



Women and Nature in the Margin: An Ecofeminist Analysis of Parijat's *Shirishko Phool* [*Blue Mimosa*]

Prabeen Kumar Awasthi

Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal

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Corresponding Author: Prabeen Kumar Awasthi; Email: awasthiprabeen2048@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research paper explores the multifaceted themes of women's and nature's subordination in Parijat's seminal Nepali novel, *Shirishko Phool* [*Blue Mimosa*]. Recognized as a cornerstone of Nepali literature, this work serves as a poignant critique of patriarchal and anthropocentric societal structures that marginalize both women and the environment. Through an ecofeminist and literary analysis, this study explores how Parijat intricately weaves together the fate of her female protagonist with the degradation of nature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these forms of subjugation. Employing a qualitative methodology, this paper utilizes thematic analysis to unravel the layered narrative and symbolism embedded within the text. The findings illuminate Parijat's critique of societal norms perpetuating these forms of subordination, while also advocating for a more harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and between men and women. The analysis underscores the significance of *Shirishko Phool* as not only a literary masterpiece but also a call to action for gender and environmental justice in Nepali society, and beyond.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, nature, subordination.

Introduction

Parijat's *Shirishko Phool* [*Blue Mimosa*] (1964) stands as a monumental work in Nepali literature, as it is celebrated for its deep psychological insights and poignant exploration of existential themes. At the heart of the novel lies the

character of Sakambari, a woman who defies societal norms and challenges traditional gender roles. Her personal struggles are paralleled with the vivid portrayal of environmental degradation, drawing a striking analogy between the subjugation

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of women and nature. This text not only explores individual and societal conflicts but also critiques the broader anthropocentric and patriarchal frameworks that perpetuate these forms of subordination.

Written in the mid-twentieth century, *Shirishko Phool* reflects a period of significant socio-cultural transformation in Nepal. The country was witnessing rapid modernization and urbanization, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, which brought about considerable environmental changes and social upheaval (Bhattarai, 2006). During this time, traditional gender roles were deeply entrenched in Nepali society, and women often faced severe restrictions on their personal and social freedoms. Parijat, born Bishnu Kumari Waiba, emerged as a pioneering feminist voice in this context, using her literary works to critique these oppressive structures and advocate for women's autonomy and environmental consciousness, as Thapa (2004) notes.

The primary research problem addressed in this paper is the interconnected subordination of nature and women as depicted in Parijat's *Shirishko Phool*. The novel serves as a lens through which we can examine the dual oppression faced by women and the natural environment in a patriarchal and anthropocentric society. The paper aims to explore how Parijat portrays the subordination of women through the character of Sakambari in her text. Additionally, it examines the ways in which the novel depicts environmental degradation and its linkage to the subjugation of women. Finally, it analyzes how

Parijat employs symbolic elements and narrative structures to convey the interconnectedness of these forms of subordination.

The objectives of this study are to analyze the characterization of Sakambari and her resistance against societal norms, examine the depiction of environmental degradation and its symbolic connection to women's oppression, identify and interpret the use of symbolism and narrative techniques that highlight the interwoven fate of women and nature, and apply ecofeminist theory to provide a comprehensive analysis of the novel's themes. Ecofeminism provides the theoretical foundation for this study. This framework, which emerged in the late twentieth century, posits that the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women are interconnected, both rooted in patriarchal structures that devalue and dominate (Merchant, 1990). It critiques the dualistic thinking that separates humans from nature and men from women, advocating for a more integrated and holistic understanding of these relationships. By applying an ecofeminist lens, this study aims to reveal how Parijat's narrative critiques these dual forms of subjugation and suggests pathways for their interconnected liberation.

The socio-cultural context of Nepal during the 1960s is crucial for understanding the themes of *Shirishko Phool*. Nepal was, and to a significant extent still is, a predominantly patriarchal society where traditional gender roles were strictly enforced, limiting women's autonomy and opportunities (Bhattarai, 2006). The

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rapid modernization of the Kathmandu Valley exacerbated environmental degradation, reflecting the broader global trend of ecological destruction driven by industrialization and urbanization (Hutt, 1991). Parijat's novel captures these tensions, using the degradation of the natural environment as a metaphor for the societal constraints imposed on women. The text is rich in symbolism, with the Siris tree serving as a central motif that embodies both resilience and beauty amidst adversity. The natural imagery throughout the novel mirrors Sakambari's inner turmoil and her resistance against societal expectations.

