

Poetics of Dystopian amidst Female Subjugation in *Blue Ticket* by Sophie Mackintosh

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ABSTRACT: *Females from the ancient till the postmodern times are confined in myriad roles which are circumscribed by the chauvinistic society. The multifaceted roles which are assigned to the females vary from culture to culture. In the postmodern arena, different canvases have been used to illuminate the voices of the females in different fabrics of the societies and one of the narratives is dystopian narrative that amalgamates the voice of the females in a very idiosyncratic way under the postmodern lens. The aim of this research appear is to bring into limelight the celebrated novel Blue Ticket by Sophie Mackintosh, published in 2020, that portrays that women's lives are destined by the lottery machine that give each female either a white or a blue ticket. White ticket females can cherish the family life and they can experience the feeling of motherhood. On the contrary, blue ticket females are ostracized to have family life and can lead a free life which is coloured with taking drugs and having relations with different men. It takes us on the journey of the female character Calla who received the blue ticket, was utterly crushed and exploited by the society. The research would be qualitative and exploratory in nature focusing on the method of textual analysis of the Blue Ticket. As the thematic and stylistic concern is feministic in nature, hence Objectification Theory by Fredrickson and Roberts has been used which is closely interwoven in the literary matrix of the novel that how females have been dehumanized in the wide social spectrum. The discussion is also synergized by the critical trajectory of 'body and space' by Elizabeth Grosz to cultivate more critical appeal to the discussion. Moreover, this research would be a fruitful attempt as it illuminates the bleak aspect of contemporary society. The novel is exquisitely interwoven into the dystopian narrative and questioned the power structures of the society like female oppression, circumscribed role of females and ownership of female body.*

Keywords: Objectification Theory, Dystopian Narrative, Women Subjugation, Body and space, Bodily choices.

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Introduction

I am a garden of black and red agonies. I drink them,
Hating myself, hating and fearing. And now the world conceives
Its end and runs toward it, arms held out in love.
It is a love of death that sickens everything.
A dead sun stains the newsprint. It is red.

I lose life after life. The dark earth drinks them (Hughes 180-181)

The above poetic excerpt has been extracted from the poem titled *Three Woman: A Poem form for Three Voices*, written by Sylvia Plath. The poem illustrates that the roles of the females are jeopardized by the society where their existence is reduced to an object. The poem represents the zeitgeist of that particular society but it resonates with the argument of my paper in the arena of British dystopian novel titled *Blue Ticket* where society is also presented as 'dark earth' and the patriarchal structures or institutions assert their dominance on the female choices.

It is an undeniable reality that the contemporary culture is the nexus of diverse spectrums: technological, social, scientific and political that recurrently refashions our lens to perceive this ubiquitous term 'feminism' (Schmeink 20). Every society has set benchmark motifs that describe the domestic and public roles of the females. But in both the roles, females have undergone into intense traumatic state of mind. Plethora of the articles, books and researches have been done in the past that elucidates the fluctuating dynamics of the females in their prescribed role. They are unable to celebrate individuality even they are given free choices, they always encountered dark experiences because of their gender. The same issue has been highlighted by one of the recent writers Sophie Mackintosh in her recent novel *Blue Ticket* which was published in 2020. The title of the novel coupled with the inner dynamics has a tinge of dystopian narrative that truly speaks about the exploitation of the females in the contemporary society. The novel has a mesmerizing ambiance and filled with animated energy in the delineation of the overall mood of the novel.

Before probing to the critical discussion, let me add the comprehensive literary snapshot of my selected novel titled *Blue Ticket*. The novel has been divided into six chapters followed by an epilogue. The names of the chapters include: Lottery, Home, Road, Cabin, Beach and Border. Every chapter gives us the detail dynamics of the blue ticket women who are perceived as an object and at the same time it shows the callous outlook

of the patriarchal setup. The name of the first chapter ‘Lottery’ is quite significant. The word, on a general note, is associated with luck of any person but here Mackintosh has interwoven the dystopian narrative and the word symbolizes that the luck of any female is determined by the lottery machine. The dystopian symbol ‘lottery’ represents the outer society that they define the role of the females.

