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Of Bodies and Soul: Interplay between Power and Desire in Parijat's *Blue Mimosa*

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By

Rubi Rai

Symbol No: 280709

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-0428-0025-2012

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Of Bodies and Soul: Interplay between Power and Desire in Parijat's *Blue Mimosa*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, by Rubi Rai has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

_____

Prof. Dr. Dhruba Karki

Internal Supervisor

_____

Dr. Komal Prasad Phuyal

External Supervisor

_____

Prof. Dr Jib Lal Sapkota

Head

Central Department of English

Date:.....

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Abstract

This paper explores the interplay between power and desire in bodies in love in Parijat's Blue Mimosa *from a psychoanalytical perspective. Since the novel underscores sexuality as a primary concern among the characters, especially between Suyog Bir and Sakambari, Suyog Bir's interchangeable dominance with Sakambari concerning his historical brutality against the Burmese native girls, namely Chhin girl, Kachin girl, and Matinchi whom he raped or compel them to commit suicide during his military days in the second world war, highlights the power of sexuality that changes the location of dominance. Against these backdrops, this research investigates the novel with three specific questions. Firstly, why do the characters in the novel focus on sexuality? Secondly, what is the significance of power for Suyog Bir and Sakambari? Thirdly, how does the novel reveal the interplay between sex and power? To answer this question, this research embodies the psychoanalytical perspective primarily especially dealing with Sigmund Freud's notion of 'the psychology of love.'Besides, it incorporates Michel Foucault's notion of the docile body to excavate the vulnerability of sexual bodies and the role of power in sexual relationships among the characters, primarily the native girls, Suyog Bir and Sakambari. The study argues that sexuality is a driving mechanism that determines, changes, and relocates the body of power. Since power retains the ability to switch according to the circumstances, sex plays a crucial role in the transmogrification of the channelized body. Moreover,* Blue Mimosa *portrays characters like Suyog Bir and Sakambari, in particular, to expose the location of power in the social sphere in which sex plays a stirring role in modulating it.*

Keywords: Libido, repressed desire, domination, psyche and sexuality

Parijat's *Blue Mimosa* (1964), an English translation of *Shirish Ko Phool*, portrays the relationship between power and sex in human intimacy weaved by love and desire. It undertakes a soldier's stories of war and the bold attitude of a fragile girl to reflect how libidinal urges captivate bodies in love and destroy the life of the host. The novel depicts human desire, especially sex, as an apparatus to explore the latent sphere of human psychosis that defines humans in the social sphere. Significantly, *Blue Mimosa* portrays two different sorts of characters, namely Suyogbir—a retired subedar of the British military, and Sakambari (Bari) —the second sister (out of three) of Shiva Raj, to reveal the controlling nature of power in the love-relationship that either function as a destructive force or works as a tool in being destructed.

Blue Mimosa encompasses a story of Suyog Bir in particular but technically circumscribes the multiple layers of life with his experience. As a structure of the plot, the novel begins with Suyog Bir's visit to Shiva Raj's home at Vishalnagar. Noticeably, the entire story proceeds from Suyog Bir's perspective, be it Shiva Raj, Mujura, Sakambari, or Sanu. As he enters Shiva Raj's apartment, he notices "the trees blossomed with blue flowers," "a sort of garage in which an old car was kept," and "in between a patch of green lawn almost covered with mimosa flowers" (1). These specks are, in fact, trifling details of the frontiers which are barely noticeable to him. What is more captivating is the woman of twenty-six, Mujura, whom he finds not merely gorgeous but also a melody of his heart, who is noticing his entry.

Suyog Bir's growing affinity to Mujura parallelly takes a turn with his disliking emotions when he encounters an absurd-looking girl, Sakambari. He pays no attention to Bari as he does to Mujura; nevertheless, his concern grows dense as the story proceeds. Bari's indifferent behavior and her bold aptitude constantly trigger Suyog Bir and unconsciously wrap him in the vastness of mysterious longing,

effacing him from the robustness he holds as a militant. Suyog Bir superficially exposes himself as a kind-hearted man without passion for love and compassion. Moreover, he reflects on his austerity despite having a brutal history of sexual affairs in his bygone days. He has murdered two girls, and one committed suicide because he betrayed her love. Now, he chooses Mujura as a dream girl but longs for Bari.

The novel moves back and forth, dealing with the present-past-present sequence to suspend the linearity of the story. First, the story narrates Suyog Bir's situation and his life in the present. The second part of the novel reveals Suyog Bir's dark secret regarding love and sex. The third part expounds on Suyog Bir's toxic love that kills Bari. Although Bari retains a deep concern in the novel and never fails to conceal her bewildering reality, her death after Suyog Bir kisses her divulges her suppleness and fragility. Parijat created such a character to show the vulnerability of life and, significantly, the consequence of men's presence, which demolishes women's wholeness. Interestingly, this issue has been the focal point of researchers in *Blue Mimosa* from a distinct vantage point.

Mallika Shakhya, for instance, in her article "Reading Parijat and B P Koirala: Belonging and Borders in 20th Century Nepali Novels" contends: "Parijat's masterpiece *ShirishkoPhül* (*The Blue Mimosa*) is an absurdist expression of deep anguish, expressed in terms of an unconquerable border demarcating self from the surrounding" (56). Shakhya considers the novel absurd literature that focuses on the mayhem of human life and society, which is exhibited as an unattainable perimeter that holistically encompasses all human spheres. She rightly points out the meaninglessness of human effort and the futility of life in achieving the desired values; however, what drives them to strive for unrestrainable love and how

meaninglessness itself is the mechanism that reinforces human toil further, she barely sheds light on these issues.

