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How can childhood memories generate nostalgia, and how does nostalgia influence our decision-making processes? A postmodern study

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**Abstract**

In this postmodern study, this article explores the fascinating connection between childhood memories, nostalgia, and decision-making processes. This article specifically analyses Ali Sethi's novel "The Wish Maker" and its characters as nostalgic figures. This exploration offers a unique perspective on the interplay between nostalgia theory and literature, shedding light on the profound influence of our past on the choices we make. In this postmodern study, this research work is going to take a closer look at how childhood memories and nostalgia can impact the way we make decisions. This article explores the fascinating topic by examining Ali Sethi's novel "The Wish Maker" and its characters, specifically Zaki, his mother Zakia Shirazi, Dadi and Choti. Through a critical analysis of "The Wish Maker" in the lens of nostalgia, this article explores how nostalgia shapes the personalities of all the characters in the novel. By examining their journeys, this article gains a deeper understanding of how nostalgia can shape our perceptions, preferences, and ultimately, the choices we make. This exploration of nostalgia theory in the context of "The Wish Maker" offers a unique perspective on the interplay between literature and human psychology. It highlights the profound impact of past on present decision-making, and how nostalgia can shape lives in unexpected ways.

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**Introduction**

This article is going to explore the captivating world of nostalgia theory and how it shapes our choices. It takes a closer look at *The Wish Maker* and examines how nostalgia plays a

role in shaping the characters, especially Dadi, Zaki, and Choti. By analysing their experiences, the article gains a deeper understanding of how nostalgia influences readers' thoughts, preferences, and ultimately, the decisions they make.

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This article also explores the impact of nostalgia on the choices we make and examines how it shapes the personalities of its characters, particularly Zaki Shirazi, Dadi, and Choti. By analysing their experiences, the article gains insight into how nostalgia can shape perceptions, preferences, and decisions. Nostalgia is a powerful emotion that has been widely explored in literature and psychology. It is often depicted as a bittersweet longing for the past, a yearning for a sense of familiarity and comfort.

The term “nostalgia” originates from two Greek words: “nostos,” meaning “return home,” and “algos,” meaning “pain” or “ache.” Initially, nostalgia was considered a medical condition, believed to be a form of homesickness experienced by soldiers far away from home. Over time, the definition of nostalgia has evolved. Today, it is widely understood as a sentimental longing for the past or a yearning for a place, time, or experience that holds personal significance. It is a complex mix of emotions, combining happiness, longing, and a touch of melancholy. Nostalgia allows you to revisit cherished memories and relive the emotions associated with them. It often arises when encounter triggers such as familiar scents, music, or visual cues that transport back to specific moments in the past. In recent years, nostalgia has gained attention in psychological research. Studies have shown that nostalgia can have positive effects on our well-being. It can provide a sense of continuity and connectedness, boost our mood, and even enhance our feelings of social belonging. So, nostalgia is not just a longing for the past; it is a powerful emotional experience that shapes our present and future. It allows us to cherish the memories, find meaning in personal history, and navigate the complexities of life with a sense of rootedness and appreciation.

In "*The Wish Maker*" by Ali Sethi, nostalgia plays a significant role in shaping all the characters, particularly Dadi, Zaki and Choti. Dadi, the grandmother in the story, embodies nostalgia as she reminisces about her youth and the traditions of her time. Her longing for the past influences her decisions and actions, as she holds onto the memories that shaped her identity. Through Dadi, Sethi highlights how nostalgia can shape the perceptions and influence choices, even as navigate the complexities of the present. Choti, on the other hand, represents a different aspect of nostalgia. As a young character, she is caught between the traditions of the past and the allure of the modern world. Her internal struggle reflects the conflict between holding onto nostalgia and embracing change. Sethi skillfully explores the tension between nostalgia and progress, offering insights into the complexities of personal growth and the choices we make. By examining the experiences of Dadi and Choti, "*The Wish Maker*" provides a nuanced exploration of nostalgia and its

effects on personality. It reminds that nostalgia can be both comforting and limiting, shaping perceptions and influencing the decisions we make.

