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### HUMAN EMBEDDEDNESS WITH NATURE IN SHAMSIE'S IN THE CITY BY THE SEA: AN ECOCRITICAL CRITIQUE

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#### ABSTRACT

This study deals with theme of human embeddedness with nature in the novel, *In the City by the Sea* by Kamila Shamsie through an ecocritical lens. It analyzes the relationship between humans and their natural surroundings, highlighting the significance of ecological consciousness, environmental degradation, and the potential for harmonious coexistence. Shamsie's vivid descriptions of the natural world emphasize its connection to the characters' emotional well-being. This study also examines how the novel intertwines environmental issues with broader social and political concerns. By employing an ecocritical framework, the study demonstrates the novel's role in fostering ecological consciousness and advocating for a sustainable relationship between humans and nature. Additionally, the present research briefly mentions Shamsie's portrayal of Karachi in novel, a highly urbanized city in Pakistan, as a representation of the environmental challenges faced by many cities worldwide. The current study is an addition to the existing body of knowledge in domain of ecocriticism and aims to make an authentic contribution and expand the scholarship on Pakistani fiction by exploring the human embeddedness with nature.

#### INTRODUCTION

Kamila Shamsie, a renowned Pakistani-British author, has made significant contributions to literature with her thought-provoking novels and insightful writings. In her early literary career, Shamsie gained recognition for her debut

novel, *In the City by the Sea*, which she wrote while still in college and published at the age of 25. Shamsie's diverse body of work, ranging from *Kartography* to *Home Fire*, demonstrates her literary prowess and has earned her numerous accolades and nominations, further solidifying her position as a prominent figure in contemporary literature. In her novels, the protagonists experience the loss of family or friends, often influenced by public events or the pervasive impact of politics on personal lives. The dominant theme of loss, both in terms of home and loved ones, permeates Shamsie's works. Symbolism plays a significant role in her texts, and an autobiographical element is discernible in her depiction of Karachi, the sea, and domestic life.

The novel *In the City by the Sea* by Kamila Shamsie (1998), offers a profound exploration of the intricate relationship between humans and the natural world. This novel touches upon the themes of human embeddedness within nature, ecological consciousness, and the potential for harmonious coexistence in *In the City by the Sea*. Set in Karachi, Pakistan, the narrative follows the life of Hasan, a young boy navigating the challenges of urban life while forging a deep connection with his coastal surroundings. By delving into the novel's portrayal of Hasan's experiences and the broader environmental context, we uncover the intricate web of relationships that exist between human beings and the natural environment. The novel *In the City by the Sea* explores the profound relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing the uneasiness that arises when one steps away from the familiar comforts of the past. The past symbolizes a sense of belonging, encompassing cherished concepts such as home, family, friendships, and the vibrant urban landscape of Karachi, which holds a significant nostalgic bond for the protagonist, Shamsie.

Ecocriticism, a branch of literary analysis that examines the relationship between literature and the environment, provides a valuable framework for understanding the novel's ecological themes. It allows us to explore how Shamsie's (1998) narrative presents nature as an integral part of the human experience, emphasizing the interdependence between individuals and their surroundings. Hasan's encounters with the sea, the sky, and the various flora and fauna illustrate the profound impact of the natural world on his emotional and psychological well-being.

The novel's setting in Karachi, a rapidly growing urban center grappling with issues of pollution, overcrowding, and environmental degradation, further highlights the importance of human-nature interconnectedness. Shamsie's (1998) vivid descriptions draw attention to the inherent beauty and fragility of the natural environment, which stands in stark contrast to the human-made challenges that threaten its survival. Through Hasan's eyes, readers are exposed to the consequences of urbanization, raising questions about the role of human agency in shaping the environment and the need for sustainable practices to ensure the well-being of both humans and nature.

In her debut novel, Shamsie (1998) skillfully captures the beauty of nature through vivid and accurate descriptions. From the lush greenery of trees to the vibrant hues of flowers, she paints a detailed picture of the natural world. The sun, the moon, and the sea come alive in her prose, showcasing her ability to

depict the magnificence of the environment. The protagonist, Hasan, plays a pivotal role in highlighting the significance of the natural world in literature. His deep appreciation and affection for nature serve as a reminder of its importance and influence. Shamsie portrays his character as someone who is attuned to the environment and finds solace and inspiration in its presence. Shamsie's (1998) portrayal of nature goes beyond mere scenery; it becomes a character in its own right. Through her evocative writing, she captures the essence and allure of the natural elements, drawing readers into a world where they can immerse themselves in its beauty. The novel showcases Shamsie's remarkable ability to bring nature to life on the pages of her book. Her accurate and vivid descriptions create a sensory experience for the readers, allowing them to feel the warmth of the sun, smell the fragrance of flowers, and hear the soothing sounds of the sea.