While reflecting upon Shakhya's loopholes, I am not arguing that her research is the only literature that failed to incorporate the gaps; the point is that her research has paved the way for further research that directs the appropriate way of validating and signifying the current study. Moreover, at any cost, Shakhya is not the only one who discusses the absurdity of life represented in *Blue Mimosa*. One of the observations, which is more crucial in this regard, is Julia A.B. Hegewald, who offers the interpretation of the novel in the following ways:

> The Mimosa Flower is a progressive and critical novel, teaching a moral lesson to modern society with its quickly changing values, a society afflicted by alienation and meaninglessness. Indeed, Sirisko Phul works precisely against cruelty, decadence and vulgarity, propagating the idea that every person is responsible for his or her own deeds, and that one can only give meaning to one's life oneself. (190)

For Hegewald, *Blue Mimosa* meaningfully reflects the meaninglessness of human life in modern society. Since the novel articulates the real-life consequences of shifting human society inflicted by the fecundity of traversed vulgarity, the novel, for Hegewald, is a self-help critical workbook that helps to explore the self in the mass of crudeness. Hegewald comprehensibly illuminates his understanding of Nepali society on the verge of transition during the panchayat regime in the 1960s and appreciates Prajit's creative faculty in advancing the social milieu through literary participation. Undoubtedly, Parijat, as Michael James Hutt puts it, "is a pen name adopted by Bishnu Kumari Waiba . . . who has been hailed as one of the most innovative Nepali writers . . ." (111). Her literary association assisted vigorously in turning the Nepali

literature trend to the face of modernity, reflecting upon the social and political upheaval, as Hegewald assumes. However, in doing so, Parijat does not merely battle against the exterior force that crumbles humans in the modern world but also shows how one's sexual desire infused with power manifests differently in different people in different situations with various consequences.

While the sexual implication of the novel comes into play, an obligation regarding its contentious circularity in the Nepali forum marches forward because undeniably, "The novel created great controversy: some thought it decadent and vulgar; others praised it for its modernity" (112). Despite being tendentious, the novel received the Madan Prize, the most prestigious prize in literature in Nepal, in 1965, showing its caliber to impact Nepal's literary and social audience. This popularity shows the relevance and requisite of sexual matter of the novel, which I think Hegewald is missing in her research. While stating this, I do not deny the way Hegewald assesses Suyog Bir's brutality in sexual affairs; instead, I am referring to his gap in understanding the role of power in addressing sex and the renunciation of life in doing so. Moreover, I am aware of the immensity of absurdity that the novel endorses in reflecting upon the issues of human life, which has been a provoking element that dragged scholars across the globe to probe Parijat's concerns in embracing it. One of the significant remarks made by Ramesh Prasad Adhikary is crucial in this context. Without the slightest turn, Adhikari highlights the similar issues of the novel in the following ways:

> The novel especially reminds us of Albert Camus and Sigmund Freud. It is the amalgamation of existential and psychological issues which are juxtaposed. Parijat had found in them an affinity to her own feelings about life. But she

> maintains that the characters and situations described in her novel reflect, at least metaphorically, the life of Kathmandu. (23)

Adhikari highlights the novel from two perspectives, including Camus' deliberation of existentialism and Freud's psychoanalysis. His analysis hints at the Western philosophical tendencies embedded in Nepali literature, which connect them with the lives of people living in Kathmandu. In other words, Adrikhari points out that the novel is a microcosm of the modern city of Kathmandu, where life holds its firmness in the meaning-making process, and the people residing here are the slaves of their psycho-sexual desire.

Although Adhikari connects the philosophical domain of the literature with the life of people in Kathmandu, serving a unique way of interpretation from metaphoric exercise, he slightly shares ground with Komal Prasad Phuyal regarding the fictional properties that assist the audience in understanding history. In other words, Adhikari and Phuyal deal with Nepali historicity and show the interrelationship between the story's setting and the events in the novel. Particularly, Phuyal contends: “Fictions matter significantly since they show the ground to the ruling heads and help identify the genuine spirit from the bottom” (21-22). Against this backdrop, Phuyal observes the character in narrativizing the issue of Nepali society in the following ways:

> Parijat’s antihero Suyogbir participated in World War II in Burma, experienced the hardship of battle in life, and derived an irregular sense of life from his encounter with women in Burma. Such perceptions of life and society instrumentally shape him to understand the world around him, consequently leading him to force Sakambari to commit suicide. (13)

Phuyal crucially remarks on the male protagonist, delivering him as a victim of social and circumstantial happenings. His argument is based on the historical context of the

novel, following the harsh conditions Nepali folks confronted during the panchayat system. Phuyal associates Suyog Bir's condition with the polity and internalizes him as a representative of Nepali citizens during the 1960s. The point Phuyal is concerned with is that Suyog Bir is not merely a fictional character but a prototype of a victimized character representing Nepali folks who have become merciless and absurd because of inevitable conditions in a dark corner of history.

When Adhikari and Phuyal are interested in discerning the values of national interest and excavating the novel's depiction of human life in Nepali society, Mahesh Poudel strives to bridge national and international encounters or the fusion of local and global issues in totality. How the writer triumphs in articulating this pivotal subject, Poudel observes in the following ways:

> In *Blue Mimosa*, Parijat has been able to achieve a success that very few of her contemporaries could claim, that is, bringing in a glimpse of WWII vis-à-vis a Nepali national working as a British soldier who fights for the British expansionist and eventually returns to native land just to realize that what has been left for him in his life is nothing. (79)

For Poudel, Parijat's attempt to illustrate a character like Suyog Bir, who fought as a rage officer during the Second World War, is a deliberate attempt to intermingle the nation with the foreign country by showing the fecundity of natives in showing bravery in the battlefield. What is left to the soldiers is nothing more than the emptiness of life and a bizarre world that becomes so poisonous that his proximity itself becomes the cause of devastation.

