



# Representation of Ecology in Lakshmi Raj Sharma's *The Tailor's Needle*

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## Abstract

*The study of Ecology emerged during 1990s and first introduced in the U.S. Ecology represents the relationship between human and nature. It takes an earth centred approach to literary studies as Feminist Writings talk about women centred society and Marxism brings awareness of modes of production and Economic. Ecology discusses interconnection between nature and culture, cultural artefacts in Language and Literature. Nature could be presented through culture. Eco-criticism examines the relationship between writers, texts, and nature. This kind of texts mostly portrays the understanding of natural world. Lakshmi Raj Sharma presents that the death of a person could be well expressed by nature with violent actions where poets express in Elegies. In *The Tailor's Needle* the author presents nature as a happy giver. Nature plays a vital part in immensely complex global system where energy, matter, and ideas interact. Most Ecological texts talk about a common motivation that nature always understands humans but we fail to comprehend it. It inspires the people. Sometimes the human actions harm the planet's basic life support system. Literary texts on Ecology create space to restore nature. Eco-Criticism theory analyses the contact between human and nature presented in the literary texts and create awareness to among the people. The Literary works like *The Tailor's Needle* talks about ecology in partial.*

**Keywords:** Ecology, Eco-Criticism, Human, Nature, Relationship

## Introduction

Eco critic encourages the readers to think seriously about the relationship between human and nature, aesthetic dilemmas, and profound ecological implication in Language and Literature. Historians, Research Scholars, Anthropologists, and Philosophers help reforming the nature with understanding. Eco-Criticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works. The works were published in the mid-1990s. They are The Eco Criticism Reader, edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and The Environmental Imagination by Lawrence Buell. In the United States, Eco Criticism is associated with the Association for the study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) where group of scholars gather once a year and discusses the environmental matters. ASLE jointly publishes with Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE).

## Representation of Ecology

William Ruecker is the first person to use the term 'Eco-Criticism' (Barry 240). Ruecker published an article entitled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-Criticism". He wrote the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of Literature in his writing (Reprinted in The Eco-Criticism Reader 107).

The writers and scholars started publishing works on Eco-theory and Eco-Criticism in the late 1960s and 1970s since the exploitation of environment. However, there was no organised movement to study the ecology works. These works totally scattered and found under different subject headings such as pastorals, human ecology, regionalism, American studies and etc. Marxist critic Raymond Williams wrote pastoral literature titled The Country and the City. It was published in 1973, in which Williams observed the lamentation for losses in pastoral ones, and went on to profess a decidedly green socialism. Joseph Meeker's The Comedy of Survival (1974) is another early ecocritical text which presents the argument between human and nature. Environmental philosopher Meeker argues that, the evolution of Western tradition and culture cause the crisis of environment with the separation of culture from nature.

From the late 1990s, new branches of ASLE and affiliated organization started in the U.K, Korea, Japan, New Zealand (ASLEC-ANZ), Australia, India (OSLE-India), Taiwan, Europe and Canada. Eco criticism could be studied in three ways as Cultural Ecology, Critical theory, and Eco linguistics. Cultural ecology is the study of human adaptation to social and physical environments. Critical theory is a school of thought that

stresses the reflective assessment and critique of society and culture by applying knowledge from the social sciences and the humanistic. Eco linguistics research considers the social context in which language is embedded and the ecological context in which society embedded.

Lakshmi Raj Sharma was born in 1954 at Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, India. He is an author, novelist and academician. He studies in University of Allahabad. He works as a professor at the department of English and Modern European language in the University of Allahabad. His grandfather Rai Bahadur Lakshmi Narain Sharma, a barrister, and his father Indra Raj Sharma was one of the notable men in Mirzapur. His eldest brother Ajay Raj Sharma was the Police Commissioner of Delhi and later he became the Director General of Border Security force. Lakshmi Raj Sharma married Bandana Sharma, a fellow Professor. He received the Doctor of Philosophy from the same University in 1986. He was selected for the Indian Civil Service, but opted for an academic career.