By emphasizing the importance of the natural world, Shamsie highlights its role as a source of inspiration and reflection in literature. Through Hasan's perspective, readers are reminded of the deep connection between humans and their environment, and the profound impact it can have on their lives.

### ***Research Questions***

1. How does the novel *In the City by the Sea* portray bond between human beings and their natural environment?
2. What are the key symbols and imagery related to nature in the novel, and how do they contribute to the understanding of human embeddedness with the natural world?

### ***Research Objectives***

1. To analyze the representation of human embeddedness with nature in the novel *In the City by the Sea* by Shamsie from an ecocritical perspective.
2. To identify and examine the various symbols and imagery associated with nature in the novel, exploring their significance in portraying the relationship between humans and the natural world.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Throughout the history of literature, the bond between humans and nature has been a recurring theme. From Wordsworth's critique of materialistic tendencies to Steinbeck's exploration of interconnectedness, authors have delved into this relationship in various ways. The emergence of ecocriticism as a literary theory further scrutinizes human exploitation of nature and analyzes how cultural creations influence our perception of this vital bond. By engaging with literature, we are provided with an opportunity to contemplate our responsibilities towards the environment and the ever-evolving dynamic between humans and nature.

Apriati's (2013) thesis, titled "An Analysis of Human-Nature Relationship in Children's Book *Julie* by Jean Craighead George (An Ecocritical Study)" explores the intricate dynamics between humans and nature depicted in the children's book. Focusing on Jean Craighead George's *Julie*, the thesis

employs an ecocritical lens to investigate the representation of human-nature relationships within the narrative. By analyzing the interactions between the young protagonist, Julie, and the natural environment, Apriati (2013) uncovers the underlying ecological messages embedded in the story. The thesis delves into the ways in which the author portrays Julie's connection with nature, emphasizing the significance of fostering a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world. The author examines how Julie's experiences in the wilderness contribute to her personal growth, instilling in her a deep appreciation and respect for the environment.

In the article "Exploring the Bond between Man and Nature in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*" by Basu (2020), the focus is on the relationship between humans and the natural world depicted in Amitav Ghosh's novel. Basu examines how the characters in the novel interact with their environment, particularly the Sundarbans mangrove forest in India. The article analyzes elements such as characterization, thematic development, and descriptive language to explore how the characters' experiences with nature shape their identities and relationships. Basu also highlights the ecological issues and conflicts portrayed in the novel, emphasizing the need to address environmental concerns and foster a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The study contributes to the field of eco-literary studies by providing insights into the profound connections between humanity and the natural world as depicted in *The Hungry Tide*.

In their article "An Eco-Critical Study of Khaled Hosseini's *And The Mountains Echoed*," Shah and Kumari (2019) analyze the ecological themes present in the novel. They employ an eco-critical perspective to explore the intricate connections between human characters and the natural environment. The authors highlight how Hosseini goes beyond traditional ecological literature by examining the impact of human actions on the environment. They delve into ecological motifs, such as landscapes and animal symbolism, and also consider the socio-cultural and political aspects of the story, illustrating the interconnectedness between society, individuals, and the environment. Drawing on ecocritical theories, the study provides a comprehensive examination of the ecological dimensions within *And The Mountains Echoed*, contributing to the field of eco-literary studies.

In their research article titled "Psychosocial Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *In the City by the Sea*," Premlatha and Swamy (2018) examine the impact of psychological and social factors on the lives of characters in the novel. This study examines the psychological and social influences on the character development of Hassan, an 11-year-old boy living under house arrest in a dictatorial regime. The death of his neighbor's child traumatizes Hassan, and he struggles to cope with the harsh reality. Shehryar, Hassan's father and a lawyer, prioritizes the continuity of life over political positions, reflecting his role as the protector of his family. In contrast, Salman, a staunch supporter of an opposition political party, embodies strong determination and willpower, prepared for sacrifices. The minor characters in the novel offer insights into the collective psychological state during the dictatorial era, marked by fear and intimidation. Each character responds differently based on their social

positions, highlighting the impact of psychological and social factors on individual behavior.