Apart from absurdist, psychological, and national issues, Indira Acharya Mishra discusses the novel from a feminist perspective. She underscores the female

body as an objectified commodity where the male dictates to quench the thirst for sexual repression. In her words,

> *Blue Mimosa* deals with men's tendency to use violence against women. Guided by the patriarchal belief system, the male characters of the novel reduce women's bodies to objects for men's pleasure. They use violence against women to control and dominate them so that they can use and abuse their bodies to satisfy their erotic pleasure. (39)

Mishra aggressively attacks patriarchal society and investigates men's propensity to dominate women for the sake of pleasure in the novel. Her exploration reveals that the brutality men adhere to over the female body not only recoils women from their position but also relegates them to a compartmentalized category where males use and abuse them without hesitation for their sexual purpose. To a large extent, Mishra hammers on the right portion of the novel, so long as the domination of Suyog Bir against those Burmese girls is concerned; however, Mishra will not be equally suitable in the case of Suyog Bir-Sakambari relationship because Suyog Bir is a vulnerable character in front of Sakambari. Even though his kiss dispels Sakambari's life, neither when she is alive nor after her death, Suyog Bir gets a chance to override Sakambari in the name of love and sex.

What is true for Suyog Bir in Mishra's point is that he is a violent and merciless guy when he is stimulated, thirsty and unquenchable when he is charged, and mad and barbaric when he is demanding. Beyond these qualities, for Mani Bhadra Gautam, Suyog Bir has intoxicating bites that sting rapaciously and change the essence of the character as such. According to Gautam, "The theme of women's identity [regarding] gender opposition . . . receives space in Parijat's *Blue Mimosa*. The female protagonist, Sakambari, experiences the sexual pleasure of Suyogbir

across the social-cultural bar. Bari abuses Suyog's kiss for her symbolic black bee sting to the free-will image of the orchid flower" (135). In Gautam's apprehension, it is not merely Suyog Bir who enjoys the kiss. However, rather than Bari as well, internally, the pleasure turns into poison and leads to the demolition of existence itself.

Since the novel is a masterpiece in the Nepali literary forum, it has received tremendous responses from critics. Moreover, the novel is so enticing that scholars and researchers never retire from exploring the layers of meaning hidden underneath. Thus, out of the works of literature available, I have traced some of the issues that could shape the direction of my study, and significantly, I have dealt merely with the issues of the articles in the review that could provide a way to give pace in the novelty of my research. So far, researchers have investigated feminist, absurdist, psychological, national, and global issues in the novel. What is yet lacking is an observation that sneaks into the interplay between sex and power that manifests as abstract affairs of humans, which is far beyond the realm of autonomous entity, instead dictated by power in the process of sexual achievement. Thus, to explore this issue, the present study undertakes Sigmund Freud's notion of 'the psychology of love' and Michel Foucault's notion of 'power.'

Austrian neurologist and the father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, discusses the relationship between sex and cruelty. In his seminal work, "The Psychology of Love," he argues, "The cultural history of mankind teaches us beyond any doubt that cruelty and the sexual urge belong most profoundly together, but in making this connection clear, we have not gone beyond an emphasis on the aggressive element of the libido" (135). For Freud, since human beings have trajectories of sexual knowledge, we are yet to discover the dimension of desires that discloses the

interrelationship between ecstasy and pleasure in pathological disharmony. Subtly, pleasure and pain are indispensable to those who brutalize others in the course of a sexual relationship. Moreover, concerning the psychology of love, he interprets the conditions of a lover in the following ways:

> The tendency to save the loved one seems to have only a loose and superficial connection with these fantasies, which have come to dominate real erotic life, and one that can be reduced to a conscious explanation. The loved one puts herself in danger by being inclined towards inconstancy and infidelity, so it is understandable that the lover should try to protect her against those dangers by guarding her virtue and working against her bad inclinations. (247)

Freud discloses the lover's responsibility to protect the loved ones and abstain from fantasies, subduing erotic urges. In such conditions, the love hypothesis distorts the lover's strength to mobilize libidinal manifestation and happens to surrender to the loved ones. At this point, Freud is suggesting the power of love to control the instinctual urges and repressed desires that motivate individuals to be dictated by sexual forces.

Freud's notion of libido as the underlying principle and the undeniable alignment between cruelty and pleasure is deliberately chosen as a theoretical perspective for this research to explore Suyog Bir's brutal sexual experiences with Burmese girls, including Sakambari. The theory here is not an appropriation but rather a means in itself that discloses the contradiction between Suyog Bir's sexual experience with the Burmese girls and his unfulfilled, repressed desire that cannot be fulfilled with Sakambari.

Similarly, to unearth the relationship between power and sex, this research adopts Michel Foucault's notion of power. French historian and philosopher Foucault,

in his book *History of Sexuality,* proclaims that power essentially plays the most crucial role in determining the sexual discipline of human beings. How power functions in sexual discourse and how sex becomes the perversion in the social sphere, Foucault discussed in the following ways:

> Power is what essentially dictates its law to sex. This means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden. Secondly, power prescribes an 'order' for sex that operates at the same time as a form of intelligibility: sex is to be deciphered on the basis of its relation to law. And finally, power acts by laying down the rule: power's hold on sex is maintained through language, or rather through the act of discourse that creates from the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law. (83)

For Foucault, power creates specific laws to guide, manipulate, distort, rupture, and contradictorily create sexual discourse, which is, in one sense, a process of limiting the possibility of sexual dimension. In another sense, exercising power is the implementation of laws that create boundaries without the consent of those who need it. These premises emanate a docile body that confronts the domination of power. For Foucault, bodies venture the power implementation and, especially "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, and transformed and improved" (136). In other words, the body inflicted experiences the torture of power and becomes a material apparatus to reflect the magnitude of suffering that power defuses.