Moreover, Childhood memories have this magical ability to transport back in time, filling hearts with a warm sense of nostalgia. These memories hold a special place in our lives, shaping identities and influencing the present experiences. This article explores how childhood memories become nostalgic and delve into the profound impact they have on present and future. Childhood memories have a way of etching themselves into the minds, capturing moments of joy, innocence, and wonder. As someone grows older, these memories often become tinged with nostalgia, a bittersweet longing for the past. Nostalgia acts as a bridge between past and present, allowing them to reconnect with younger selves and relive cherished moments.

When someone experiences nostalgia, it can have a profound impact on his or her present life. It brings forth a flood of emotions, reminding someone of simpler times and the people and places that were significant to him/her. This emotional connection of past can provide comfort, a sense of belonging, and a reminder of our roots. Nostalgia has the power to transport us back to a time when life felt more carefree and less complicated. Furthermore, childhood memories and nostalgia they evoke can shape their future. They serve as a foundation for our values, beliefs, and aspirations. Positive childhood memories can instill a sense of resilience, optimism, and self-confidence, propelling us forward in life. On the other hand, negative memories can impact on self-esteem and relationships, requiring navigating and heal from past wounds. Understanding the impact of childhood memories and nostalgia can help to appreciate the importance of creating positive experiences for ourselves and future generations. By nurturing someone’s own nostalgia and embracing the lessons learned from childhood, this article can build a more fulfilling present and lay the groundwork for a brighter future.

## Literature Review

This chapter starts with some background material, scholarly publications, journals, and many reviews discussed by numerous researchers about a certain topic related to *The Wish Maker* (2009). This study chapter examines the available literature on the subject and associated concerns. The current study used a postmodern viewpoint to highlight problems such as nostalgia, old memories, childhood experiences, and individual tragedies as orphans. The novel also emphasizes Pakistani culture, language, and middle-class family values, as well as their battle to live under the

prevailing feudal framework, which has the potential to change every aspect of life. The author, Ali Sethi, has attempted to portray the plot as following the norms of a traditional tragedy: an orphan meets difficulty and overcomes it through a poor revelation. The novel follows the story of an air force pilot who dies in an accident, leaving his widowed mother, young wife, and newborn infant Zaki to fend for themselves in this harsh world. The novel depicts mother-in-law and daughter-in-law stereotypes through the narrator's mother and grandmother. Despite the male orator, the story's tone is female-oriented. The main character is basically a spectator who is raised and maintained by a woman.

*The Wish Maker* focuses on old memories, nostalgic feelings, and childhood experiences. It depicts the actual image of true picture of Pakistani culture and society. The novel is a vast story involving three generations of a Pakistani family, but Sethi's excellent handling of his subject makes for a delightful read (Catherine, 2009). Zaki, the story's male narrator, a generous son, cousin, nephew, and grandchild of Dadi, returns to Lahore from college in the United States to attend his cousin Samar Api's wedding. Sethi expertly interviews stories from Zaki and Samar's childhood, accompanying Zaki's radicalized widowed mother, Zakia, on pro-Benazir Bhutto marches to Dadi, his parental grandmother, and the condemningly arousing nucleus of his household, as they approach this seemingly ordinary yet momentous occasion.

The major plot is around the rebellious Samar Api's teenage rebellion and its unfortunate consequences, with Pakistan's political turmoil serving as a sobering insistent backdrop (Taylor, 2009). Ali Sethi rose to popularity in a modest manner. His talent and public appearances are subtle and unfussy, which may be due to his parents' mastery in juggling the spotlight. Nothing significant happens in the tale; nothing exceptional or illuminating happens in our heroes' lives, and the author uses layman's terms throughout the book. It appears to be more of a testament to the elite way of life just exist; the rest is irrelevant. Unfortunately, there is nothing to focus on, therefore the plot does not push you to sit up straight or pay attention. (Khurshed, 2013).

*The Wish Maker* (2009), on the other hand, necessitates a detailed depiction of Pakistani ethnic heritage. Sethi provides a vicarious comprehension and synthesis of the other two thematic strands, identity difficulties and 9/11's impact. (Rabia, 2020, p. 222). The story begins a few years after 9/11, with Zaki Shirazi traveling to Lahore, Pakistan, to attend his cousin's wedding. They were raised together and now reside with their grandmother in Lahore. We appear to be moving toward a story of Zaki's or Samar's coming-of-age, but their

narratives are plagued with gaps, and most of the book is given to Zaki's mother, who also lives in Dadi's home on a meager wage. The most intriguing character is Zakia, who wishes to have a boy named after her because of her spouse. Recently freed from military dictatorship, Pakistan currently oscillates between democracy and anarchy.