This paper, broadly, aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the novel through the lens of ecofeminism. By examining the intertwined fates of Sakambari and the natural environment, this study seeks to uncover the profound critique of patriarchal and anthropocentric systems embedded in Parijat's narrative. The insights gained from this analysis are particularly relevant in today's context, where the fight for gender equality and environmental sustainability remains a pressing global issue.

This research adopts a qualitative methodology, utilizing thematic analysis to examine the text of *Shirishko Phool*. The primary data for this study is the text *Shirishko Phool* itself. Secondary data includes existing scholarly articles, books, and theses that analyze Parijat's work, ecofeminism, and the socio-cultural context of Nepal. These sources provide a foundation for understanding the novel's themes and

its critical reception.

The data analysis involves a close reading of the novel, focusing on passages that depict the relationship between women and nature. Key themes such as the portrayal of Sakambari, the symbolism of the Siris tree, and the depiction of environmental degradation are identified and analyzed. This process involves coding the text to identify recurring patterns and themes, which are then interpreted through an ecofeminist lens.

Literature Review

Parijat, born Bishnu Kumari Waiba, remains one of the most iconic figures in Nepali literature. Her literary contributions have consistently been marked by feminist undertones and existential themes, capturing the complexities of human experience against the backdrop of Nepali society. Parijat's magnum opus, *Shirishko Phool*, published in 1964, not only won the prestigious Madan Puraskar but also cemented her place as a literary pioneer. The protagonist, Sakambari, embodies Parijat's own defiance against societal norms and her quest for existential meaning (Thapa, 2004). This character is central to understanding the feminist and existential dimensions of Parijat's work, reflecting her personal and philosophical battles.

Sakambari's character has been extensively analyzed by scholars for her representation of the modern Nepali woman who challenges patriarchal constraints. According to Thapa (2004), Sakambari's resistance is a direct reflection of Parijat's rebellion against traditional gender roles. Similarly,

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Sharma (2013) argues that Sakambari's existential quest is not merely personal but also a commentary on the broader societal structures that oppress women. Parijat's nuanced portrayal of Sakambari's internal and external struggles offers a layered critique of the societal expectations placed upon women.

Understanding the socio-cultural context of Nepal during the mid-20th century is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of *Shirishko Phool*. During this period, Nepal was undergoing significant changes due to rapid modernization and urbanization, particularly in the Kathmandu Valley, where the novel is set. This era saw a clash between traditional values and modern influences, creating a backdrop of social and environmental upheaval (Bhattarai, 2006). Nepali society has historically been patriarchal, with rigid gender roles that severely restricted women's rights and opportunities. The legal and social framework of the time was heavily biased against women, reinforcing their subordination (Bennett, 1983). These societal constraints are vividly depicted in Parijat's work, where the female protagonist struggles against the expectations and limitations imposed upon her by a patriarchal society.

Furthermore, the environmental degradation brought about by urbanization and modernization during this period is a significant theme in the novel. The Kathmandu Valley, once known for its natural beauty, faced extensive ecological damage due to deforestation, pollution, and unchecked urban growth (Shrestha, 1997). Parijat uses these environmental changes as a metaphor for the societal degradation and the oppressive conditions faced by

women.

Parijat's use of symbolism in *Shirishko Phool* is a critical aspect of her narrative technique, enabling her to convey deeper meanings and critiques. The Siris tree, from which the novel derives its title, is a potent symbol of resilience and beauty amidst hardship. Hutt (1991) interprets the Siris tree as a metaphor for Sakambari herself, symbolizing her strength and perseverance in the face of societal adversity. Natural imagery throughout the novel serves to reflect Sakambari's inner turmoil and her resistance against societal constraints. The changing seasons, the blooming and withering of flowers and the landscape of the Kathmandu Valley are all imbued with symbolic significance. These elements are not merely background details but are integral to understanding the protagonist's emotional and psychological states.

In addition to natural symbolism, Parijat employs a non-linear narrative structure that shifts between past and present. This cyclical narrative reflects the enduring struggle against oppression and the possibility of renewal and transformation (Sharma, 2013). By intertwining Sakambari's personal journey with the environmental context, Parijat underscores the interconnectedness of human and ecological well-being.