In order to navigate the rich tapestry of the present debate, the research is exploratory in nature as it probes into the bleak reality by portraying that the roles of the females are circumscribed by the society through the dystopian symbol of lottery machine. The aim of this research paper is to bring into limelight that the females are cocooned as their destiny is determined by the lottery machine which gives either a white or blue ticket to different females. Their sphere and role is circumscribed by the society and they cannot embrace their own individuality as per their own choice. As a result, a social message is embedded in the dystopian narrative in a unique way (Gottlieb 15). White ticket females experienced the docile motherhood role. On the contrary, blue ticket females have freedom to taste the world in their own way but even in this free choice they have been molested and experience mental repercussion.

Following Objectification theory by Barbara Fredrickson and Tome-Ann Roberts from the seminal work *Objectification Theory, Self-Objectification, and Body Image* (2012), this research paper gives voice to bifurcation: it not only illuminates blue ticket females as an objects but it also amplifies their voices of resistance in the dystopian narrative that they need familial fabric to get themselves completed instead of free-will or open choices which the society has imposed on them. Female bodies act as tangible geographical space where the outer structures of the society, particularly patriarchy assert their dominant role (Rodaway1). My discussion is also synergized with the theoretical underpinning of ‘body and space’ by Elizabeth Grosz in order to navigate the mosaic of fragile space of the female character named Calla where her fractured individuality tries to reconcile meaning in the social reality. The critical paradigm vociferously highlights that the matrix of body and space is complex and “it is site of contestation in a series of economic, sexual, political and intellectual struggle (Grosz 19). Within the mobile space, the social and psychic mobility gets halted in the postmodern world (Adey1). My essay also gives critical and aesthetic space to different dystopian symbols like clinic, lottery machine, compass, mirror, and bottle to give emphatic texture of the debate. Let us take a brief literary

snapshot of the wide range of scholarship in the realm of dystopian fiction before navigating the textual engagement with the critical underpinnings.

The term Dystopian narrative is ubiquitous in postmodern scenario and different critics harmonize their concern on this motif that it is a gateway to an imaginary dream like world where all the obnoxious realities of the outer world gets opened in a literal way. According to Suvin, it creates an imaginary space where the writer makes the reader enter through the grotesque landscapes of the world (Bell & Ryan 228). For Ryan, it is a literary typology that accelerates the grave issues of the society in an aesthetic way and it is the perfect genre for the articulation of dark reality of any society (Bell & Ryan 231). In a similar vein, Le Guin argued that dystopian narrative also functions as a trope of resistance as well from the dark fractured society (Moynan and Baccolini 124). In the novel *Blue Ticket*, we can also see the dream like dystopian narrative has a tinge of resistance as well because the main protagonist Calla wanted to transgress the boundaries of the social world. The dystopian narrative amplifies the struggles of the characters and it jells with the thematic matrix of the novel *Blue Ticket* (Claeys 156). Dystopian genre is giving creative space to the notion of liquid modernity, as voiced by Bauman where the old methods of representation are being contested and have given new creative and aesthetic space in the postmodern world. Furthermore, dystopian literature is the epitome of creative intervention to the central socio-political discourse that is negotiated in the society (Schmeink 65).

At the heart of dystopian fiction, the issue of representation holds paramount signification. There is always a struggle of representation and the word 'dystopia' has gained momentum in the twenty first century in the articulation of our fears and anxieties about the future (Stock 2). Dystopian fiction comes under the category of speculative fiction. It provides a liminal space to view past, present and future (Stock 9). The book titled *New Perspectives on Dystopian Fiction in Literature and Other Media*, edited by Saija Isomaa, Jyrki Korpua and Jouni Teittinen asserted that dystopian fiction is flexible and proliferates into other mediums like dystopian films, disaster fiction, digital games, anthropocene fiction and graphic novels (xiv). Popular dystopian authors from world literature include Margaret Atwood, Suzanne Collins and Veronica Roth have gained prestigious acclaim. This genre is popular among young adults especially in the realm of dystopian films like *The Maze Runner*, *Divergent* and *The Hunger Games* (Han, Triplett and Anthony 2).