At the age of twenty-three Ali Sethi wrote his first autobiographical novel *The Wish Maker* (2009). Sethi's narrative smoothly bridges between Zaki's childhood and Lahore he finds upon return, giving coverage to two decades of family, a city and a country in turbulence. In many ways the novel feels autobiographical story; the characters are real and the setting is familiar. Sethi on the other hand, has written a Pakistani novel for Pakistani readers and the majority of its references are aimed at a Pakistani audience. (Hueston, 2009). In contrast to other contemporary Pakistani novels, *The Wish Maker* (2009) depicts the ongoing conflict between homeland and home, which is fueled by lamentation and melancholy as well as the protagonist's determined attempts to end this agonizing conflict. This makes the novel an engaging your de force in the field of diaspora studies (Global, 2018,p.148).

When it comes to the literature review on nostalgia theory, there are a few key aspects that researchers have explored. One important aspect is understanding the underlying psychological mechanisms of nostalgia. Researchers have found that nostalgia often arises when we feel a sense of longing or yearning for a past experience or time. It can be triggered by various cues, such as familiar smells, music, or even certain locations. Various writers have defined nostalgia in various contexts. Postmortem nostalgia is not the same as classical or modern nostalgia at all. Jameson defines postmodern nostalgia as the societal desire to value an idealized past via acquisitive representation. It comprises removing historical markers from their context and reinterpreting them in conjunction with aspirational partners to create a Barthesian mythology of the past as a prevailing, lost object of want, all the while obscuring actual historical events. Nostalgia is not just a simple feeling of missing something, but it also involves a complex mix of emotions, including happiness, longing, and a touch of sadness. Another area of focus in literature is the impact of nostalgia on our well-being. Studies have shown that engaging in nostalgic reminiscence can have positive effects on our mood and overall psychological health. It can provide a sense of comfort, connection, and continuity with our past selves. Nostalgia has been found to boost self-esteem, enhance feelings of social belonging, and even provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

Furthermore, researchers have explored the cultural and societal aspects of nostalgia. Nostalgia is often intertwined with our collective memory and cultural identity. It can shape our perceptions of history, influence our preferences for certain cultural artifacts or traditions, and even impact on our political and consumer choices. As we delve deeper into literature review, we may come across various theories and perspectives on nostalgia, such as the restorative function of nostalgia, the role of nostalgia in identity formation, or the ways in which nostalgia is portrayed in literature.

One influential work in the field is the book "The Future of Nostalgia" by Svetlana Boym. It examines the role of nostalgia in contemporary culture and how it shapes our understanding of the past and our aspirations for the future. Another notable study is by Constantine Sedikides and Tim Wildschut, titled "Nostalgia: A Bittersweet Emotion That Confers Psychological Health Benefits." It delves into the positive psychological effects of nostalgia, such as increasing self-esteem, fostering social bonds, and providing a sense of meaning and purpose. Additionally, the *Journal of Nostalgia Studies* is a great resource for scholarly articles on the topic. It covers various aspects of nostalgia, including its cultural, psychological, and sociological dimensions. Nostalgia is found on unsettling risks that exist outside of the phenomenology of memory and the epistemology of history, claims postmortem theorist Paul Ricoeur (2004) (p. 412). This illustrates how nostalgia deviates from the truthful, verifiable, or accurate, and it also explains why reactions to the idea in the present are taken to suggest a mistake or avoidance.