Foucault discusses the nature of power in the sexual realm and explains how it maintains its grip to perpetuate the law and order as per the needs of those who hold power. Indeed, I am aware that Foucault discusses power in relation to discourse, truth, and knowledge to expose the social dynamic, especially in historical relationships. Moreover, Foucault reveals the systemic development of sexuality in

Western Europe and the role of power in shaping its current form in his book *History of Sexuality*. However, I find it appropriate as a theoretical stand in my study because his concept of power resonates with the act of the antihero Suyog Bir, who, as a soldier, abuses the body of Burmese girls and, as a patriarchal male, abuses Sakambari. In both cases, Suyog Bir triumphs in relaxing his sexual repression either through militant power or social privilege.

The theoretical stand of the research assists in excavating the underlying relationship between sex and power, which manifests in the form of love and disrobes the outer fabric that hides the brutality of repression in the human sphere. It allows the audience to comprehend that libidinal urges are not autonomous but tamed through the implementation of power, negotiating either through love or coercive exercise, depending upon the circumstances. Moreover, the study unearths the nature of power, locating its fleeting vocality, which can be altered through sexual motives. In other words, power is incapable of concentrating its space in a particular body; instead, it switches its situatedness according to the necessity necessitated by the one who tames libido.

The novel does not fail to shatter sexual relationships among the characters without any queries, be it Suyogbir, Sakambari, Mujura, or Shiva Raj. Specifically, in every relationship, including Suyog Bir-Mujura, Suyog Bir-Sakambari, and even Shiva Raj-Sakambari connotatively, the reflection entices on sexual motif. For instance, when Suyog Bir happens to see Mujura for the first time, he inwardly reverberates, "I studied her complexion, her clothes, her height, her weight, her expression, her clothes, her height and weight, her expression, the way she walked, everything. She could not be called an ugly woman in her white sari and sleeveless white blouse, with her long hair loose" (1). Interestingly, Suyog Bir is observing his

friend's sister; more importantly, it is his first meeting; in such a situation, how can he be so keen if he has to be observed from a sociological perspective? Usually, people tend to omit these things, but the male protagonist cannot hide the dark passion he has incubated in his inner psyche. To be more precise, Suyog Bir instantly reflects his psychic urges without hesitation, as is expected in a psychological state. He has forgotten what he is and what he is meant to be. In Freudian explication: "forgetting is a spontaneous process involving a certain lapse of time . . . when something is forgotten, a kind of selection is made from among the available impressions, and that the same thing happens with the details of any impression of experience" (129). The point here is that Suyog Bir is a retired soldier who has committed insane brutality over innocent Burmese girls. Thus, when he happens to see Mujura, an instant realization of experience or sexual connotation bursts, and he starts narrating Mujura's presence with extensive details.

In other cases, Shiva Raj and Sakambari do share a certain magnitude of sexual relationship unconsciously. He keeps a photograph of Sakambari in his purse and explicitly confesses his carefulness to Bari compared to Mujura: "Bari doesn't get to sleep until close to midnight. Besides, it's not Mujura's nature to oppose anyone. She doesn't complain if I drink. But Bari doesn't care what people think; she gets angry. And that makes me care for her even more" (9). Perhaps it is a common expression that people care for those who care in return; nevertheless, their affinity hints at an incest relationship that is not conspicuous but obliquely hidden. As Freud proclaims, "Of course it should be remembered that with a certain freedom of sexual intercourse, beyond the strictures of matrimony, the blood relationship, and thus the prevention of incest, becomes so uncertain that another basis for the prohibition is required" (9), in this relevance, Shiva raj and Sakambari is maintaining their bloodline

relationship as a new form of prohibition to excel their sexual incest relationship, effacing the intimacy they had mysteriously.

A significant portion of sexuality resides in Suyog Bir and Sakambari's relationship, which exceeds the guardrails of limitation, redefining the interrelationship between sex, love, and power. Their relationship is more crucial because their affairs embed the historicity of Suyog Bir and the fragility of Sakambari in the love-making process. For Hutt, "The psychological background to the story is the soldier's memory of his sexual exploitation of Burmese women during his military service. On only one occasion does he attempt to reveal his feelings to the woman, and shortly afterward she dies" (112). Hutt hints at two different events in a subtle way. Firstly, he points out that Suyog Bir's tormented psychological condition causes Blue Mimosa's bizarre worldview, as the novel is narrated from his perspective. Secondly, although Suyog Bir never failed to show the animality of his uncanny representation, he failed to attain what he wanted, being entrapped in the prison of love. Hutt's reflection underscores the necessity of Suyog Bir's historicity and passion for love, revealing the consequences of his two unavoidable traits.