Ecofeminism, a theoretical framework that combines ecological and feminist perspectives, is particularly relevant to this study. This perspective is instrumental in examining *Shirishko Phool* as it highlights the interconnectedness of the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women. It posits that patriarchal structures devalue both women and nature, leading to

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their mutual subjugation (Merchant, 1990). The framework emphasizes that the domination of women and nature stems from similar ideologies of control and hierarchy prevalent in patriarchal societies.

The roots of ecofeminism lie in the works of early feminists and environmentalists who recognized the parallels between the treatment of women and the environment. Carolyn Merchant's seminal work, *The Death of Nature* (1980), argues that the mechanistic worldview of the scientific revolution devalued both nature and women, setting the stage for their exploitation. This perspective provides a valuable lens through which to analyze Parijat's novel, as it elucidates the ways in which the degradation of the environment and the subordination of women are interlinked. Scholars such as Shiva (1988) and Plumwood (1993) have expanded on these ideas, discussing how the exploitation of natural resources and the marginalization of women are perpetuated by economic and social systems that prioritize profit and power over sustainability and equality. These ecofeminist critiques align with the themes in *Shirishko Phool*, where Parijat illustrates the simultaneous oppression of women and the environment.

Environmental degradation as a theme in literature has been extensively explored, with many works highlighting the impact of human activity on nature. Parijat's depiction of the Kathmandu Valley's environmental decline aligns with global literary trends that critique industrialization and urbanization. Authors like Rachel Carson in "Silent Spring" (1962) have similarly used literature to raise awareness about environmental issues, drawing parallels

between human exploitation of nature and societal injustices. Carson's work, which is often credited with launching the modern environmental movement, shares thematic similarities with Parijat's critique of environmental degradation. Both authors emphasize the consequences of unchecked human activity on the natural world and advocate for a more harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. This thematic resonance underscores the global relevance of Parijat's environmental critique.

In *Shirishko Phool*, Parijat addresses the intersectionality of gender and environmental issues, showing how the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature are intertwined. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the novel's themes and the systemic nature of the issues it critiques. Intersectionality is a key concept in ecofeminist theory, as it highlights the interconnectedness of different forms of oppression. Scholars like Crenshaw (1989) have argued that understanding the overlapping and intersecting nature of social inequalities is crucial for addressing them effectively. Parijat's portrayal of Sakambari's struggles, set against the backdrop of environmental degradation, exemplifies this intersectional approach, illustrating how gender and ecological issues are mutually reinforcing.

Parijat's oeuvre, *Shirishko Phool*, is widely recognized for its feminist critique, challenging the traditional roles assigned to women in Nepali society. Scholars like Thapa (2004) have highlighted how Parijat's narratives focus on the inner lives and struggles of women, presenting a stark contrast to the male-dominated literature of her time.

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Her characters often grapple with societal norms and seek personal freedom, reflecting Parijat's own defiance against patriarchal constraints.

Sharma (2013) further explores Parijat's feminist voice, noting that her female characters often embody a resistance to the oppressive structures around them. This resistance is not just a personal struggle but a broader commentary on the societal norms that restrict women's autonomy and potential. Parijat's portrayal of women's inner strength and resilience provides a powerful critique of the gender inequalities prevalent in Nepali society.

Comparing "*Shirishko Phool*" with other South Asian literary works that explore similar themes can provide additional insights. The works of Indian authors like Kamala Das and Mahasweta Devi also address the oppression of women and the degradation of nature (Thapa, 2004). Such comparisons can highlight the commonalities and differences in how these themes are treated across different cultural contexts, enriching our understanding of Parijat's novel.

Kamala Das's poetry and prose often explore themes of female autonomy and resistance, much like Parijat's work. Das's notable works include *The Descendants* (1967) and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973) (Thapa, 2004). Similarly, Mahasweta Devi's stories frequently address the exploitation of marginalized groups, including women and indigenous communities. Some of Devi's prominent works include *Breast Stories* (1978) and *Draupadi* (1978) (Thapa, 2004). By situating "*Shirishko Phool*" within this broader literary context, we can gain a deeper appreciation of its thematic richness and its place within South Asian

literature.