Divergent opinions exist regarding the place of sentimentality in artistic works. For instance, Hutcheon (2000) offers an alternative interpretation of the idea on page 196. She argues that nostalgia raises the cherished and this continuously absent past to a position of rapidity, nearness, and realness by disputing or even debasing the present as it is (Hutcheon, p. 197). In this sense, nostalgia lessens the resignation or deadening that has long been associated with the past and more focuses on the present. When moving and being banished are significant events in relocation writing, nostalgia can be a big or minor subject. In anecdotal situations where the abused have shown a solid and sentimental response to what is thought to be their formerly cohesive personality, postcolonial writers have emphasized nostalgic moments.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is founded primarily on postmodern theory, specifically the concepts of nostalgia by Linda Hutcheon. Postmodernism offers a new way of looking at society. It could not be understood without considering the

relationship between modernism and postmodernism. As we know, modernism laments fragmentation as something tragic, whereas postmodernism celebrates fragmentation and human subjectivity. Postmodernism frequently opposes ideas, beliefs and cultural norms. This rejection is ironic because postmodern literature deals with new ideas that are difficult to grasp, such as the use of nostalgia, trauma and humor. *The Wish Maker* is filled with nostalgia, which has become one of the hallmarks of postmodern writers who treat serious subjects in playful and human ways.

*The Wish Maker* alternates between the past and the present, from culture to norms, norms to cultures, and back again. The novel's protagonist, Zaki Shirazi, explores the past before moving on to the present. According to Hutcheon, postmodernism is moving away from nostalgia and toward trauma, with trauma ending and nostalgia beginning. Postmodernism addresses the lack of order in society, and the search for order seems futile. Order was a positive memory of the past, and modern critics and writers romanticized that order of society, which is referred to as nostalgic in postmodern terms. In *The Wish Maker*, time travels back and forth between the past and present, from culture to norms, from norms to cultures, from culture to norms. The protagonist of the novel Zaki Shirazi considers the past before moving on to the present. According to Hutcheon, there is a shift in postmodernism from nostalgia to trauma, with trauma ending and nostalgia beginning. Postmodernism deals with no order in society, search for order is a fruitless effort, Order was good memory of past, modern critics and writers fanaticized that order of society which is called nostalgic in postmodern terms.

On the topic of nostalgia, there are a few key perspectives that researchers have explored. One prominent framework is the socio-cultural perspective, which examines how nostalgia is shaped by social and cultural factors. This perspective emphasizes how nostalgia is influenced by collective memory, cultural norms, and societal values. Another framework is the psychological perspective, which focuses on the individual experience of nostalgia. This perspective explores the cognitive and emotional processes involved in nostalgia, such as memory retrieval, emotional regulation, and the impact on well-being. It also considers how personality traits, attachment styles, and life experiences can influence one's propensity for nostalgia. Let's dive into the theoretical framework for studying nostalgia in "The Wish Maker." One theoretical framework that can be applied to analyze nostalgia in literature is the concept of collective memory. Collective memory refers to the shared memories, experiences, and traditions of a particular group or society.

In the case of "The Wish Maker," the novel explores the collective memories and nostalgia of the characters, reflecting the larger cultural and historical context of Pakistan. Another theoretical framework that can be relevant is psychoanalytic theory. This perspective delves into the individual's unconscious desires, conflicts, and emotions. In the context of nostalgia, psychoanalytic theory can help us understand how the characters in "The Wish Maker" grapple with their longing for the past and the impact it has on their present lives. Cultural studies are another theoretical lens that can be applied to analyze nostalgia in the novel. Cultural studies examine how cultural practices, beliefs, and symbols shape our identities and experiences. By employing this framework, researchers can explore how nostalgia in "The Wish Maker" is influenced by cultural norms, societal expectations, and historical events.

These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the complexities of nostalgia and its effects on personality, culture, and society. By using these lenses, researchers can delve deeper into the themes and characters in "The Wish Maker" to uncover the underlying meanings and implications of nostalgia within the context of the novel. Additionally, some researchers have adopted a neuroscientific approach to understand the neural mechanisms underlying nostalgia. This framework investigates the brain regions and neural pathways involved in nostalgia, shedding light on the neurological basis of this complex emotion. It's important to note that these frameworks are not mutually exclusive, and researchers often draw upon multiple perspectives to gain a comprehensive understanding of nostalgia. When we examine nostalgia from a socio-cultural perspective, we explore how it's shaped by our social and cultural surroundings. This means considering how collective memories, cultural norms, and societal values influence our experiences of nostalgia. For instance, certain historical events or cultural traditions may evoke nostalgia in specific communities or generations.