Cold War Stories: British Dystopian Fiction, 1945-1990, by Andrew Hammond suggests that dystopian fiction got flourished in 1940's because it provides unique and critical space in the articulation of shared anxieties in different forms. Erika Gotlieb points out that this particular genre pinpoints the 'strong sense of interconnectedness' at cultural level (Hammond 8). By the turn of the century, dystopian fiction has entered into 'cli-fi', or eco-dystopia where the struggle of nature has been shown in artificial and natural forms. It addresses the issue of climate change and its consequences on the planet. This mode cultivates planetary consciousness in the minds of the masses so that they contemplate about the loss of ecosystem and biodiversity (Hughes and Wheeler 2). Precisely speaking, Thomas More's *Utopia* set the tradition of dystopian fiction (Booker 337).

Dystopian writing gives contemplative space because it warns the society about the futuristic aspects so that readers can address the evils of the society (Zaki 244). An article titled *When Science Fiction Writers Used Fictional Drugs : Rise and Fall of Twentieth Century Drug Dystopia* voices a new critical concept of 'drug dystopia' that envisage the wrong use of medicines which are rampant in our society (Hickman 141). Moreover, it also gives space to gothic literature in presenting the bleak reality of society in different contours (Brantlinger 30). Last but not the least, dystopian fiction is also imbued with new critical and aesthetic orientations in the arena of posthumanism, cyborg and cyberpunk as voiced in the article titled *Bodies That Matter : Science Fiction, Technoculture and Gendered Body* by Kaye Mitchell (109).

In a nutshell, dystopian fiction is a rich contemporary genre and its manifestation can be seen vividly in world literature especially where the voices of the subaltern are suppressed in the case of Afro-American literature. The voice of the voiceless gets resounded in every part of the globe by the virtue of idiosyncratic appeal of dystopian genre (Tabone 291) Sophie Mackintosh is a British novelist and has won Betty Trask Award in 2019. She has nailed her literary excellence not only in novels but also in writing short stories and poetry. She has also won the *White Review Short Story Prize* and the *Virago/Stylist Short Story Competition*, and has been published in *Granta*, *The White Review* and *TANK magazine* among others. Her first debut novel *Water Cure* was published in 2018 and her fiction and essays are published by *New York Times*. The output of myriad literary achievements of her masterpieces gives a crystal clear image that she is a seasoned writer and her novels implicitly illuminates

how the females are perceived and maltreated by the chauvinistic society. Her second novel *Blue Ticket* is published in 2020 and the thematic narrative with a tinge of dystopian narrative really amplifies and brings our attention to the postmodern feministic scenario. The novel has intrinsic and extrinsic appeal in its true spirit. According to Mackintosh, her novel *Blue Ticket* serves as an engine of social change because she wanted to change the stereotypical attitude of the society.

In an interview with Avni Doshi, Sophie Mackintosh has illuminated her ideas about writing as an art and called the novel *Blue Ticket* as “Body Horror” (<https://granta.com/in-conversation-doshi-mackintosh/>). She has explained that women have confined spaces whether they received white or blue ticket by the lottery machine in the novel *Blue Ticket*. White ticket women have to go through the excruciating experience of giving birth to a child while blue ticket women have freedom to spend their life in their own way. But in the free world, they hardly find solace and all the time feels incomplete because of the vacuum of motherhood. Similarly in another interview with Nathania Gilson who is an Australian writer and editor, Mackintosh has expressed her concern that the language is even not sufficient to express the gruesome reality of postmodern feminist condition in its true spirit. We need wide varieties of language to articulate this grave concern which lies at the heart of every society but in different intensity. She further stated that her novel is not the product of imagination only rather during the lockdown she has watched certain movies that really pave the finishing touches of the novel (Gilson 2020).