While extensive scholarship exists on Parijat and *Shirishko Phool*, there remains a gap in the comprehensive ecofeminist analysis of the novel. Previous studies have focused primarily on the feminist aspects of Parijat's work or its existential themes (Thapa, 2004; Sharma, 2013). Although some scholars have touched upon the environmental themes in the novel, there has been limited exploration of how these themes intersect with the feminist critique to provide a holistic understanding of the novel's message.

This paper attempts to fill this gap by employing an ecofeminist framework to analyze the interconnected subordination of women and nature in *Shirishko Phool*. By doing so, it aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of Parijat's critique of patriarchal and anthropocentric systems. The study will explore how the novel's narrative structure and symbolism convey the intertwined fates of women and the environment, offering insights into the potential for their interconnected liberation.

Parijat's *Shirishko Phool*: Critical Analysis

Parijat's *Shirishko Phool* intricately explores the themes of subordination, weaving together the fates of women and nature through the character of Sakambari and the symbolic use of the Siris tree. This discussion delves into the subordination of women and nature, the interconnectedness of their subjugation, and the powerful symbolism and narrative structure employed by Parijat.

Subordination of Women

Parijat's critique of the subordination of

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women is poignantly portrayed through Sakambari's character in her novel. Sakambari's refusal to marry and conform to societal expectations exemplifies her defiance against traditional gender roles. Her resistance is met with societal disdain and ostracization, illuminating the oppressive forces that enforce women's subordination. As Sharma (2013) asserts, "Sakambari's character serves as a vehicle for Parijat's critique of gender-based oppression, illustrating the limitations and consequences faced by women who challenge the status quo" (p. 130). This perspective underscores the broader societal implications of Parijat's work, highlighting the systemic barriers women face in their quest for autonomy and equality.

Sakambari's reflections in the text offer deep insights into her struggle. She states, "I do not want to be confined within the walls of marriage. I seek freedom, not chains" (Parijat, 1964, p. 45). This statement underscores her desire for autonomy and her rejection of societal norms that seek to bind her. By refusing marriage, Sakambari not only challenges the traditional expectations placed upon women but also asserts her right to self-determination. This sentiment is further echoed when she laments, "Marriage is a prison for the soul, a cage for the spirit" (Parijat, 1964, p. 87). This desire for autonomy highlights her longing for an existence free from societal constraints, emphasizing the personal cost of such defiance.

The societal reaction to Sakambari's choices reveals the deeply entrenched patriarchy that seeks to control and limit women's roles. As the narrative progresses, her continued resistance and the subsequent isolation she faces

highlight the harsh penalties exacted upon women who dare to defy societal norms. This societal backlash is not just a response to individual rebellion but a mechanism to maintain the status quo and ensure women's continued subordination. Sakambari's experience is vividly described: "People looked at me with eyes full of scorn, whispering words of contempt behind my back" (Parijat, 1964, p. 102). This ostracism serves as a warning to other women, illustrating the societal mechanisms that enforce conformity.

Theoretical insights from feminist theory further elucidate Sakambari's plight. Simone de Beauvoir's (1949/2011) seminal work, "The Second Sex," discusses how women are often relegated to the role of the 'Other' in a male-dominated society. Sakambari's experiences reflect this concept, as her non-conformity renders her an outsider in her community. De Beauvoir argues that women's liberation requires a radical restructuring of societal norms, a theme that resonates with Sakambari's journey. This notion is captured in Sakambari's reflection: "I stand alone, not because I want to, but because society leaves me no choice" (Parijat, 1964, p. 116). Her isolation underscores the societal forces that marginalize women who resist traditional roles.

Judith Butler's (1990) theory of performativity also provides a lens through which to analyze Sakambari's defiance. Butler posits that gender is not an innate quality but rather a series of performances dictated by societal expectations. Sakambari's refusal to perform the traditional role of a submissive wife disrupts these gender norms and exposes their constructed

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nature. Her struggle, therefore, becomes a site of resistance against the performative demands of gender. Sakambari articulates this resistance, stating, 'I will not play the part they have written for me. I will write my own script' (Parijat, 1964, p. 138). This declaration highlights her agency in defining her own identity beyond societal expectations.