On the other hand, the psychological perspective focuses on the individual experience of nostalgia. It delves into the cognitive and emotional processes involved, such as memory retrieval and emotional regulation. Factors like personality traits, attachment styles, and life experiences can also influence our propensity for nostalgia. Furthermore, some researchers take a neuroscientific approach to understand nostalgia. They study the neural mechanisms underlying this emotion, examining the specific brain regions and pathways involved. This helps us gain insights into the biological basis of nostalgia and its connection to our brain activity. By considering these different frameworks, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of nostalgia and its various dimensions. It's important to note that these

perspectives are not mutually exclusive, and they often intersect and complement each other in our overall comprehension of nostalgia.

### Research Methodology

This study explores text of the novel *The Wish Maker* as a primary source and scholarly articles related to it, books of Nostalgia and memory as secondary sources. This is qualitative exploratory research that is concerned with social and psychological concerns of the novel. One common research method is thematic analysis, where researchers identify and analyze recurring themes related to nostalgia in the text. They examine how nostalgia is portrayed, the emotions it evokes, and its impact on the characters' thoughts, actions, and relationships. Researchers may also conduct interviews or surveys with readers who have engaged with "The Wish Maker" to gain insights into their interpretations and experiences of nostalgia within the novel. This qualitative data can provide valuable perspectives and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Overall, the research methodology for studying nostalgia in "*The Wish Maker*" involves qualitative approaches such as thematic analysis, reader interviews, and engagement with existing literature. By employing these methods, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how nostalgia is portrayed in the novel and its effects on the characters' lives.

### Analysis

Ali Sethi's novel "*The Wish Maker*" is a captivating novel that beautifully captures the essence of nostalgia through its richly developed characters and their journeys. "The Wish Maker" is set in Pakistan and follows the life of Zaki, a young boy growing up in the 1980s. The novel explores themes of family, love, and the longing for a sense of belonging. Through Zaki's experiences and interactions with various characters, we witness the power of nostalgia in shaping their lives. Zaki's relationship with his family members, particularly his grandmother and his cousin, is a major source of nostalgia in the novel. The vivid descriptions of family traditions, the aroma of home-cooked meals, and the warmth of familial bonds evoke a deep sense of longing for the past. As Zaki navigates the challenges of growing up, he often looks back on these memories with a mix of joy and wistfulness. The characters in "*The Wish Maker*" are intricately woven into the fabric of Pakistani society, and their stories reflect the larger societal changes happening around them. From Zaki's ambitious cousin Samar Api, who dreams of pursuing a career in journalism, who embodies the complexities of love and desire, each character represents a different facet of nostalgia.

Nostalgia also permeates the novel through its exploration of cultural and political events. The backdrop of historical events, such as the Zia regime and the rise of political unrest, adds another layer of nostalgia as the characters grapple with the changing dynamics of their country. Ali Sethi's writing beautifully captures the bittersweet nature of nostalgia, reminding us of the significance of the past while acknowledging the inevitability of change. Through his vivid storytelling and memorable characters, he invites readers to reflect on their own experiences of nostalgia and the power it holds in shaping our identities. The political and cultural shifts during the Zia regime and the rise of political unrest provide a context that adds depth to the characters' experiences.

Through these events, Sethi captures the longing for a time when things were simpler yet also acknowledges the inevitability of change. Overall, "*The Wish Maker*" beautifully weaves together the threads of nostalgia, showcasing the power of memories, family, and societal shifts in shaping our identities. Ali Sethi's evocative storytelling and well-developed characters make it a compelling read for anyone interested in exploring the complexities of nostalgia. The novel covers three generations of stories. Dadi, her children and grandchildren are skillfully portrayed in the novel.

### Dadi and Memory

Dadi, an elderly woman and the leader of the Shirazi family, is characterized in the story as smart, sardonic, and nostalgic. She is an extremely nostalgic and sentimental figure. She has a strong feeling of dominance and is particularly sensitive to rules, traditions, and religious problems. She frequently feels nostalgic as a result of fond recollections of her husband and young, proud son Sami Shirazi, who died in an aircraft tragedy. Dadi's character is portrayed by Ali Sethi in the same way that Sara Suleri did in *Meatless Days*. She is religious and "wakes at dawn to say the Fajar prayer". (Sethi, p. 43). Dadi's connection to religion is rooted in the trauma she has experienced in the past. Dadi always thinks back on her old experiences and longs to bring the past back, but it is impossible to do so since Sami Shirazi passed away. According to Zaki, Dadi enjoys revisiting her history as a pastime. A person who "does indeed recall the past but always with the kind of ironic double vision that acknowledges the final impossibility of indulging in nostalgia even as it consciously invokes nostalgic effective power" can be understood in relation to Dadi in a postmodern setting. (Hutcheon, 1998,p.23)