Films cultivated a space for writing this particular novel *Blue Ticket*. For instance, she has watched *The Piano Teacher*, *The Lobster*, *Thelma and Louise* which invigorated new spirit in writing this novel. Moreover, Mackintosh also explains the process of art that it is not a conscious effort, in a sub conscious state with a sprinkle of imagination; she can better express her ideas with revised drafts (Gilson 2020). Giving voice to her personal literary sketch, she was enthralled by the uncanny writings having gothic motif. It remains a matter of fascination for the rest of Mackintosh’s life and cast an overwhelming influence on her literary writings. According to her, uncanny ambiance gives permission to the novelists to talk about the sheer reality of the physical world. In a similar vein, we can navigate the inner and outer reality of the social world by the dystopian narrative.

Geographer and historian David Lowenthal stated that landscape holds paramount significance because it refashions our concrete world and make sense of different relationships in different geographical spaces. Thus it creates a literary space that enhances not only the extrinsic appeal of any work but also the intrinsic appeal as well (Lewis 17). The book titled *Women's Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, edited by Sharon R. Wilson emphasizes that dystopian fiction is the contemporary genre that speaks of the past, present and future dilemmas of the society in wide range of aesthetic orientations (3). It brings into limelight the fractured segments of the society in its literal representation. According to Moylan, this particular genre of writing centers on the alienated protagonist who is oscillating between two entire different poles of subjugation (Lewis 19). Narrations and the method of representation has been changed in the contemporary scenario (Fenske and Norkunas 107). According to Susan Lanser, narrative strategies particularly dystopian narrative serves as the nexus of the thematic concern of any literary piece which the writer wants to highlight emphatically (Alber 4).

The novel *Blue Ticket* has vociferously highlighted the intricate pattern of men domination on the main female protagonist named Calla. This research paper brings this point to careful contemplation that even Calla received a blue ticket from the lottery machine which meant for freedom but she became the product of sheer subjugation at the hands of patriarchal community. The recurrent events at hotel motels, country sides, fox festival and travelling by bus gave us the graphic episodes that Calla has perceived as an object by various men in all these places and the status of the humanity reached the nadir point.

The preliminary lines of the novel take us to this fact that the roles of the females are circumscribed by the society. Sophie Mackintosh has written: "It began with the allocating of luck, our bodies pinballs inside a machine. It was the year of overlapping adolescences when the girls started to faint and grow tall" (9). It clearly illustrates that young females when they reached the age of their puberty, society defines their roles. Society has been given a dystopian symbol of 'clinic' where the directions of how to live a life has been ingrained on the walls of the clinic. One of the manifestos written on the wall of the clinic was "Be careful in your wanting" (Mackintosh 10). It gives this ambiance to the readers that every female has to be meticulous in her desires and the transgression from the defined desires will cast an overwhelming repercussion for the long run.

They cannot step out from the traditional binaries of the society. Clinic was the place where all the young girls were scrutinized properly by the doctor, staff nurses and all of them were waiting eagerly for their turn at the lottery machine whether they will receive a white or blue ticket. All those girls are also accompanied by their parents and upon receiving their ticket from the machine and careful examination from the doctor, they were sent to their parents. It illuminates that the parents are also helpless in this confined decorum and pressure from the society.