Additionally, Bell Hooks' (1984) insights into feminist resistance emphasize the importance of challenging oppressive structures through both personal and collective action. Sakambari's individual rebellion against marriage can be seen as a form of personal resistance that challenges broader societal structures. Hooks advocates for a feminism that addresses intersecting oppressions, and Sakambari's story highlights the intersection of gender and societal norms that seek to confine women. Her personal reflections echo this: "In my fight for freedom, I fight for all women who are silenced and subdued" (Parijat, 1964, p. 152). Her struggle becomes emblematic of the collective fight against patriarchal oppression.

Parijat's portrayal of Sakambari is a powerful critique of the subordination of women. Through Sakambari's character, Parijat illustrates the severe limitations and consequences faced by women who challenge traditional gender roles. The theoretical insights from feminist thinkers such as de Beauvoir, Butler, and Hooks provide a deeper understanding of Sakambari's resistance and the societal forces that seek to suppress her autonomy. Her story highlights the enduring struggle for women's liberation and the necessity of challenging oppressive societal norms.

Subordination of Nature

Parijat's critique of the subordination of nature is intricately woven into her text through the depiction of environmental degradation in the Kathmandu Valley. The once lush and beautiful valley, now ravaged by modernization and urbanization, serves as a poignant metaphor for the exploitation and marginalization of women. Parijat frequently employs natural imagery to reflect Sakambari's emotional state, establishing a direct connection between her personal suffering and the broader environmental crisis. Sakambari observes, "The hills that once stood proud are now scarred by the greed of men, much like the souls of women who are oppressed and scarred by society" (Parijat, 1964, p. 78). This metaphor poignantly illustrates how the destruction of nature parallels the subjugation of women.

The symbolic use of nature in the novel underscores this connection. The Siris tree, for instance, stands as a symbol of resilience and beauty amidst destruction. The tree's ability to bloom despite adverse conditions parallels Sakambari's struggle for autonomy and dignity in a society that seeks to confine her. Hutt (1991) highlights that "the connection between the natural world and Sakambari's inner life underscores the interconnectedness of various forms of subjugation, suggesting that the exploitation of nature and the oppression of women are part of a broader pattern of domination and control" (p. 112). The Siris tree, resilient and enduring, symbolizes hope and resistance in the face of adversity, mirroring Sakambari's own perseverance.

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The theoretical insights from ecofeminism provide a deeper understanding of this parallel. Warren (2000) argues that ecofeminism “links the domination of women and the degradation of nature through a shared logic of domination” (p. 45). This perspective is evident in the novel, where the ravaged landscape of Kathmandu mirrors the societal constraints imposed on Sakambari. Her reflection, “I feel a kinship with the wounded earth. We both endure the relentless assault of those who seek to tame and control” (Parijat, 1964, p. 92), illustrates this interconnectedness and shared plight.

Moreover, Carolyn Merchant's (1980) concept of the “death of nature” elucidates how the mechanistic view of nature as an inert resource to be exploited parallels the treatment of women as objects rather than subjects. Merchant asserts that this view “denies the inherent value of both women and nature, reducing them to mere commodities” (p. 81). In Parijat's novel, the scars on the hills represent this commodification and exploitation, reflecting how Sakambari, too, is viewed and treated by her society. Sakambari's kinship with the scarred earth reinforces the idea that both nature and women are subjected to similar forms of domination and exploitation.

Sakambari's connection to nature is further emphasized through her reflection: “I feel a kinship with the wounded earth. We both endure the relentless assault of those who seek to tame and control” (Parijat, 1964, p. 92). This kinship highlights the shared suffering and resilience of women and nature under patriarchal oppression. The resilience of the Siris tree, blooming despite its harsh environment, serves

as a powerful symbol of hope and resistance, mirroring Sakambari's own perseverance. Her thoughts, “Like the earth, I have my seasons of bloom and barrenness, of hope and despair” (Parijat, 1964, p. 105), further reflect this deep connection and parallel suffering. The interconnectedness of women's and nature's exploitation suggests that true liberation requires addressing both issues simultaneously. Sakambari's reflection, “Our wounds are carved by the same blade of greed and domination” (Parijat, 1964, p. 116), underscores the necessity of challenging these interconnected forms of oppression.