Suyog Bir is an aggressive character infused with libidinal urges. She does not fail to express his sexual motives as soon as he encounters a girl who could stimulate his passion for intercourse. Interestingly, this happenstance and his psychic behavior are explicit as the novel turns to Suyog Bir's military days. His passion for sexual thirst with Chhin is described in a sequence of the novel in the following details:

> Firstly, The face of the Chhin girl appeared before me and, turning her eyes, passed away. I went on thinking of her strong limbs, skin, the color of wheat, clear unself-conscious eyes, and tangled hair, she was leaning against a

> mahogany tree looking for prey. It was about midnight. Unaware of the presence of soldiers camouflaged there, she stood forgetting herself in the voice of the murmuring stream. Illuminated by the moonlight, expressed in the smell of the forest, if anyone can be called a thing of heaven, it was she, in that place. It was not possible just to sit and look at her there alone, ignorant, innocent, unbitten by the worm of self-consciousness. (52)

The novel passage describes the situation when Suyog Bir, during military service in the Second World War, encounters a girl who revamped his starvation of sexual hunger. The Chhin girl in the forest is unalarmed and lost in her work, whereas Suyog Bir, looking at her, is drowned in the dream of copulation. Moreover, he assumes that the Chhin girl is not for visual satisfaction but an object to be consumed to quench the thirst growing within. Thus, he says, "Her naked arms shining in the moonlight, she was the focus of my attention. As I watched her, the bonds of my camouflage began to tighten bout my throat, the war tormented me" (53). When he could not restrain his inner desire, he came out of the bushes and confronted her, begging for one night. However, the girl was not weak enough to crumble herself in front of this young soldier. Thus, when she refuses Suyog Bir's request, being incapable of bearing his defeat, he describes what consequences the girl had to face, Suyog Bir describes his brutal murder in the following ways:

> Immediately I got up and, grabbing her from behind by the hair, I struck her across her tender lips. A thin line of blood flowed from her lips, but the head-hunter's daughter did not hesitate to match her strength with mine. She was not afraid of me. Opening her eyes very wide, she challenges me. Inflamed, unable to control myself, I struck her on the head with my rifle butt and she fell over, unconscious, into the bushes. (55)

Suyog Bir's act of encountering sexual brutality by throwing the Chhin girl to death shows the immensity of his rage and passion for sexual desire. The way he remains intact to consume her body, being engrossed with sexual blindness, shows his magnitude of libidinal appetite. Not only does Suyog Bir murder the girls, but he also sexually abuses the dead body. As he says, "I began to play with her. All through the night toiled with the naked body of a woman. I played with every part of her, enjoyed every pleasure" (55). How mercilessly he describes his sinfulness can be measured by his utterances: "If I were an animal I would have been satisfied, but my human instincts were not satisfied . . . I scratched her naked breast with my savage nails until they bled. I bit her lips, her cheeks, her neck until they bled" (55). Perhaps the animality he shows with the corpse and his unquenched sexual thirst is the result of his uncertain life. Suyog Bir succumbs to such thoughts because the war was so torturous that life has turned meaningless, and as a consequence, he committed such a horrible crime. Importantly, when life oscillates between death and hunger, such reflection of human beings is a common trait. As Foucault contends: "It is up to sex to tell us out truth, since sex is what holds it in darkness" (77). For Foucault, sex naturally resides in darkness, and it is "hidden from us, concealed by a new sense of decency" (77). In this sense, human beings are privileged in conforming to the dignity of sexual appetite; however, sex is rooted in the underlying psyche that never reveals darkness behind.

While appropriating Foucault's notion of sex, I am not defending Suyog Bir nor merely redescribing the events that took place in Suyog Bir's life. What I am trying to reflect upon instead is how Suyog Bir misuses his power to abuse an innocent girl despite having sex as dark and secret. The relationship between Suyog Bir and the Chhin girl is the relationship between the powerful and the powerless.

Suyog Bir, a military soldier with arms and on the verge of uncertainty in life, and the Chhin girl, the daughter of an Indigenous head-hunter on the edge of her vibrant spring years, are the depiction of possible dominance that can end either through surrender or through combat. The Chhin girl chooses the latter option and ends her life; she chooses the option because, as Kingsley R. Browne states, “The converse of men's bias toward perceiving sexual interest on the part of a woman appears to be women's bias toward perceiving sexual threat on the part of men in circumstances in which opportunities for escape are limited” (149). From Browne's perspective, she could have chosen the first option, but since there was the question of the existence and dignity of sex, which confined her in the realm of the limited ways of escaping, thus she confronted such a fate.

Suyog Bir confirms his power and misuse of authority by equating himself with Hitler and the British Empire. While defining the death of the Chhin girls, he says, “This was her end, the daughter of a head-hunter, an end submerged in the ambition of Hitler, an end as a sacrifice on the altar of British imperialism, an innocent end. With these, unburdening myself as I abandoned her, I came back. Yet this was something. With this, I had proved life meaningful” (56). In this sense, Suyog Bir is a character who holds power and can dominate those who can be dominated. In dominating the vulnerable characters, he was retaining gratification and satisfaction because, as Freud argues, "Anyone who takes pleasure in causing others pain in a sexual relationship is also capable of enjoying as pleasure the pain that can arise from his own sexual relations” (135). Although he was suffering from the meaninglessness of life, he was cheering his life by brutalizing others. The relationship between sex and power is indispensable in this context. Suyog Bir attains pleasure through exercising power, no matter how barbaric he became in retaining it.

This is what power does because, as Foucault claims, “The form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him. It is a form of power that makes individual subjects” (331). In this context, Suyog Bir was more concerned with his aspirations regardless of the grievances that the Chinni girls aspired to. The sexual relationship between these two characters in this context not only bestowed the nature of sex that could change the dynamic of human life but also determined the categories of powerful and powerless people.

Suyog Bir retains power by enunciating his freedom and exercising over the Chhin girl. Without the approval, Suyog Bir succeeds in consuming his wants from her body, which determines the level of power he encapsulates. In the words of Foucault, “Power is not a matter of consent. In itself, it is not the renunciation of freedom, a transfer of rights, or power of each and all delegated to a few . . . the relationship of power may be an effect of prior or permanent consent, but it is not by nature the manifestation of a consensus” (340). In this sense, Suyog Bir, through the sexual pleasure that he procures from the reserved body of the Chhin girl, establishes himself as a powerful character, transforming the Chhin girl into a docile body that experiences the brutality of power play because “the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on its constraints, prohibitions or obligation” (Foucault 136). In this relevance, what comes to visibility is the power of sex itself, which constitutes the ability to compartmentalize the human sphere in the form of victim and victimizer based on the power one holds.