My discussion in this section is also guided by the concept of 'body and space' given by Elizabeth Grosz in her book *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. According to Grosz, "body is a site of contestation, in a series of economic, sexual, political and intellectual struggles (19). The novel aptly speaks about the journey of the main protagonist Calla how she has gone through different phases of adulthood. She was taken to the restaurant by her father and he told her that the future lies at the bottom of the wine bottle which she was unable to comprehend. On reaching the age of puberty, her father took her to the clinic where all the other girls along with their parents were waiting for their turn for medical examination and their ticket from the lottery machine. "The lottery station was lot like a clinic" (Mackintosh 14). Moreover, Calla witnessed bunch of girls in vibrant dresses and waiting eagerly for their turn as they were apprehensive about their luck or future. It is important to note that in this treatment of examination, girls were not seen with compassionate lens and they were treated with callous outlook as it has been mentioned in the novel as "We lined up, waiting to pull out the tickets from the machine ,the way you take your number at the butcher's counter"(Mackintosh 15). This textual episode corroborates with the critical underpinning of 'body and space' because Calla's body is subservient to the norms of the patriarchy and there is a vacuum of individual autonomy on her body. It restricts her own individual space and mobility (Grosz 19). Calla was quite apprehensive but she was ready to get her life decided by the machine (Mackintosh 15). In this rigorous process, all the girls got blue tickets except one girl who received a white ticket. "The other girls followed, each taking their own ticket from the machine in turn. Almost a full house! he exclaimed at the end, reading a piece of paper spat out from the machine. We huddled and compared tickets. They were all blue, except for one, which was white" (Mackintosh 15).

Later on, those girls were sent to their parents and they were given bottles and compass by the doctors. I contend that the dystopian motifs of

‘bottles’ and ‘compass’ elucidates the confined roles of the females dictated by the society as compass serves as an instrument for getting direction of some place. The writer has mentioned “The bottle given to the white-ticket girl was larger than ours” (Mackintosh 17). However, Calla and other girls who received blue ticket from the machine were directed to live a life of their own choice as they are free from domestic motherhood role unlike white ticket girls. “Go, the doctor said to us. To the place of your choice. Walk into it. Anywhere but here. Congratulations” (Mackintosh 17). From this line, the precarious journey of Calla started, that at every step of her life, she encountered dark experiences where she was perceived as an object and felt herself ostracized from the family life.

The melancholy of Calla also gets exacerbated when her mind was brimming up with the idea of annihilation and emptiness. She didn’t enjoy the social events and gatherings. She felt herself more annihilated in this free zone of life. She said “In practice, life felt smaller than that expansiveness promised” (Mackintosh 19). She observed all the vibrant activities of the people but she was put into her cocoon in the name of freedom because she said that choice is just an illusion, a figment of imagination (Mackintosh 20). The novel has a dream like quality where all the names of the main characters especially males are not given proper names by the writer like Doctor A and Doctor J. Similarly, another male character who perceived Calla as an object was given the name R. The structure of the novel is fragmented in the delineation of the characters but emphatic in terms of literary representation highlighting the maltreatment of Calla at the hands of the patriarchy. Thoughts of uprootedness and annihilation kept on lurking in her mind after getting the blue ticket. She expressed: “In its place came desires so alien that I could only assume they had been inside me for a long time, like splinters or shrapnel waiting to be pushed to the surface” (Mackintosh 22). She was completely engrossed in that vicious cycle of thinking that the world of independence and night club smoking areas cannot make her happy and she did not have any other option to alleviate her suffering (Mackintosh 23).

Eighteen years after the lottery, Calla spent her life in extreme depression as she was forcefully indulged in nefarious activities and has received dehumanizing titles from the society that crushed her serene state of mind. Although she was given freedom in the name of a blue ticket, but internally she craved for a family life and especially the feeling of motherhood. This novel gives this thought provoking dimension that no

matter free choices are given to women in the name of freedom_ world of independence but it is the intrinsic desire of every woman to be loved and get loved in the family fabric. Unfortunately, Calla was forbidden by the doctors in the clinic to go for this dimension as she did not get white ticket. She mentioned her state of mind as “For weeks there had been a new and dark feeling inside me. A strange, ravaging ghost that gave me recurrent headaches at my temples, and even dosing up with the extra tinctures prescribed by Doctor A” (Mackintosh 25).