Saleem, Saleem, and Ifzal (2021) in their article titled “A Metahistorical Study of Kamila Shamsie’s *In the City by the Sea*,” delve into the intricate layers of history and its impact on the narrative structure and themes of Shamsie’s novel. This study focuses on the exploration of historiographical elements in Pakistani fiction, specifically in the novel *In the City by the Sea*. The authors analyze how the novel portrays the emotional upheaval and displacement caused by political and social turmoil. They examine how personal narratives are intertwined with larger historical events, providing a profound reflection on the human condition in Karachi. The article emphasizes the influence of history, both individual and collective, on the characters’ identities and their sense of belonging. Themes of nostalgia, loss, and the longing for stability in changing times are explored. The researchers also draw connections between the author’s own experiences and the fictional world, highlighting how Shamsie’s personal connection to Karachi contributes to the authenticity and emotional impact of the narrative. The study sheds light on the socio-political backdrop and its effects on the characters’ lives.

Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, it becomes apparent that there exists a gap in research regarding the exploration of human-nature interconnectedness. Consequently, this study endeavors to address this research gap by conducting an ecocritical analysis of the portrayal of human embeddedness with nature in the novel, *In the City by the Sea*.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

In this study, a qualitative research approach will be utilized as the research methodology. The primary focus of the research will involve analyzing the text of the novel *In the City by the Sea* to investigate its representation of the interconnections between humans and nature. Through a careful examination of the novel, significant elements such as themes, symbols, and imagery related to the natural world will be identified and explored. These findings will be examined from an ecocritical standpoint, providing insights into the ecological issues portrayed in the novel. The research methodology aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between humans and nature as depicted in Shamsie’s literary work.

Ecocriticism, as a relatively new field of literary study, has been subject to debates regarding its definition. The etymology of the term “Ecology” (oikos + logos) suggests that it refers to the understanding of household science. This implies that ecology encompasses more than just a binary relationship between organisms and their environment. It also includes the interconnectedness of the environment, society, and individuals. The critical approach of Ecocriticism emerged in the late 1980s in the United States and as Green Studies in the early 1990s in the United Kingdom. Ecocritics generally believe that human beings bear significant responsibility for environmental destruction. Consequently, the primary objective of Ecocriticism is to preserve and protect nature from any form of disaster.

Ecocriticism is also known as “Ecopoetics” and “Environmental Literary Criticism” (Glotfelty, 1996). Glotfelty (1996) offers a concise explanation, stating that ecocriticism entails the examination of the connection between literature and the natural world. Similar to how feminist criticism analyzes language and literature through a gender-conscious lens, and Marxist criticism incorporates an understanding of production modes and economic class in its textual analysis, ecocriticism adopts an earth-centric approach to the study of literature. Ecocriticism can be defined as a literary discipline that focuses on the Earth as its central subject matter and explores its representation within texts.

Ecocriticism emphasizes the idea that human nature is shaped by the environment and, in turn, has a profound impact on the natural world. It challenges the traditional notion of humans as dominant beings with a right to control and exploit nature, and instead promotes a more holistic and sustainable approach to our relationship with the environment. Glotfelty (2005) pinpoints that Ecocritical theory touches on “the interconnections between nature and culture”(p.21). Glotfelty (2005) further expands the scope of Ecocriticism in the same book, stating that humans bear responsibility for environmental issues. She emphasizes that Ecocriticism encompasses various genres beyond nature writing, as long as the works explore ecological awareness. Consequently, the examination of the relationship between humans and the physical world becomes a prominent theme in ecocritical studies. A fundamental principle shared by ecocriticism is the recognition of the interconnection between human culture and the natural environment, where both exert influence on one another. In essence, ecocriticism investigates how human actions impact nature and, in turn, how humans are influenced by nature in the formation of their culture. This exploration ultimately uncovers the intricate bond between human and non-human entities. Heise (1997) says that Ecocriticism deals with “the role that the natural environment plays” (p. 1) in society “and the way in which the relationship between humans and nature is envisioned” (p. 1). It can be inferred from Heise (1997), point of view that Ecocriticism focuses on the examination of nature's role, the valuation of nature, and the depiction of the human-nature relationship within literary texts. Shah & Kumari(2019) mentions that Arthur W. Gaalston introduced the term “Ecocide”as “extensive destruction, damage, or loss of ecosystems”. (p. 2)