The Chhin girl is not the only character who allows Suyog Bir to relegate himself to the influential strata. Since he persistently victimizes the other two girls, namely the Kachin girl and Matinchi, he corroborates his power through two

sequential sexual participation. Suyog Bir, including his fellow friends, are slaves of their passion for libido. They are enticed by sexual desire and motivated by unconscious urges manifesting consciously. These happenstances are palpable when Suyog Bir communicates with one of his fellow friends. As his friend says, “Hi, pal! It looks as if you haven't found a victim” (58); in response, he says, “There is no trouble finding one” (58). The dialogue exposes the soldiers' habits and their repetitive victimizing. Deep down, they are submerged in the thirst for sexual pleasure and are constantly in search of a source that could help them to redeem themselves from their suspended wills. Successfully, Suyog Bir finds the Kachin girl as a subsequent victim. When she denies his request, he outsmarts her with his lovely words: “Sweetheart, why must you raise a wall of ideals against those who are about to die? Come let me plunder you, and you, too, plunder me” (58). His words work as a mantra and hypnotize the lady as if to say, “Marry me, let us live together, Gurkha; this body is yours. My sweetheart” (58). Suyog Bir’s attempt to remark on her approval shows his strength in consoling his surrounding people.

However, notably, Suyog Bir does it only for the sake of his wish fulfillment because had he done it for any other purpose, he should not have left the victimized girl without life. More specifically, had Suyog Bir paid mercy upon those girls, he should not have heard the message: “A Kachin buffalo-herding girl was found on the ground, bleeding profusely. She was covered with bruises. Sinners! She was fatally tortured” (59). What is more concerning is the exercise of power that profoundly condemns the victimizer to death. Moreover, the Kachin girl is not out of the realm of docile body because “it is the body of exercise, rather than speculative physics; a body manipulated by authority, rather than imbued with animal spirits” (Foucault 155). In this context, when sexual exposition occurs, the combat ends with the victory

of those who hold power. It is power, therefore, that determines the legitimacy of sex. The ultimate result of being vanquished in sexual combat—based on power—is death and the demolition of the sexual story.

As the number of victims increases, Suyog Bir shows his power more playfully. When he first encountered the Chhin girl, he was full of rage, but in the second story, he was calmer. When he has to confront the third victim of his sexual story, he is a man full of deceptions and internally solid and cunning to abuse the sexual body of the victims. The more he heads toward the victimized, the better he takes a stand on emotional grounds, especially love. The first girl was treated without resembling love, but the second one received at least a certain magnitude of affection. When he interacts with the third one, Matinchi, he engrosses her, showing a flood of love and security in life, confirming himself as her husband. His lovely words reverberate: "I'll give you as many children as you'd like, don't worry Khwannion Pan. I'm really in luck to get a beautiful wife like you. I won't go home. I'll marry you, and we'll spend our lives together growing chili and ginger. How happy we'll be when the war's over" (63). Suyog Bir's deceitful dialogues parallelly connote with Freud's definition of words:

> It is perhaps in the case of the most repellent perversions that we must acknowledge the most generous psychical participation in the transformation of the sexual drive. Here a mental task is being performed which, despite its grim consequences, we are obliged to see as an idealization of the drive. It may be that the omnipotence of love is nowhere more strongly apparent than in these deviations. Everywhere is sexuality, the highest and the lowest are most profoundly attached. (137)

Freud discloses that every consequence is motivated by sexual urges; even the most crucial drives that monitor human behavior are the byproduct of sexuality, which diminishes abstract values like love and affection. In this sense, Suyog Bir's attempt to delude the Indigenous girl who wants to marry him is triggered by his sexual urges. Love for him practically does not exist. If it exists, it works merely as a means or an apparatus to attain his sexual goal. Perhaps, this could be the reason behind saying, "But it was not me saying; I knew that well" (63). In this sense, the immensity of sexuality and the degree of libidinal urges determine the magnitude of power over the victimized. The passion for sex dictates the amplitude of power imposed upon the powerless. In other words, the negotiation of sexuality creates a boundary that measures the imposition of power, and these acts take place unconsciously, deep down in the psychological realm of the human sphere. At the same time, it is equally valid that the negotiation of sexuality determines the proportion of brutality one has to confront as a victim.

Suyog Bir gradually melts as the story proceeds, and his rage to attain his sexual desire depletes as he reaches Sakambari. Thus, his way of treating Sakambari contrasts with the other three girls, who, along with Suyog Bir, showed disdainful behavior. In this relevance, his relationship can be observed from a love-and-hate perspective. On the one hand, he unwillingly plunges into Sakambari's regime of love, and on the other hand, he willfully embraces the girls in the past to realize his passion for sex. For Freud,

> The case of love and hate is particularly interesting in that it resists being assimilated into our account of the drives. We cannot doubt that the most intimate relationship exists between these two emotional opposites and sexuality, but we naturally reject the notion that love is some special

> component drive as the expression of the sexual urge as a whole, but this is also insufficient, and we are not sure how we are to understand the opposite of this urge. (25-26)

Freud exposes the underlying motives of these two drives of human psychosis. He denies the possibility of merging the hate and love drive into one account and underscores the incapability of unearthing the meaning of these urges in totality. From a Freudian perspective, although there are difficulties in understanding love and hate drives, they are not similar and can segregate their domain in the human psyche. If it is true, the people who fall in love drive in an individual psyche, and the rest who assimilate into the hate zone are different psychologically in an individual's experience. Subtly, the people who are hated and those who are loved reside in two different psychic realms of an individual who experiences it. Thus, for Suyog Bir, from this theoretical premise, Sakambari and those three girls are not the same in terms of psychic experience. If so, what psychologically differentiates Sakambari from the other girls for Suyog Bir? This thesis argues that Suyog Bir's ego plays a vital role in distinguishing these characters.