At the heart of my discussion, dystopian motifs which are jelled in the narrative of the novel can never be overlooked because it elevates the critical aesthetics of the theoretical trajectories which I have integrated in my paper. Throughout the course of the novel, bathroom mirror has been used as a dystopian motif where Calla could revisit the dark reality once again, where she could reflect her daily activities that further augment her depression. She explained “If you were a blue –ticket your life could change at any time, you could make it change at any time, and we were alternately complacent and anxious about the possibilities contained within that freedom” (Mackintosh 29) Calla used to work in the laboratory and was indulged in drinking and smoking. She used to bite her nails that represent the canvas of her inner state of mind. She was forced to go for dark bottles of wine with her colleagues who were also enjoying the life of independence. On her way to home, she encountered a person who satiated his desire by having intimacy with Calla which immersed her into dark feeling. This was the first initial episode where she was perceived as an object by the society but in the later sections of the novel, the intensity gets aggravated and it further dismantled the state of mind of Calla. Consequently, this minor yet grave dark episode, her physical appearance was just like a mess and bitter pungent smell emanated from her mouth (Mackintosh 31).

Calla spent most of her time with R who is another male character in the *Blue Ticket* and has been not been given full name by Mackintosh. Calla was deeply engrossed in the world of blue ticket but the bathroom room recurrently gave the crunched outlook of her physical and mental state. Male character named R, treated Calla as an object, because she was just an appetite with no everlasting bond. This ephemeral enticement brought clouds of melancholy for Calla in her future life while holding blue ticket. She said: “I was a person with an appetite. Once or twice there was the threat of warmth, of connection, when he kissed the side of my head, and I didn’t want to like it, I knew liking it would bring its own problems

(Mackintosh 35). This fact cannot be overlooked that inside her heart, she craved for motherhood in every graphic episode which she encountered with the male character named R and other patriarchal characters whom she met in different destinations. She wanted to feel the sensation of a baby leg and for that she filled a sock with flour just to get an imaginative tactile touch (Mackintosh 35).

Ostracized from the role of changing her ticket from blue to white, she was reminded by Doctor A that she cannot change her destiny. I argue that the blue ticket has impinged confined role on Calla's body and her body becomes a "territory" as voiced by Grosz (23). This repetition of the confined role in the dystopian narrative of *Blue Ticket* augmented the precarious state of mind of Calla. She questioned the concept of motherhood from herself that intrinsic natural phenomenon cannot be halted (Mackintosh 36). She was grappling with the confined role of her ticket. She said: "There was no way to change your ticket" (Mackintosh 36). In the suburbs, she has seen mothers with their children in jovial spirits and those scenes fostered spirit of despondency in her mind that she was helpless to switch her role. "The dark feeling swelled in my chest like a balloon" (Mackintosh 38).

Elizabeth Grosz contends that "we perceive and receive the information of the world through our bodies(86). This critical underpinning resonates with the textual episode of the novel when Calla was reduced to an object or puppet at the hands of the male character named R. Hence the boundaries of self-esteem and individuality get blurred in this dark journey. Together, they indulged in free life. They took false refuge in this ephemeral bondage. Calla said: "I already sensed that I was not going to be a part of his universe, and had my peace with it" (Mackintosh 41). In her heart, she knew the bleak reality of this spurious relationship but its human tendency to fester false hopes about good future. Furthermore, in this intimacy with the male character R, Calla received dehumanizing title such as "worthless slut" (Mackintosh 41). In this scenario, she was not only viewed as an object but have also received bad labels from the society too. In this process of inevitable subjugation as an object, Calla realized that R had also connections with other blue ticket women of past or present. It clearly illustrates that she was not the only victim in this dark reality; several women have undergone the same traumatic experiences. Emphatically speaking, Calla was observing and making sense of her identity amidst the social reality which she experienced.