### **TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

Kamila Shamsie's (1998) novel *In the City by the Sea* elaborates the interdependence between individuals and their environment. Through the transformation of the protagonist, Hasan, and his deep appreciation for nature, Shamsie highlights the profound influence of the natural world on human consciousness. During the mid-term holiday in Mamoo's house Hasan's most vivid memory would forever be the enchanting scent of pine-cones; serving as a gentle reminder of the profound connection humans share with nature, even amidst the chaos of daily life. Hassan still remembers and relishes the aroma of pine-cones “that pervaded his Mamoo's house.”(p.1)

From the above citation it is evident that Hasan felt a deep sense of embeddedness with nature, realizing that his existence was intricately intertwined with the natural world. The aroma transported him to serene forests, evoking a nostalgia for the earth's raw beauty. It awakened his senses, reminding him of the delicate balance and interdependence between humanity and the environment. The smell of pine-cones became a poignant symbol, urging Hasan to cherish and protect the precious bond that humankind shares with nature. The vivid display of nature's resilience and beauty reminded humans of their embeddedness in the natural world, serving as a gentle nudge to appreciate the interconnectedness between humanity and the environment.

Shamsie (1998) alludes to human embeddedness with nature by giving excellent description of the ferocious sun casting its scorching rays; and arrival of the summer months. The vibrant colors of purple, orange, and pink bougainvillea flowers gracefully droop along the boundary wall, seeking shelter beneath their own lush leaves. In the back garden, the hibiscus flowers display their pollen-tipped tongues, inviting insects and birds into their vibrant world. We find the phrase "a taste of summer months....and the hibiscus flowers"(p. 4) which focus on enchanting beauty of nature. The hibiscus flowers close their vibrant petals, resting after a day of pollination and nurturing. Humans, too, find solace in this rhythmic dance of nature. Witnessing the transformations and cycles within the plant world, they recognize their own transient existence and realized the profound interconnectedness with the natural realm. It is a reminder to cherish and preserve this delicate balance, for in the embrace of nature, humanity finds its true harmony.

In his (Hassan) uncle's garden each flower offers a unique experience, providing a respite from the challenges of everyday life. Surrounded by a vibrant array of flowers, one can escape the rigors of their daily routine and immerse themselves in nature's embrace. The sight of these flowers creates a picturesque scene, captivating the senses with their beauty. Seeking solace, Hasan finds himself seated in the garden, away from the imposing presence of Uncle Latif's prized "chikoo trees"(p.5). The house has two streams of sun-sparkling flow of water. The writer's fascination with the sun, flowers, garden, and diverse trees reflects an ecocritical perspective. Literature mirrors society's renewed interest in nature, emphasizing its significance. The fragrance of flowers offers an escape from reality, providing solace. At home, individuals often feel discontented and weary. Shamsie (1998) describes Hasan's gratefulness for the aroma that "made him feel as though Ami, Aba and he were somewhere different..." (p.8)

When Hasan arrives at his uncle's house with his parents, he observes various natural objects. Besides the sun, he can also see the moon during the night, which brings him immense pleasure and delight. His teacher has taught him about the moon, and Hasan contemplates that it rises to just the right height to be visible to sky watchers. There is a gardener responsible for removing pine trees from the surroundings, and he engages in play with Hasan by throwing pine cones at him. Inside the house, Hasan enjoys a peaceful sleep at his uncle's place. In the morning, when his uncle questions him about something

he hasn't done, Hasan truthfully informs him that he has stopped eating pomegranates. During his early childhood at the age of five, Hasan used to wake up in the morning. During that period, Hasan would eagerly inhale the fresh air, while the grass shimmered with dew that seemed to have been "sprinkled from the wings of fairies" (p. 4). Ecocriticism explores the relationship between animals and humans, emphasizing their interconnectedness. This connection is also evident in the novel, where Hasan's girlfriend, Zehra, has named her puppy after the president. Upon returning from his uncle's house with his parents after a week, Hasan notices significant transformations in the streets which offer a sight of air pollution and which "filled Hasan's nostrils.....made every intake of breath a conscious action". (p. 5)

Salman convinces his sister and Hasan to venture outside, where they witness a mesmerizing sight: clouds resembling a dragon and a red sun, accompanied by a sky filled with scattered pinecones. This display highlights the human embeddedness with environment. The story beautifully portrays Hasan's house, infused with the scent of pinecones, surrounded by pine trees, and even featuring a carpet made from these natural treasures. However, the withered state of the pinecones contrasts with their former vibrancy, reflecting the changing conditions of Hasan's maternal home.