The Tailor's Needle was published in 2009 by Picnic Publishing. The novel covers the years 1917-1949. The novel ends a little after Indian Independence. Even though the novel is written during Independence struggle it discusses only the life of Sir Sarswati. Sir Saraswati was the head of the family. Savitri was his wife. They had three children Maneka, Yogendra, and Sita. The family had been living in Kashinagar. The Maharaja of Kashinagar was on dead bed at the beginning of the novel. The people were sad about the health condition of Maharaja. The author presents that the trees surrounded the palace were in dead silence with its calmness and sunk in sorrows.

The Maharaja worried about his two sons who contradict with each other. Ranbir is the eldest son of the Maharaja who was always with his uncle Udai Singh. Raghubir, the second son of the Maharaja was left alone. Raghubir behaved with his people softly but Ranbir never worried about his countrymen. The Maharaja left his Will to Sir Saawati before his death. Ranbir and his uncle's cruel behaviour disturbed Sir Saraswati. They were always after Maharaja's Will. So, Sir Saraswati left the Will in the palace under another person's custody and left Kashinagar.

Sir Saraswati's children were sad to migrate but the description of Ganga by him made his family member to migrate to Mirzapur. Savitri changed her mind to leave Kashinagar and settle in a holly river land. The children thought about a tree, where they used to play every day. Savitri, Maneka, and Sita worried about

the migration but Yogendra just recollected his favourite proverb “Be the tailor’s needle, which passes through every cloth without making distinction” (Sharma 64).

In Mirapur, Sir Saraswati went to forest to meet Swami Jeevananda with his son. He wanted his son to become an ashram. Swami Jeevananda predicted his son’s life and told it to Sir Saraswati. Further, he told about the deforestation to Sir Saraswati. The Indian people revolted against the British government during this time but Sir Saraswati never participated in freedom fighting. Sethji was a business man in Mirzapur. He was threatened by the great robber Jhanda Daaku. Sethji wanted help from Sir Saraswati. He caught the thieves with his great intelligence. He became famous in Mirzapur.

“The journey was backbreaking. But the beauty of the Himalayan foothills helps you to forget the damage your body is enduring (Sharma 11-12)”. Nature makes the human to forget his suffering. The trees, flowers, birds, and animals make a long journey very short. The people who have aesthetic sense forget their sorrows, when they look at nature. Nature plays a major role in the lives of human beings. In this context nature appears to be a doctor which cures and reduces pain. When Sir Saraswati undertook a long trip to Sripur he was exhausted, but the beauty of Himalayan foothills refreshed him.

In Tintern Abbey, Wordsworth stated that whenever he was in city, the memory of his first visit of Tintern Abbey reduces his stress. “The conifers-the Devdars and the other pine trees-surrounded the Maharaja’s palace like tall sentries. They stood so still this afternoon, as if they were mourning more earnestly than the men (Sharma 12)”. These lines convey, nature offers consolation to human beings, who suffer. Here, Lakshmi Raj Sharma tries to say that nature tries to understand man but sometimes man fails. In the novel, pine trees and devdars trees mourned for the death of Maharaja. It shows quality of human in nature. In Silappathikaram, when Kovalan killed by Pandia Maharaja, the wind stopped itself. The author shows the relationship between man and nature. Sometimes, when justice is denied, the wind shows its anger through tempest. The village people believe that Owl’s cry is a sure sign of death. It may appear silly but all people know that birth and death could not be stopped forever by the science.

Nature always talks with people. Many people visit sea shore to ease themselves. Sometimes people speak with nature. It gives relaxation to worried men. The violation of nature indicates the danger of humanity. When Saraswati looks at the disappointed, he starts to think about his despair future. Sir Saraswati sees the

frustrated sun which indicates his nation disappointed by Maharaja's death. Saraswati saw dawn; it means the end of the day as well as end of Kashinagar. If day begins, it has to end, that is natural. The dawn warns the people of Kashinagar about the fore fall of Kashinagar.

“This was the one dread which the Rai Bahadur shared with his wife. In every other matter he was like a rock (18)”. The above line is aptable to show the quality of man by nature. Sometime a brave man is compared with a lion. At most of the time a man is compared with animal in bravery, fastness, and intelligence. In this context, Sir Saraswati's character is compared to a rock. Rock indicates stiffness, roughness, an unemotional. All these show that one has to depend on nature even qualify a person. It means that people could not live without relating with nature. Sir Saraswati being a strict man, he never mingles with his family members. So, Lakshmi Raj Sharma compared him with rock.