Calla expressed that “I forgot about everything else except our bodies and knelt down on the floor, stretched my arms out over my head” (Mackintosh 43). It is crucial to mention that even in that ambiance of intimacy she felt herself torn apart having no identity. This conforms to the critical underpinning of objectification theory that the state of the mind of woman gets jeopardized and her world view gets changed because of the dark atrocious experiences where she was treated as an object. Calla considered herself as a tiny speck of this universe, having no identity and who wandered from place to place like a wild wind whose tangible presence is not visible. She said: “I was dark wind and dust blowing across the landscape, and there was nothing anybody could do for me” (Mackintosh 43).

The gruesome episode which Calla has experienced with a male named R, made her baffled that she questioned her life as a faulty experiment where people visited bodies as an object to satiate their lust. The stereotypical outer structures of the society cannot be revamped; it is a matter of lust for other gender. She said: “Sometimes my life felt a faulty experiment. I followed all the instructions and yet I did not turn out to be a person I should have been” (Mackintosh 45). A male character named R denounced to be in a father role after all the graphic episodes and maintained a sugar coated ambiance just to soothe Calla’s mind that she must live in the present blissful moments of her life (Mackintosh 56). The state of mind of male character R was in complete equilibrium unlike Calla and he justified that there is no need to have a child (Mackintosh 59).

I argue that Calla’s body became the manifestation of ‘lecherous gaze’ as voiced by Lacan (Rai 50) and the textual episode gives voice to this core issue. Calla experienced sheer subjugation as she was an object of enticement at hotels, highway, and in the country where Fox festival was celebrated. Calla’s body was the source of attraction for everyone (Mackintosh 81). She transgressed the confined role of the blue ticket and took ephemeral refuge in various places but those places ended in fiasco. Lacan contends that gaze can be used as a controlling tool to sabotage the female spaces (Rai 50) and it affected the mental health of Calla. In a similar vein, Calla felt herself dejected. She expressed her state of mind as “It was lonely to feel like that, a true loneliness. I wanted someone to be happy for me” (Mackintosh 82). She has undergone rough excruciating experiences of bodily pain as a result of being an object, and society has also cultivated acrimonious feelings for her (Mackintosh 87). She

mentioned her mental canvas as “I was a warm-blooded female animal. I was a doll” (Mackintosh 87). The critical textual matrix is profusely synergized with the critical concept voiced by Foucault that “human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down” (138). She was just an object and puppet for the chauvinistic society who manipulated her with their sugar coated words with the token of compassion.

Meticulous glance was given to Calla’s body when she entered hotel that dismantled her state of mind. While giving a holistic glance at the living room of the hotel, Calla observed that this nasty place was also the nexus of so many girls of the past and living room and bed served as a haunting space for Calla. She didn’t feel herself safe in that hotel because she believed that “Safe had become a relative term” (Mackintosh 91). She expressed her concern as “All the bodies that has passed through this room had left their dents in the mattress and fingerprints on the cups just like I would, left their sadness to accumulate like the dead skin of their skin” (Mackintosh 91). The complacent state of Calla got jeopardized with every new experience of the outer world. I resonate this idea with the critical paradigm of ‘body and space’ that contends that it is necessary to know the relation between interiority and exteriority that reshapes the sensual perception not only in the physical modality but it has to do with the consciousness of the mind as well (Grosz 86). In the light of this critical matrix, I contend that Calla’s experience falls in two dimensions: embodied and reflective which helps her to re-orient her perception..

Moreover, Calla visited a country town where people from different corners of the world were celebrating fox festival with zeal and zest and she met a person accidentally because people were peeping at the bodies of females in that festival. She became the victim of ‘lustful gaze’ (Rai 50) and the literary matrix also pronounced this concern that When the male person found that Calla is a blue-ticket female, he exercised his lustful move which made her more uncomfortable. She said: “He traced his finger steps over my palm and I shivered involuntarily (Mackintosh 98). The same episode got more amplified when that man brought other men, too for satiating his lust. He locked Calla in the bathroom with a person named T and she was calling for help at the top of her voice because the man was pulling the hem of her dress but all her cries went in vain. “Help! I called out, but at once there was a hand over my mouth” (Mackintosh 99). In that festival, Calla heard obnoxious remarks that made her realized that deserved all this nasty treatment from the

society because society decides roles for every gender. She heard this remark “It’s an open season on women like you. You are criminal now” (Mackintosh 103).