Dadi looks back on her past knowing full well that the wheel cannot be turned backward. Zaki claims that he listens

to Dadi's stories about her history while lying down in her lap every night. As Zaki is her grandson and her last living relative after her son passed away, as she states upon his birth, Dadi especially shares her memories with him.

"With one hand Allah takes and with the other hand He gives".(Sethi, p. 40).

Nostalgia can actually influence our decision-making process. When we are nostalgic, our emotions and perceptions are influenced, which affects the decisions we make. We can connect it to our text by stating that nostalgia can influence decision-making. Dadi loves her grandson as much as she loves her son Sami Shirazi, and recalling her nostalgic past, she is hesitant to send his grandson abroad for higher education because she does not want to lose her grandson after losing her son Sami Shirazi. In this way, readers may understand how nostalgia can influence their decisions.

### Nostalgia and Dadi's younger Sister Chotti

In one way or another, every character in the book is nostalgic. I will discuss Dadi's younger sister Chotti's negative nostalgia here, which stands in opposition to Dadi's nostalgia. During her teenage years, Chotti develops feelings for a lad who studies philosophy. When the proposal is made, the boy and his parents show up at her house. Chotti, who is sure of her decision, tells the story as follows in the book:

"It was the Malik boy, the brother of her classmate. Chotti had seen the boy and had liked him. She said, he wanted to marry me". (Sethi, p. 56).

When she tells her parents about her feelings, they are worried but also bound by convention, and they are unable to intervene when they discover that the boy's family is planning to send a marriage proposal. The boy's family arrives at the house, and after meeting the two families, Chotti appears very happy and smiles all the time for no apparent reason. However, after a few days, the boy's father returned to Chotti's house and delivered the news that his son is suffering from mental health issues and has been suffering from them since childhood. This is how the romance ended, but no one cares except Chotti, who can't believe it and cries and shouts in vain. The novel discusses it as follows:

"The engagement was off.... she howled in her room and broke things". (Sethi, p. 57).

Her nostalgia can therefore be seen as unpleasant and unfavorable. She suffers more the more she thinks about her history and the memories of it that haunt her. The memories of the past pierce her mind and cause agony. Chotti

passes her matriculation exam but declines to enroll in college. Her family begins searching for Chotti's ideal partner. After talking to her friend Seems about her sister Chotti's marriage, Dadi gets a proposal from Seems, saying the boy has already divorced his first wife and is looking to marry a female who can live in the village and wear a veil. Chotti leaves the village with a heavy heart full of memories of her prior marriage, having entered into it against her will. She is unhappy with her husband since he is having an affair with other women, but she does not protest. Her life becomes hell after she is scheduled to marry a feudal and conservative guy from a "landowning family from small village" (Sethi, p.68), who is already divorced. She occasionally notifies her elder sister, Dadi, of her husband's affairs, who always reprimands her and advises her to accept the conditions rather than understand Chotti's plight. In this way, she is continually reminded of her past and finds her present unsatisfactory due to Dadi's controlling and conventional attitude. She is unwilling to marry anybody else, but Dadi dominates her and forces her to marry an unwelcome man who is materialistic and values nothing but land and money.

#### **Nostalgia of Chotti's daughter Samar**

Chotti was born and raised in the city of Lahore, but after getting married, she was forced to move to the village of Barampur, which is completely different from the city. She is unhappy with her traditional and rule-bound village husband and finds it difficult to understand the customs and norms of the village. She gives birth to a daughter named Samar and decides not to raise her in the stuffy village environment. frightened about her kid and being reared so far away from her after observing the outmoded customs and narrow-mindedness of the hamlet (Sethi, p. 61).