The author has intentionally selected names that reflect human embeddedness with environment. Hasan, meaning beauty, and Gul, symbolizing a flower, serve as reminders of this bond. The novel intricately weaves together the natural surroundings with the human society, emphasizing the interplay between them. The story unfolds in two distinct seasons, winter and summer, prompting people to adapt their clothing choices based on the prevailing environment. This portrayal signifies the influence of the external surroundings on one's inner state. It underscores the notion that changes in the external environment can impact an individual's internal disposition. Shamsie(1998) points out that "two seasons of Almost-Winter and Absolute-Summer had been coexisting" (p. 21).

The branches of the trees appeared disordered and unkempt. Within the vicinity, two children, a boy and a girl of Hasan's age, roamed amidst "the heaps of garbage", (p.3) diligently scavenging for papers to sell in order to earn money. The author's intention is to shed light on people's disregard for the environment, as evidenced by the presence of a large garbage heap. The writer emphasizes the apathetic attitude prevalent in society, where little attention is paid to the proper management of waste.

The delightful sounds of animals resonate in the air. "Ku-kura Koo. Ku-kura Koo." The crowing of the rooster serves as a symbolic representation of our connection to the natural environment. It is not just the sounds of birds that bear significance, but also the association of animal names with people, like the mention of a person as the "bloody bird." This theme is explored within the realm of Ecocriticism. The writer observes that roosters have become irregular in their crowing patterns, often sounding their calls during the daytime. Salman Mamoon expresses his frustration with the rooster's

behavior, highlighting the disruption of natural rhythms in the urban environment. The delayed crowing of the rooster, due to the obstruction of raised walls, indicates a disconnection from the natural cycle of sunrise. Salman's own attempts to goad the rooster into crowing with his own noises can be seen as an example of human intervention and manipulation of natural sounds. Salman Mamoon's frustration with the rooster's untimely crowing reflects an underlying ecological concern. The statement, "Even the roosters are unpunctual in this city," (p. 24) suggests a disruption in the natural rhythms and cycles that govern both the human and non-human world. This observation serves as a microcosm of the larger ecological imbalance present in the city. The description of the rooster's delayed crowing due to raised walls demonstrates the human-made barriers interfering with the rooster's natural behavior. This can be seen as a metaphor for the ways in which urban development and human interventions disrupt the natural order and ecological harmony. The phrase, "bloody hell I am rural boy," (p. 24) expresses Salman's longing for the simplicity and naturalness of rural life, contrasting it with the complexities and disruptions of city living. Salman's attempt to 'goad' the rooster into crowing by making noises of his own reflects a desire for a return to a more authentic connection with nature. By mimicking the rooster's natural behavior, Salman seeks to recreate a semblance of the natural world within the confines of the city. This can be interpreted as a manifestation of the human longing to reconnect with nature and reclaim a sense of belonging in an increasingly urbanized and disconnected environment.

The rural setting is teeming with birds and crops, forming an intricate ecological tapestry. Each character in the novel is intricately connected to their natural surroundings. Hasan, for instance, "awoke every morning" (p. 31), and walked "barefoot" on "the grass" (p. 31) relishing the refreshing ambiance of the dew-laden dawn. Throughout the day, from morning to evening and into the night, the natural beauty of the environment unveils itself in various forms. The picturesque scenery and the glistening dew on the grass exemplify the wonders of nature. The morning breeze contributes to a healthier atmosphere.

Adopting an ecological perspective provides solace in discussing the serene aspects of morning, evening, grass, trees, and gardens, as skillfully depicted by the writer in this novel. Hasan finds respite as he lies amidst the *karonda tree*, reflecting upon past moments. Immersed in nature, he experiences a sense of pleasure and heightened clarity of thought. Stepping away from the pressures and anxieties of everyday life, Hasan finds solace in the beauty of the natural world. His close affinity with nature is evident, as he actively engages with birds touching "new born chicks stirring in the hand" (p. 54) and dipping "his hand into the mass of feathers" (p. 54) deriving joy from their presence. Hasan's deep appreciation for the natural environment keeps him connected to the peaceful serenity it offers.

