

An Exhaustive Study of the Radical Democracy in Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*

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Abstract:

The multiple threads of radical democracy depicted in the select book has given a new template or new facet to the governmental system of the world. The present research paper attempts to explore and exhaustively study the threads of radical democracy in Robinson's *Red Mars*. The present novel under study carries several defining factors of utopian and radical democratic government where human being, ecology and every essential aspect are plugged with needy transformations in the society. How human being is being interfaced seamlessly with every aspect like environment of the world is the nucleus of radical democracy. Multiple voices of an interface of human beings and other every essential factor is explored with the study of Robinson's utopian book *Red Mas*.

Key Words: democracy, radical democracy, utopia, inclusive, participatory.

Now-a-days equality and freedom are considered as key terms in democracy. Inclusive growth is a significant process in the trajectory of democracy. In order to bring about social change in the governmental system, there is a need of some key strategies to expand the dimension of democracy. There is an utmost need of having deep study of the various roots of democracy. In view of various types of oppression and suppression of gender, race, class, creed or personal views in the current society across the world, there is a need of radical democracy in the present world. There is a need to throw light on the oppression and suppression in the society. There are several movements dedicated to the building of radical democracy. There are several contemporary practices which embody radical democracy in the world where equal and free participation of people in power is the prime objective.

The subversion of hegemonic struggle to politicize society is possible with the help of radical democracy. Denial of contestation and elimination of conflict are prime points in the radical democracy. There is a need of some significant steps for effective institutionalization of radical democracy as Barnett and Low defines the term in *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography* "However, the term is better used to describe a broad variety of approaches that emphasize the inclusive, participatory, and contestatory qualities of democratic politics." (Barnett and Low, 1996, 233) Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in the book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985) explicate the emergence of radical democracy after aftermath of 1968 protests. The term 'Radical Democracy' is explicated by C. Mouffe in *Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?* as "Radical democracy", actually means 'radical liberal democracy'; that is, a radicalisation, democratisation, and deepening of the type of political regime already characteristic of the modern West, a project that does not seek to 'create a completely different kind of society', but rather attempts to make use of 'the symbolic resources of the liberal democratic tradition.' (Mouffe, 1996: p.20) William Burling explicates that the concept of radical democracy advocated by Laclau and Mouffe has roots in the Italian scholar Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'Hegemony'. Heterogeneous reflections are taken into consideration in radical democracy, so it embraces the politics of contestation. Diverse struggle movements, aspiration with respect to the state power and the views towards the global level of power are some critical points to differ the changing dimensions of the radical feminism. Laclau and Mouffe have focused on the concept of socialism and comment "socialism is one of the components of a project for radical democracy," (Laclau and Mouffe, 1996: p.178) Here socialism is considered as a

significant concept in the process of radical governmental system. The views presented by Laclau and Mouffe are summarised by William J. Burling as “they argue that a political process liberated from teleological assumptions allows, even enables, socialistic struggle to advance, and that the process itself can be one of the most empowering dimensions of a truly radical democracy.”(Burling, p.77) Here the separation and liberation of political system from any teleological assumptions strengthens socialistic perspective for empowering radical democracy.

Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Mars Trilogy* carries some threads of radical democratic government. The trilogy depicts a radical democratic system which is free of capitalist exploitation. Robinson’s *Mars Trilogy* is a promising book on utopian vision. The democratic system is restructured and redefined in the present book. Here we see the substitute governmental system to the Earth’s political system as William J. Burling in his “The Theoretical Foundation of Utopian Radical Democracy in Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Blue Mars*” remarks “Robinson depicts in detail the establishment and development of what becomes a clear alternative to Earth’s political and environmental quagmire, as the ever-increasing population of Martian colonists slowly formulates a radically new and empowering sense of politics.”(Burling, 2005: p.75) Jeremy Smith in his talk with Kim Stanley Robinson in the interview writes about Robinson’s views on the governmental system. The opinion and view of Kim Stanley Robinson on his utopian strand in the political system in his *Mars Trilogy* is referred by William J. Burling as ““I consider my books to be a political work.... There’s got to be a Utopian strand, there’s gotta be positive stories. You can criticize over and over again, but it also helps to have some vision of what should happen” (Smith).”(Burling, 2005: p.75) Robinson’s *Blue Mars*, one of the novels of trilogy, carries some threads of utopian and radical democratic system. From the opening of the novel, the fight against the Earth’s UN paramilitary forces with democratic spirit is seen among the Martians. This fight for right is not an overnight journey as Burling comments “The Martians have experienced a long history of progressive democratic process and have always enjoyed significant though not exclusive autonomy,”(Burling, 2005:p.78) Martians attempt to make the Martian government and administration system as a role model for the earthlings. This model is easier for comprehension as Nadia Chernyshevski, the first president of the autonomous Martian government comments “a small-scale model. Easier to understand.”(Robinson, 1996: p.148) Martian government highly rests on ideal and utopian foundations as William Burling remarks “One of the more promising literary Utopias in recent years to offer a close and careful reconsideration of how the democratic political process might be redefined and thus revitalized is Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Mars trilogy*”(Burling, 75) The surpassing political vision adopted by the Martian is appreciated by Frederic Jameson. Various strategies and treaties are formed for security and sovereignty of the Mars. Equality principle was highly considered in the formation of Martian constitution as William Burling remarks “In short, on Mars the citizens have the opportunity and the means to advocate for their own positions in a context of relative respect. This situation,...represents the possibilities of the radical democratic process as a site for personal and group empowerment.”(Burling, 82-83). Here William Burling explicates how the Martian citizens and every individual are being empowered in the radical democratic process. Sax Russell focuses on the sovereignty of Mars as he claims “no country can claim land on Mars, no military activities are allowed, and all bases are open to inspection by any country. Also no Martian resources can become the property of a single nation—the UN is supposed to establish an international regime to govern any mining or other exploitation.”(Red Mars, 87) *Dorsa Brevia* is a significant document for the Martian government. The *Dorsa Brevia* is a declaration in regard with the semiautonomous, free and sovereign position of the Mars government as William Burling

comments“...the Dorsa Brevia document, a kind of Martian political manifesto, produced many years earlier during a previous period of democratic struggle.”(Burling, 82) The Dorsa Brevia declaration incorporated the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures, fundamental rights, ethical values, healthy relations and human values. To sum up, finally there is a radical as well as utopian democracy on the Mars in the 22nd century with prime focus on the sovereignty, autonomy and egalitarian principle. On Mars, people have freedom and opportunity to have their own radical views as William Burling writes “On the Mars the citizens have the opportunity and the means to advocate for their own positions in a context of relative respect. This situation, though far from free of problems, nevertheless represents the possibilities of the radical democratic process as a site for personal and group empowerment.”(Burling, 2005: p. 83)Here radical democracy boosts the empowerment of individual and group development.

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