She sent Samar to her elder sister, Dadi, in Lahore for study. In the instance of her daughter, we may understand her nostalgia because she is concerned about her daughter's education and does not want to repeat history by not pursuing higher education in the past. That is why she wants to educate her child. Furthermore, she was scared that her daughter would fall in love with someone and have her life devastated, just like her own. This allows us to understand how her nostalgia influences her decision-making process. Her daughter Samar lives in Lahore with Dadi and cousins as part of a joint family arrangement. During her school years, Samar falls in love with a boy named Jamal from a higher socioeconomic class, who later betrays her for her closest friend Tara Tanveer. She covertly meets him with the help of Zaki, who knows everything.

She shares her passion of fairs with Zaki. When Dadi discovers her relationship, she summons her mother and

sends her to the village with her mother since Dadi is extremely narrow-minded and opposed to love marriage. According to Dadi, love is a sin that cannot be forgiven. Despite living in a modern culture, she maintains a sardonic conservative stance. Samar, a brokenhearted woman, lives her life on autopilot until she is hauled away and kept in a chamber to await her fate. In this sense the novel portrays Samar's nostalgia as a painful recollection.

#### **Zaki Shirazi as a Nostalgic Character**

The novel's male narrator, Zaki Shirazi, is also a nostalgic character. He relocates to the United States for higher education, and when he returns to Lahore to attend his cousin's wedding, he is surprised and stunned by the dramatic changes that have occurred in his home and country. He has difficulty connecting with his real nation, which he has left behind. The more he talks about his past, the more he feels confused. His mind fills with memories one after the other, and he appears to become lost in an exploration of his homeland. He feels disillusioned and quickly detects the societal process of cultural change as he tries to compare his experiences with actual reality after landing in Lahore and finds that

“I was here now at home. But homes too was changed” with a new airport, roads, hoardings and building ( Sethi, p. 18).

After witnessing him in a transformed nation that he finds difficult to recognize and relate to, he says these things. He believes that his nation is misleading him, even though he is aware that this cultural shift is the outcome of a social process. The appearance and character of people and things around him are constantly changing, despite the fact that his recollections have led him to perceive this country as a distant, elusive reality. He observes:

“Bombs had begun to go off in the North of the country and it would come to the roads of Lahore, where there were more bicycles now, rickshaws, cars hastened by bridges and underpasses where once walls had stood”. (Sethi, p. 403).

This cultural transition creates nostalgia in his thoughts as he attempts to connect his past and present, and he discovers newness in his country as he observes: “The drive home was too short, the bridge too small, the trees not high enough on the canal... the house was an odd shrunken aspect”(Sethi, p. 18).

Zaki reflects on his early years in Lahore, recalls familiar faces from his extended family, and evaluates his ties with them. He mentions the changing sociocultural environment when recalling his upbringing, implying that his

country has been undergoing numerous changes for a long time. He was born and raised in Lahore in a joint household with a tiny group of acquaintances and has been reticent since he was a child. Once Dadi informs him that

“You must make friends. This is no way to behave”.

These lines reveal that he was a quiet and reserved youngster in his early years. Dadi asks him to "make friends," as she dislikes his guarded personality. When the headmistress of his school advises his mother to send her boy to a child psychologist. However, rather of understanding his emotional state, she becomes enraged and decides to find her kid a new school. He spends his time with Samar Api, who falls in love with someone whose identity is kept secret from everyone who saves Zaki. He works as her assistant, and Samar Api shares her secrets with him. One day, he asks her and says, “Do you think she doesn’t get married because of me?” (Sethi, p.118).

He occasionally feels guilty for sacrificing his mother's happiness for him, since Dadi constantly torments her by criticizing her actions despite the fact that she is a self-sufficient woman and he is unable to assist her. He left his early years behind to pursue higher education in America, which caused all of his memorable experiences to gather and start to prickle in his mind over time. His psyche starts to prickle with memories, compelling him to think back to his early years. He is powerless to resist the draw of recollection, nor can he stop himself from exploring his past. When he arrives in Lahore, he is disappointed to see that his motherland has undergone numerous changes that he does not recognize. Toward the end of the story, Zaki realizes that he has accepted a deceptive and misleading recollection as he observes that his homeland has entirely altered and is now unrecognizable to him.