Animals and lush greenery form the focal point around which the entire narrative revolves. During Hasan's chehnam visit to meet his relatives, nature accompanies him in every moment and every place he goes. Shamsie (1998) eloquently portrays Hasan's engagement with nature by mentioning that "Hasan squatted on the grass and pulled things in the view." (p. 94). The author

seamlessly weaves the presence of nature into the interactions and conversations, emphasizing its constant presence in Hasan's life and the connections it fosters between individuals near the verandah. In the verandah, where "Something shiny glinted in the bushes" (p. 94), Hasan watches his mother and other ladies, busy in reciting prayers. While looking the other side of verandah, Hassan found "bright yellow flowers of the laburnum tree" (p. 95). Hasan shows human embeddedness with the nature when he "stepped forward into the shade of the laburnum."(p. 95)

Plants, trees, and flowers encompass Hasan's entire world. During a tour with his cousins, Hasan becomes involved in the hunting of a beast, engaging in discussions about the value and worth of such creatures. Uncle Latif and Hasan encounter various birds and plants during their journey, prompting them to share their observations and insights. Shamsie masterfully captures the exquisite beauty of animals and plants, depicting them in a captivating manner within the narrative. Hasan suggests Lantcelittl natural methods of maintaining good eyesight "by eating carrots" (p. 117) and improving the glow of skin by using "lemon juice and salt" (p. 117). This thing indicates human embeddedness with nature.

Hasan ventures to the seaside and excitedly shares seashells with an elderly gentleman. The old man compares these seashells to others, engaging in a thoughtful comparison. Hasan's mind drifts to the mango tree that was recently cut down, a pang of nostalgia washing over him. Meanwhile, the gentle breeze in the garden fills Hasan's heart with joy. Immersed in the beach atmosphere, Hasan takes pleasure in the surroundings. Conversations revolve around frogs and toads, while Zahra and Hasan find respite, sitting on the grass and engaging in meaningful dialogue. Salman Mamoo humorously suggests disregarding notions of spirits and dolphins. Shamsie skillfully presents vivid imagery of animals, breathing life into the narrative. "The dragonflies sped up and began whirling frenetically like dusk-fairies to escape from between the enclosed palms of the Warlock."(p. 188)

Hasan plays with animals, birds and lives in the company of flowers. He is in the lap of nature whether he is in the state of happy or in the angry mood. In every season and situation he is very close to his human and nonhuman world. The arrival of "the first fruits of the season" (p. 207) in the city carries a "whisper of mangoes", (p. 207)bringing with it a sweet-sour aroma, and leaving an intoxicating impact on Hassan in Salman Mamoo's house, where mango tree is standing.

Throughout the entirety of the novel, Shamsie (1998) skillfully portrays the profound impact of nature on the lives of individuals. From the opening pages to the final chapter, the rich tapestry of the natural world is vividly depicted, making the novel a compelling example of nature writing. With a keen emphasis on trees, plants, birds, and animals, the narrative delves deep into the interconnectedness of these elements, serving as a fertile ground for exploring human embeddedness with nature. Shamsie's (1998) explicit portrayal of nature's influence creates a captivating narrative that invites readers to contemplate bond between humans and the environment that surrounds them.

## CONCLUSION

*In the City by the Sea* by Kamila Shamsie explores the theme of human embeddedness with nature through the protagonist Hasan's profound appreciation for the natural world. The novel portrays Hasan's deep connection to nature through vibrant descriptions of flowers, fragrances, and the rhythmic dance of plants, symbolizing the delicate balance and interdependence between humanity and the environment. Throughout the novel, Shamsie (1998) masterfully intertwines the lives of the characters with their natural surroundings, emphasizing their interplay and the deep connection between humans and their environment. The author's fascination with the sun, trees, and diverse flora reflects an ecocritical perspective, highlighting the significance of nature in society. Shamsie's descriptions evoke a sense of nostalgia and awaken the senses, emphasizing the transformative power of nature. Hasan finds solace in the garden, surrounded by a diverse array of flowers, escaping the chaos of daily life. However, the novel also reveals the consequences of human disregard for the environment, such as garbage heaps and disrupted natural rhythms. The stark contrast between the serenity of nature and the chaotic urban environment urges readers to reflect on the need to cherish and preserve the delicate balance between humanity and the natural world. The changing seasons underscore the influence of the external environment on one's internal disposition. Through rich descriptions of flora, fauna, and natural phenomena, the novel invites readers to contemplate the profound impact of nature on human lives and the importance of nurturing and protecting this bond. Ultimately, *In the City by the Sea* offers a compelling ecocritical reading, highlighting the theme of human embeddedness with nature and urging readers to appreciate, reflect upon, and safeguard the bond between humans and the natural world.

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