down upon them. It is even difficult for a single parent for taking care of their child, giving proper food and education. Similarly, the aforementioned insights are highlighted in Rachel Kushner's *The Mars Room*. Rachel Kushner was in born 1968 and is an American writer, known for her novels *Telex from Cuba* (2008), *The Flamethrowers* (2013), and *The Mars Room* (2018). Kushner is famous for her debut novel *Flamethrowers*. She mainly focuses on the struggle of women and bring out their problems to the world. This paper throws light on how the protagonist Mrs. Romy Leslie Hall encounters hardships in women's jail in the central valley to serve two consecutive lifetime term. The paper also delineates the shades of deprivation, and suffering and her life as a bar dancer and its repercussions to fall as the victim of poverty and negligence of rights.

Indexed Terms- Rachel Kushner, *The Mars Room*, Poverty, Struggle, Economy, Single Mother, Labour

I. INTRODUCTION

Women encounter countless predicaments amidst patriarchal society where they are not treated with elementary esteem. Rachel Kushner (1968 -) is a well-known American writer in her novel *The Mars Room*, she handles the similar ideas and highlights the thrones that women experience as a part of their walk of life. She was famous for her works (novels)

Telex From Cuba (2008), *The Flamethrowers*(2013), and *The Mars Room*(2018). She is well-known as an essayist and novelist. Mainly her works deal with suffering of women and their pathetic condition all around the world. *The Mars Room*, delineates with the personal interactions with the prisoners, their life, the struggles they encounter, and how society treat them. These personal interactions helped Kushner to write the novel *The Mars Room*. She always gives priority to women and their suffering in her novels. *The Mars Room*, speaks about the life of a twenty-nine-year-old Romy Hall who was serving two consecutive life sentences at Stanville Women's Correction Facility in California.

Romy spends her adolescence in San Francisco by drinking and stealing, and she was raised as a bar dancer for a living. When a regular customer start stalking for her resistance, she is forced to murder him. But more than a murder, nobody is there to notice her side. Nobody is able to do this but she makes that murder for self-defence rather than a motive of killing him. While she was arrested by the police, she was forced to leave her five-year-old child, and he was taken care of by her mother. Kushner highlighted her protagonist as a unique and different persona throughout the novel. The novel never makes readers fear or sensationalize, the novel is guiding readers with a sure and sophisticated hand from Romy's past to the darkest recesses of the prison. In the following lines Romy explains the role of poverty in the life of prisoners:

I realized that the girlfriend experience was not my thing. I would stick to hustling my income as a lap dancer at The Mars Room on Market Street. I don't care what was honest work, only what wasn't repulsive to me, I knew from lap dancing that grinding was easier than talking. *The Mars Room*(8)

Women in America even today go through gender bias, which still has been considered a significant obstacle. There are issues to be resolved still, such as ensuring equitable opportunities and ending gender-based violence. *The Mars Room* (2018) is a Psychological-Crime fiction that takes place in America. This mainly draws the life of the Protagonist Romy Hall, her life, and the difficulties women face in society. Witnessing the life and struggle of women prisoners destined Rachel Kushner to write this novel *The Mars Room*. Here the readers see how poverty hones their life. *The Mars Room* the title refers to the Strip club where Romy worked as a Bar Dancer. She knows pretty well that she cannot do anything which advances her life because of a girlfriend's duty. The only way she can survive her life is through the revenue from lap dancing at *The Mars Room*. Thus, she realizes that honest never creates path for her survival as well as for her earnings. Her main aim is to earn money for her living. In the following lines, Romy the protagonist speaks about how they collect the materials or clothes they required for their profession:

Eva was professional. One of those girls who always had a lighter, bottle opener, graffiti markers, flask, amyl nitrate, Buck knife, even her own sensor remover-the device that department store clerks used to remove theft prevention clips from new clothes. She stole it. The rest of us ripped out the sensors forcibly before leaving the store with our stolen loot. (38)

Eva, is another woman who is identical to the protagonist Romy Hall. Romy is explaining the status of other women who are imprisoned. They are stealing and gather clothes for their requirements in different stores as a group. The shopkeepers place sensors on the dress for identification, but they have a variety of tools to remove it. Eva stole the sensor remover from the store and used it to remove the sensors. The Remaining women forcefully remove the sensors and flee the stores with the stolen goods. Here she is making a differentiation between the rich and poor on a monetary basis:

We were not Kleptomaniacs. That's a term for rich people who steal by compulsion. we were

finding innovative ways to acquire makeup and perfume and purses and cloths-all the normal things a girl would be expected to have and want, and which we could not afford. (38)

She is explaining that for stealing things they are not figured as kleptomaniacs. That is deceased for rich people even poor people with kleptomania who steal things are called robbers or they are punished by the society and court. The term Kleptomaniac only suits for rich and people who are higher in society. Here they are stealing only for their needs and living. Even for meeting up their basic needs, the amount is not enough for them even to have a full day meal and experience the difficult part of their life. Cosmetics became part of their daily life; those are not affordable to them and they attempt to obtain them by devising new methods of stealing. The meager earning from their job is insufficient to maintain a sustainable living. The following deals with the odd works and what they do for money for sustenance:

Worked is a bit strong. We served ice cream and dirt punch in all the sales on the register, took the stolen profits at the end of the night when we tallied our drawers. We hit the nitrous oxide tank that was used to fill whipped cream canisters. (45)

She explains other than working at night clubs what she and other women do for money. Some nights initiatively they work hard, there are some ironies behind the hard work. They serve ice cream but would not register it while billing. They earn their sustenance in this way when they do not have work. The stolen profits are distributed equally among all at the end of the night, but first, they must ensure that the accounts are corrected to avoid being caught. The readers can see how the money plays an important role in human life:

"I could give you money for a taxi?" "really" I asked Hopefully. The rain was soaking me. He said he would be happy to help me and we should go to his hotel, and then he would. He would be happy to help me, but we should first go up to his room and have a drink. (27)

This paper shows how women are constantly utilized and criticised. Everywhere Romy is exploited, for instance her pitiful condition as a bar dancer to win bread for her living is discussed. One night Romy gets stuck in a place where she is helpless. It is a heavy rainy night and she is completely soaked in rain. A man came to help her and offered her money initially. She is surprised and overjoyed that somebody who is extremely a stranger to her came forward to offer her help before seeking help from him. In fact, he made a condition she has to be her girlfriend for the next hour. He wants Romy to accompany him to a hotel in order to spend time with him and make him happy. Here Kushner emphasis how money plays a vital role for survival, and also throws light on her helplessness which leads her to this profession. The deprived state of Romy portrays her as a scapegoat which many utilise. The struggle for living in Romy's life has been explained and how the lack of education changes their life from others. The readers will be able to understand about the how the lack of education can ruin the life:

If the students could learn to think well, to enjoy reading books, some part of them would be uncaged. That was what Gordon Hauser told himself, and what he told them, too. But there were days, like when one women walked into the prison classroom. (49)

The protagonist explains how lack of education affects people's lives. They do not have enough money to address their immediate requirements. Even a full day's worth of food is out of reach for them. This condition continues from generation to generation, even children are uninterested in learning and are unaware of the value of education. The only thing that matters to them is money, and they are willing to do anything for it. She claims that if children are educated, society's thinking would change. They can live freely in society, and everyone will respect and accept them. They can earn a living in a conventional manner. Gordon Hauser one of the prison guards told them that if they were educated, they would not be in such a bad situation. They would lead a better life and more social standing.

There are issues to be resolved still, such as ensuring equitable access to economic and educational

opportunities and ending gender biased violence. Kushner's protagonist Romy, in *The Mars Room* is raised by her divorced, opioid-dependent mother in the sunset neighbourhood of San Francisco. After being sexually raped at the age of 11, she developed as a drug addict and was forced to perform sex act as an adult. To put in another way Romy had a challenging and complicated existence that required her to adapt and figure how to survive.

The paper indicates how people from the economy weak are handled. It also encompasses the significant insights such as unrecognised niche of value of education and people owing to lack of knowledge. Especially, how women are criticized or harassed. Women's illiteracy causes them to be the poorest of the poor. Another aspect that haunts them is gender discrimination. Lack of education pushes the feminine gender in a different direction, where they may encounter haunting hands rather than helping hands. The dark side of girl's life will not get to an end. The only way to influence society is to educate oneself. Make the girl child go to school. This paper deals with the reality how to make the readers understand about how the education plays an important role and how the lack of education changes the life and also focuses on the denial of societal and humane esteem for women in society is portrayed.

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