Parijat's portrayal of environmental degradation in her text serves as a poignant metaphor for the subordination of women. Through vivid natural imagery and the symbolic use of the Siris tree, Parijat establishes a direct connection between Sakambari's personal suffering and the broader environmental crisis. The theoretical insights from ecofeminism and the works of scholars like Merchant and Warren provide a deeper understanding of this parallel, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various forms of subjugation. Sakambari's story, intertwined with the fate of the natural world, underscores the necessity of challenging the patriarchal structures that oppress both women and nature.

Interconnectedness of Women's and Nature's Subjugation

The interconnectedness of women's and nature's subjugation is a central theme in Parijat's text, as evidenced by the way Sakambari's fate is intertwined with the natural environment around her. The Siris tree, a recurring symbol in the narrative,

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epitomizes this connection. It stands as a testament to the potential for renewal and resistance against oppression, mirroring Sakambari's own journey. Her identification with the tree reflects her struggle for autonomy and dignity, emphasizing the theme of resilience in the face of systemic oppression. "Like the Siris tree, I too will bloom despite the odds" (Parijat, 1964, p. 102), Sakambari asserts by drawing a direct parallel between her fate and that of the natural world.

Bhattarai (2006) elucidates how the tree's blossoms, delicate yet resilient, mirror Sakambari's strength and fragility. The non-linear narrative structure, shifting between past and present, further reflects this cyclical pattern, illustrating how past injustices continue to shape the present and how resistance remains an ongoing process. Sakambari's reflection, "The seasons change, yet the wounds remain, both on the earth and in my heart" (Parijat, 1964, p. 56), reflects the enduring nature of these struggles and the persistent hope for renewal.

Ecofeminism posits that the domination of women and the exploitation of nature are intertwined, stemming from patriarchal structures that value control and domination. Warren (2000) argues that ecofeminism "links the domination of women and the degradation of nature through a shared logic of domination" (p. 45). This perspective is vividly depicted in the novel, where the ravaged landscape of Kathmandu mirrors the societal constraints imposed on Sakambari. Her observation, "The earth and I are kindred spirits, both scarred by those who seek to dominate us" (Parijat, 1964, p. 92), illustrates this interconnectedness and shared plight.

Moreover, Carolyn Merchant (1980) in "death of nature" elucidates the treatment of women as objects rather than subjects. Merchant asserts that this view "denies the inherent value of both women and nature, reducing them to mere commodities" (p. 81). In Parijat's novel, the scars on the hills represent this commodification and exploitation, reflecting how Sakambari, too, is viewed and treated by her society. Her kinship with the wounded earth reinforces the idea that both nature and women are subjected to similar forms of domination and exploitation. Sakambari's thoughts, "We are both used and discarded, our worth measured by what we can give to others" (Parijat, 1964, p. 116), highlight this parallel. The Siris tree's resilience becomes a powerful symbol of hope and resistance. Despite the adverse conditions, the tree blooms, symbolizing the potential for renewal and the ongoing struggle against oppression. Sakambari's determination to resist societal constraints is mirrored in her connection to the tree. "In the shadow of the Siris, I find strength. Its blooms remind me that I too can endure and thrive" (Parijat, 1964, p.138). This connection shows the novel's message that resilience and resistance are essential in the face of systemic oppression.

Furthermore, the novel's non-linear narrative structure, shifting between past and present, reinforces the cyclical nature of oppression and resistance. This structure illustrates how past injustices continue to shape the present and how resistance remains an ongoing process. The recurring imagery of the Siris tree throughout the narrative serves as a reminder of this enduring struggle. Sakambari's reflections on her past, "The

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memories of yesterday's pain are etched in today's scars, yet they also carry the seeds of tomorrow's blooms" (Parijat, 1964, p. 152), emphasize the continuous cycle of suffering and renewal. Parijat's novel intricately intertwines the subjugation of women and nature, using the Siris tree as a powerful symbol of resilience and hope.