Firstly, as a soldier who was fighting in the world war, Suyog Bir had no concern about his life and was determined to die or to bring others to death without hesitation. In such conditions, Suyog Bir did not let his ego down in front of those girls when he was already confronting the loss of life and its dignity. However, as he is a survivor of the war and has a good relationship with Shiva Raj, he is restrained from controlling his ego while dealing with Sakambari. As Freud contends: "hate originally denotes the ego's relation to the alien outside world and stimuli" (28); Suyog Bir's ego against those girls is an intentional outcasting of the waste that occupied his crucial space in his mind. Contrarily, Sakambari holds a love drive in

Suyog Bir's psyche that changes his attitude and purpose of his urges not merely as a will to attain sexual pleasure but to adore his own body as well because, as Freud confirms,

> If we do not normally say a particular sexual drive loves its object, and if the most appropriate use of the word 'love' is, rather, to describe the ego's relation to its sexual object, this tells us that the word is applicable here only after the synthesis of all the component sexual drives under the primacy of the genitals in the service of the reproductive function. (29)

Freud exposes that every drive deeply entangles its association with reproductive function and sexual pleasure for a specific purpose. Love does not necessarily mean emotional affinity for Freud but also an intricate intimacy with the genital or the purpose of the genital in reality. In this sense, Suyog Bir's love for Sakambari is, on the one hand, his libidinal response; on the other hand, love for his genitalia. The implicit meaning will differ if we consider Foucault's notion of power in this relevance. Subtly, Suyog Bir's power negotiates sexually in his inner psyche, and either he tries to control her sexual emotions or, with the affinity he holds for himself, he tries to substantiate his power by perpetually showing his love to his genitalia.

Considerably, Suyog Bir has a purpose in attaining Sakambari, but Sakambari is a bold character who dies rather than surrender. For Hutt, This woman is the antithesis of the traditional Nepali heroine: she is cynical and sometimes cruel, wears her hair cropped short, and smokes continually" (112). Her robustness proclaims her recognition and remaps Suyog Bir's psychic phenomena. Suyog Bir did not fail to entrap those Indigenous ladies. However, since Sakambari dislocates herself from any other form of girl who confines herself in the remote location of womanness, she defies her reality and successfully hides her interest eternally. Her openness with

Suyog Bir from the beginning reclaims her ability to recoil herself from Suyog Bir's dreadful and lustful eyes. When Shiva Raj introduces his family and says, "My second sister . . ." with a firm boldness, she says, "My name is Sakambari." Her attitude toward uttering her own name shows the courage to confront Suyog Bir, which threatens him and shatters his conception of women in totality. Thus, how her voice impacted him and what he finds over her, he describes in the following ways:

> Startled, I turned toward the door and saw a woman of twenty-four. She was about five feet three, fair, with very large breasts on an extremely thin body. She wore gold-rimmed glasses with deep-set, sparkling black eyes. Her hair was cut very close to her head, in the style of ancient Hebrew soldiers, and her small, white lobes wore earrings of black stones. (3)

Suyog Bir's observation of Bari is mainly based on his inability to understand her. Whenever he thinks of Bari, he is hammered by a big question mark, which destines his vulnerability and impotence in cultivating a thought that could breed a hope of exposition. Moreover, his gaze is fixed on the locus of sexual orientation that occupies his body and trembles him with inner joy. Perhaps the sense of urges he confronts whenever he encounters women gives him a sense of living because, as Freud contends, "The uncovering of the body, which is advancing along with civilization, keeps alive the sexual curiosity which seeks to complete the sexual object by revealing its hidden parts, but which can be diverted ('sublimated') into art if its interest can be distracted from the genitals to the form of the body as a whole" (133). For Freud, sexual arousal retains the capability to change the dark and secret desire into a creative art form; however, Suyog Bir has constantly been encroached by evil, though that shows his destructive outcome from his libidinal urges. In this sense,

Suyog Bir cannot tame his reserved potential and transform it into a productive resemblance.

When Suyog Bir fails to excavate what he could do with his unconscious desire, he simultaneously wrestles to internalize the significance of potential bodies that could alter his comprehension. This incident is ostensible when he says, "Who was this Bari? What was Bari who came like a landslide the orderly course of the introduction? I needed more time to think about her; here with my friend, there wasn't enough time. To think about her, I needed a room, solitude" (4). Suyog Bir is not a naïve character who is unaware of women in particular, nor is he a docile being who needs space to realize the immensity of a woman's attitude; however, he restlessly strives to trace the location of Sakambari's reality, never could he hammer the right place so that she becomes opened and explored.