When he departs for America, he can only bring home and memories with him, which convince him to stay loyal to his hometown. His ardent recall of his boyhood days in Lahore causes him to unconsciously feel wistful for his homeland, which is conspicuously absent in reality. On the one hand, he believes that his memories are urging him to return to his homeland, while on the other, Hook continues to persuade him to do so. Memory sometimes appears to be at his disposal, causing distress in his thoughts. Zaki’s distress ends up being stuck in and realized:

“News from home makes you that the flow of memory has stopped. You relay on memory to inhabit and every home coming involves the puncture of memory’s airy bubbles”. (Sethi, p. 427).

He cannot go back to his own land because, in addition to its retreat, he cannot discover any connection between the original homeland and the arbitrary concept of home he has been lugging around. When Zaki realizes the distance between his hometown and, consequently, the tension between the two, his misery has no boundaries. Zaki, an orphan, is acutely aware of his father's noticeable absence from his life. Even though his mother raised him as both a mother and a father, he misses dad a lot. She never allowed him to feel the absence of his dad. Nevertheless, his status as an orphan causes him suffering and difficulties. His mother adored his father, and even after he died, she remained in love with him. If this article connects his nostalgia to his childhood memory, he will never love anyone or have many friends since he does not want to spend his life like his mother.

### Conclusion

To conclude this article explores that studying nostalgia in literature, such as in "*The Wish Maker*," provides a deeper understanding of human experience and the ways in which our past influences our present and future. Through the theoretical frameworks of collective memory, psychoanalytic theory, and cultural studies, this article explores the complex layers of nostalgia and its effects on the characters' personalities, cultural identities, and relationships. By analyzing recurring themes, examining character motivations, and considering the larger socio-cultural context, researchers can uncover the nuanced portrayals of nostalgia within the novel. This analysis allows us to reflect on our own experiences of longing for the past and how it shapes our perceptions of self and society.

*The Wish Maker* serves as a rich exploration of nostalgia, taking us on a journey through the characters' memories, desires, and struggles. Through this lens, this article gains insights into the universal human experience of longing for what once was and the impact it has on our lives. In conclusion, studying nostalgia in "*The Wish Maker*" not only enhances readers' appreciation for the novel but also provides a deeper understanding of the complexities of human emotions and the power of memory. It reminds me of the importance of cherishing past while embracing the present and future.

To sum up, exploring nostalgia theory from different perspectives, such as socio-cultural, psychological, and neuroscientific, allows the readers to gain a comprehensive understanding of this complex emotion. The socio-cultural perspective helps us to understand how nostalgia is shaped by our social and cultural surroundings,

while the psychological perspective delves into the individual experience of nostalgia. The neuroscientific approach uncovers the biological basis of nostalgia through the study of brain activity. By considering these frameworks, readers can better appreciate the multifaceted nature of nostalgia and its impact on their lives. Nostalgia theory explores the complex emotion of nostalgia from different perspectives. Researchers delve into the socio-cultural, psychological, and neuroscientific aspects of nostalgia to gain a comprehensive understanding.

The socio-cultural perspective examines how nostalgia is shaped by our social and cultural surroundings. The psychological perspective focuses on the individual experience of nostalgia, exploring the cognitive and emotional processes involved. The neuroscientific approach uncovers the biological basis of nostalgia through the study of brain activity. By considering these frameworks, readers can better appreciate the multifaceted nature of nostalgia and its impact on our lives. So, nostalgia theory is all about understanding this fascinating emotion from different angles. One perspective is the socio-cultural framework, which looks at how nostalgia is influenced by our social and cultural surroundings. It considers how collective memories, cultural norms, and societal values shape our experiences of nostalgia. For example, certain historical events or cultural traditions may evoke nostalgia in specific communities or generations.

Another perspective is the psychological framework, which focuses on the individual experience of nostalgia. It delves into the cognitive and emotional processes involved, like how someone retrieves memories and regulates his/her emotions when feeling nostalgic. Personality traits, attachment styles, and life experiences can also play a role in how prone someone is to nostalgia. This perspective helps the readers to understand why some folks might be more nostalgic than activity. Finally, this article explores the neuroscientific approach, which explores the biological basis of nostalgia. Researchers study the specific brain regions and pathways involved in the experience of nostalgia. This article helps to understand the neural mechanisms behind nostalgia and how it relates to readers' brain activity.

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