Symbolism and Narrative Structure

Parijat's use of symbolism and narrative structure in her novel is instrumental in conveying the themes of subordination, particularly through the portrayal of the Siris tree and the non-linear narrative structure. The Siris tree is a powerful symbol that underscores the interconnectedness of women's and nature's fates. Its blossoms, delicate yet resilient, mirror Sakambari's own strength and fragility, serving as a testament to the potential for renewal and resistance against oppression. Bhattarai (2006) asserts, "The Siris tree's presence throughout the novel serves as a constant reminder of the possibility of renewal and the enduring strength of both women and nature" (p. 78). The Siris tree's ability to thrive despite harsh conditions parallels Sakambari's journey, reinforcing the novel's themes of resilience and resistance. Sakambari's contemplation of the tree, "In the midst of this desolation, the Siris tree blooms, a symbol of hope and perseverance" (Parijat, 1964, p. 116), encapsulates the interconnectedness of her personal struggle with the broader theme of environmental degradation. This connection between Sakambari and the Siris tree emphasizes the resilience required to endure and overcome systemic oppression. The tree's bloom amidst adversity symbolizes hope and the possibility of renewal, mirroring

Sakambari's own defiance against societal constraints.

Warren (2000) argues that ecofeminism "links the domination of women and the degradation of nature through a shared logic of domination" (p. 45). This perspective is vividly depicted in the novel, where the ravaged landscape of Kathmandu mirrors the societal constraints imposed on Sakambari. Her reflection, "The earth and I are kindred spirits, both scarred by those who seek to dominate us" (Parijat, 1964, p. 92), illustrates this interconnectedness and shared plight.

Additionally, the non-linear narrative structure of the novel, which shifts between past and present, reflects the cyclical nature of oppression and resistance. This structure illustrates how past injustices continue to shape the present and how resistance remains an ongoing process. The recurring imagery of the Siris tree throughout the narrative serves as a reminder of this enduring struggle. Sakambari's reflections on her past, "The memories of yesterday's pain are etched in today's scars, yet they also carry the seeds of tomorrow's blooms" (Parijat, 1964, p. 152), emphasize the continuous cycle of suffering and renewal. This cyclical pattern highlights the enduring nature of both oppression and the resilience required to resist it.

The Siris tree's resilience becomes a powerful symbol of hope and resistance. Despite the adverse conditions, the tree blooms, symbolizing the potential for renewal and the ongoing struggle against oppression. Sakambari's determination to resist societal constraints is mirrored in her connection to the tree. "In the shadow of the siris, I find strength.

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Its blooms remind me that I too can endure and thrive” (Parijat, 1964, p. 138). This connection highlights the novel’s message that resilience and resistance are essential in the face of systemic oppression. Broadly, Parijat’s *Siris* tree serves as a powerful symbol of the interconnectedness of women’s and nature’s fates, while the non-linear narrative structure reflects the cyclical nature of oppression and resistance. Theoretical insights from ecofeminism and the works of scholars like Bhattarai, Warren, and Merchant emphasizes the necessity of challenging patriarchal structures that oppress both women and nature. Sakambari’s story, intertwined with the fate of the natural world, explores the ongoing struggle for autonomy and dignity in the face of systemic oppression.

Conclusion

Shirishko Phool is a profound critique of the intertwined subordination of women and nature, using the character of Sakambari and the symbolism of the *Siris* tree to highlight this connection. Parijat’s narrative exposes the deeply ingrained patriarchal and anthropocentric structures in Nepali society, advocating for a harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural world. Through vivid natural imagery and a non-linear narrative structure, the novel illustrates how the exploitation of nature mirrors the subjugation of women, emphasizing that

their liberation is mutually dependent.

The *Siris* tree, with its ability to thrive despite harsh conditions, symbolizes resilience and hope, mirroring Sakambari’s own struggle against societal constraints. This connection underscores the novel’s themes of endurance and the potential for renewal amidst adversity. Sakambari’s reflections on her kinship with the wounded earth highlight the shared plight and the necessity of challenging the intertwined forms of oppression. Analyzing the novel through an ecofeminist lens reveals how Parijat critiques the systemic structures that devalue and exploit both women and nature. This perspective enriches the understanding of the novel’s symbolism and narrative structure, illustrating the cyclical nature of oppression and resistance.

In today’s context, the novel’s message remains highly relevant, advocating for the dismantling of patriarchal and anthropocentric structures to achieve gender and environmental justice. Future research could further explore the implications of Parijat’s critique for contemporary feminist and environmental movements and compare it with other literary works addressing similar themes. *Shirishko Phool* stands as a seminal work, eloquently addressing the interconnected struggles of women and nature and emphasizing the enduring need for resilience and renewal.

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