Suyog Bir and Sakambari have two different conceptions regarding the attitude toward sexuality. Where Sakambari unhesitatingly entertains the relationship's secrecy and dares to demolish the trespasser, Suyog Bir resembles a character who wants to open the relationship and confront the challenge it welcomes. This contradictory expression enveloped by these two characters regarding sexuality is conspicuous in their orchid discussion. As Sakabari vocalizes the characteristics of the flower:

> When they are aware of the sound of the bumblebee or black-bee or hornet, these pouches that look like buds open their mouths. I don't know what there is in them, but the insects leave the flowers and enter them. When a bee has entered the pouch, it closes its mouth. Inside, the insect dies of suffocation. It is exciting. There's no insect here now or else you could see for yourself Suyogji. (13)

Sakambari's affinity to the flower, which has carnivorous characteristics, shows her bold attitude towards sexual encroachment. How she describes the flowers that consume the insect as they succumbs the flower symbolically hints at Sakambari's way of dealing with male characters like Suyog Bir. Her jocular statement comparing Suyog Bir with the insect mainly manifests Sakambari's intention to submerge Suyogbir in the vast mystery that Sakambari reserves. Contrary to Sakambari's attitude towards the flower, Suyog Bir opines: “If that's so, why should it blossom without any purpose? A flower must have some kind of purpose. If that has the power to kill without having some special blossoms or treasure to yield, then what's the meaning of its special characteristic? Since a flower has to fade and fall, why can't it die fighting as assailant?" (14). For Suyog Bir, the flower lacks the courage to dare the challenges and substantiate the exceeding that precedes. Metaphorically, he hints at his notion regarding life, which has to be valiant in accepting the difficulties and enjoying the day before crumbling to death. Moreover, suppose he is observed from his historical background. In that case, he defends his deeds while advocating for courageous will because since he was living an uncertain life during the world war, he challenged his day and succeeded in stealing nectar from women three consecutive times. Although his way of perceiving life may have a positive connotation, his sexual brutality and enslavement of carnal desire hints that in every step, he merely conspires to victimize women and justifies his meaningful life as he did in the past.

Suyog Bir does not surrender before Sakambari but never fails to encompass thoughts about her. Recurrently, he asks himself about her nature and tries to evaluate her from his fragile perspective, which shatters as the situation changes. For instance, he contends: “What a difference there is between Sakambari and the stallkeeper's wife; how opposite they are! What after all, is Sakambari? Compared to her, the stall-

keeper's wife is better" (20). He ranks Sakambari so filthy and worthless that she is worse than the stall-keeper's wife. However, as the time passes by, his conception alters. In one of the monologues, he meditates: "I started thinking of how many women my heart had welcomed and how many it had dismissed, of how many women I had held in my arms only to send them away again. However, I had never felt empty and alone because of a woman's absence" (42). Suyog Bir's changed attitude towards Sakambari exposes the changed location of power. When Suyog Bir was wrestling against the indigenous girls, he was powerful, but his dealing with Sakambari divulged his powerlessness. Power is never a constant phenomenon nor a confirmed structural element that is physical. Thus, it is executed non-physically without physical traces. Foucault discusses the traits of power in the following ways:

> The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between 'partners,' individual or collective; it is a way in which some act on others. This is to say, of course, that there is no such entity as power, with or without a capital letter; global or massive, or diffused; concentrated or distributed. Power exits only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action, even though, of course, it is inscribed in a field of sparsely available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures. (340)

For Foucault, power works without consent and is a matter of force imposed upon individuals without their approval. Indeed, it is substantiated by the firm composition of a permanent structure and diffused for its profit; however, its location changes depending upon the discourse and truth it adheres to. In this relevance, Suyog Bir fails to gain power as he gradually shifts his position from a robust soldier to a beloved lover drowned in his lust to achieve Sakambari. Interestingly, the essence that changes Suyog Bir's dynamic character is his unfulfilled sexual pleasure from Sakambari's

sexual body. Despite having an immense desire to enjoy with Sakambari sexually, he loses the chance merely with a kiss. How deeply he is impacted when he knows Sakambari's death, he says, "For one moment, only one moment, it felt as if all the motion had stopped. For one moment, I could not think at all. My mind was completely empty. As I returned to normal my first thought was that Sakambari no longer existed in this world . . . a hard reality, that insert presence of limitless misery which could not be removed . . .” (96). A man who never thought of the consequence of murdering, who never questioned the cause of suicide, and who never rationalized the cause of deception now has become a meek character who is engrossed in misery because of a girl who, with he merely had infatuation, if not passionate love. Suyog Bir's characterization does not merely expose how power is exercised in different situations but also reveals that power itself remains a vehicle in the sexual discourse. Sex determines the strength of power and validates the authenticity, locating its structure and stand.

Suyog Bir is undoubtedly a vibrant character who dares to take risks and celebrate his every moment; nevertheless, he loses his gravity as he entices himself with Sakambari. This context resembles Foucault's assertion: “The pathology of sexual activity itself is constructed around two elements by which the dangers of the sexual act are usually characterized: an involuntary violence of tension and an indefinite, exhausting expenditure” (113). In this relevance, Suyog Bir is involved in violence while confronting the Indigenous girls, and he expenses his life being drowned in Sakambari’s absence. Thus, sexuality remains the locus of every power play that determines the stand and essence of Suyog Bir.

In conclusion, Suyog Bir cannot restrain his libidinal urges in front of Sakambari. Thus, he becomes the slave of his passion, whereas Sakambari controls it

and perpetuates her regime of superiority, embracing death rather than surrender. Sakambari triumphs in negotiating her repression and captives her dominance eternally, leaving Suyog Bir as a servant of love and sexuality. Suyog Bir's unfulfilled desire remains suspended and dangled in the nexus of love attainment, which remarks Suyog Bir as a powerless character in front of the powerful Sakambari. This determination and fixation on power is rooted in the sexual enactment that these characters entail.

Thus, Parijat's *Blue Mimosa* reveals the interrelationship between sex and power in the body that is involved in love affairs. To be more precise, by portraying characters like Suyog Bir and Sakambari in association with the Indigenous girls that Suyog Bir encounters in his military day during the Second World War, the novel shows the nature of power to dominate and use and abuse the human body sexually. Moreover, the novel is a depiction of sexual power, which is never a static version of apparatus that grooves the firmness of dominance but rather a fleeting structure that transmogrifies sexuality.

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