‘The sun rose next morning and its rays dispersed into the seven colours after kissing the glassy mountains ..... Human life was merely a floating dot on this vastness of fixity (Sharma 21)’. Sunrays closely related with human life. In the morning, the sun gives happiness and the same gives tiredness during dawn to the people. The author compares the sun being covered by dark clouds with human life. It conveys that human beings are temporary occupiers of the world. “You'll be seeing a beautiful river in Mirzapur, a river that can change everything for us” (Sharma 26). The river has the power to make the people forget their sorrows. It comforts the worried man.

The people need nature's support to qualify the good and bad character of a man. If a man is good, people use the symbol of milk to represent his character, if it is not so people could use the symbol of Fox, Crocodile, and Lion to represent the bad character of the man. “Could human beings be left alone all of a sudden to the dark, chilly nights outside?” (Sharma 30). From above quoted line Lakshmi Raj Sharma says that, a man cannot leave the world all alone. Nature always speaks with the humans.

On the cold gray stones, O Sea!

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thought arise in me (Tennyson's “Break, Break, Break” 2-4).

The death of Arthur Harlem was not believed by Tennyson. He went to seashore console himself. Tennyson said that sea won't stop his sorrows could not be stopped like waves. Tennyson felt that he was all alone after his friend's death but he thought sea is his only friend.

The north wind shall blow,

The north wind shall blow,

And we will have snow,

Yes, we will have snow. (Sharma, 36)

Nature always unites people. The above song is beautifully written by Lakshmi Raj Sharma about the nature. The flow of the north and west wind is a normal thing. It appears to be simple that do not have aesthetic sense. All feel wind but only some enjoys it. Savitri sung the song to her son, Yogendra. She not simply describes the nature but she enjoyed it. In this context, nature unites mother and son. When the people worry of the cold, the fire helps, at the same time when the people worry about fire water helps. Everything is well connected in the world.

Life of human being could be represented by natural phenomenon. Rough weather represents sufferings and uncomfortable situations. If anybody furious about somebody it could be compared with Volcano, which controls itself for years together and explode in one fine day. Nature is always connected with the human life. There is no life without nature. The people are depending nature for everything, even for comparing human character.

“Bertram was worried that the cat was now not far from getting out of the bag” (Sharma 245). A cat inside a bag shouts for help to save itself. It knows well that it could not escape from the bag without shouting likewise Maneka knows that she could escape from her family without telling about her husband's death. Betram says the Maneka is worried about her husband's death but she has hidden that from her family. When truth revealed to Betram, he feels that one day truth would be discovered like shouting cat in the bag. It shows how much Lakshmi Raj Sharma is attracted with nature.

“The two sat in their car and drove to a park. They sat on the green benches, quit unaffected by the beautiful bottle brush trees alternating with pines, along the green lawn” (Sharma 248). People visit garden,

when they are in depression. Nature helps people to forget their sorrows for a short term. It means that nature speaks with the people. In this context when Yogendra knows that his sister killed her husband, he silently went to his father who was in the garden to reveal truth. There Yogendra feels that nature never betrays him because if this issue is discussed in the family, news might spread out but Yogendra believes in nature and revealed the murder of Mohan to his father. When author was writing this part he would have remembered Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey". There Wordsworth mentions that nature never betray likewise Yogendra in the novel The Tailor's Needle thinks that nature never betray.

## Conclusion

Man always has to depend on nature but there is no need for nature to depend on man. The people may think that they are superior to nature but the truth is that the nature is superior to all. It could bear human misdeeds but people could not. Nature has the power to create and destroy. In the novel The Tailor's Needle, Lakshmi Raj Sharma describes the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where most of the people sacrifice their lives to get freedom. But the author not discusses problems pertaining to independence. Lakshmi Raj Sharma's focus was on a particular family's problem and mostly he portrayed their relationship with nature. Close reading of the novel reveal the fact that there exists a deep bond between man and nature.

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