I argue that the natural landscape in the form of wilderness does not provide shelter to Calla. She was striving hard to step out from the grotesque reality of the physical world and was like a deer that was running for miles and miles just to keep her body safe from the cruel clutches of the patriarchy (Mackintosh 108). She was in an entire abject condition because the natural world was not even promising for her. She equated her life with animals that such sheer brutality on bodies can be seen by animals only but she experienced the grotesque realities on her body by herself. She said: “The natural world was hostile. The animals saw what the humans didn’t want to see but I was different now” (Mackintosh 113). At the end of the novel, when Calla reached service station in order to fill her can with petrol for her car, she encountered sheer abjection from the society with the title of “Frigid blue bitch” (Mackintosh 120) which further augmented her mental repercussion. All the time, her mind was teeming with spurious sooth saying ideas with some invisible bond which she has created as a result of her figment of imagination in order to protect herself. Calla said: “I was in love with my made-up husband who could keep me safe” (Mackintosh 120). Her existence has been reduced to ‘homo sacer’, a term by Giorgio Agamben which means ‘cursed’ or ‘despised’ (Agamben 1998). This self-deception fostered “soggy desire” (Mackintosh 120) in her mind to alleviate her suffering of body politics. She recapitulated her past painful experiences where her body was maltreated forcefully with lustful moves. She was treated as an animal not as a human being. “My body was the only ocean they had ever known” (Mackintosh 121). Her body was the haunting space for her that brings alarming consequences on her state of mind recurrently and she questioned her own existence “May be I was a slut” (Mackintosh 140). At the end, she found a bus on the highway but again she experienced bleak reality as she sensed nasty move from one of the passengers. Above all, bus driver was also accomplice in the accomplishment of that heinous desire which that passenger festered in his heart aggressively while looking at Calla’s body.

The novel *Blue Ticket* vociferously expresses that “The lottery and the journey and the recovering were just dead space, a stutter, a bad dream (Mackintosh 176). Borrowing the idea of “empty space” by Martin Walter in *Landscapes of loss: the semantics of empty spaces in contemporary*

postapocalyptic fiction, I contend that Calla has undergone the process of self-annihilation, where the dead spaces from the outside world cultivate an inner empty space which tarnish her state of mind. It was not possible for Calla to rejuvenate herself. She has experienced the “spatial visualization of the disaster” (Walter 133) after the myriad embodied experiences being inflicted on her body that mars her individuality.

Poetics of Dystopian amid Female Subjugation in Blue Ticket by Sophie Mackintosh is my humble endeavor to illustrate the repercussion on the female character named Calla where her own individual existence got nullified in the myriad contours of the patriarchy. Articulation of the critical trajectories which are enmeshed in my paper is also best captured by the dystopian motifs like ‘clinic’, ‘laboratory’, ‘bottle’, ‘compass’ and ‘mirror’ that elevate the critical and aesthetic debate of this paper. Women bodies are the site of contestation and control both materially and symbolically in the twenty first century (Fischer and Dolezal 3). As embodied subjects, they are always on the verge of vulnerability which Judith Butler called it as “embodied vulnerability” that results from social institutions including patriarchy (Fischer and Dolezal 4). In a nutshell, this paper highlights that the longing for family life and motherhood is central to the emotional and psychological resonance of the females which is presented by the British novelist Mackintosh in the dystopian texture. The novel captures the mental outlook of the female character named Calla where her space was sabotaged at the hands of the institution and she tried to seek refuge in the wilderness. Hence the critical trajectories enmeshed in my paper quintessentially encapsulate the critical debate in its true essence.

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