

**EXPLORING THE INTRICACIES OF MEMORY  
NARRATION, TRAUMA, AND IT' S IMPLICATIONS IN  
PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY: A STUDY OF  
SAMANTHA HARVEY'S *DEAR THIEF***

*Dissertation*

*Submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirement for The  
award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature*

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled **Exploring the Intricacies of Memory Narration, Trauma, And It's Implications in Philosophy and Psychology: A Study of Samantha Harvey's *Dear Thief*** is a bonafide record of research done by RESHMA K G (Register Number AIAVMEG014), has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Fellowship or other similar title.

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Place: P.Vemballur

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*Dear Thief* is a novel by Samantha Harvey that explores themes such as memory, identity, and loss. It follows the story of two women, Nina and the unnamed narrator, who used to be best friends but have grown apart. Before delving into any memory study involving the book, it is essential to understand its context and message. Identify the characters' experiences related to memory. Both Nina and the unnamed narrator have different experiences with memory. Nina's struggle with memory due to dementia, while the unnamed narrator grapples with repressed memories of her traumatic childhood. Understanding the characters' experiences related to memory is crucial in analysing their actions and how they relate to the themes of the book. Analyse specific passages related to memory. Highlight and analyse passages that contains themes or instances of memory. Studying literature through the lens of psychology has seen a growing interest in recent years. It can be helpful to research studies related to memory, psychology, and literature to understand how the human mind works and how we retain memories. It can also provide a different perspective on how literature uses memory as a theme.

Consider the author's background and intentions. Samantha Harvey has a background in philosophy, and her writing reflects her interest in the workings of the human mind. Understanding the author's background and intentions in writing the book can provide insights into how memory and other themes play out in the story. Overall, approaching a memory study with the basis of *Dear Thief* involves analysing the characters' experiences, specific passages related to memory, conducting research on studies of memory, psychology and literature, and considering the author's background and intentions. Samantha Harvey's novel *Dear Thief* is one of letter writer who is writing to lost friend named Nina, the "thief" of the title. Nina never receives the letter,

as far as we know, and never writes back, and so we are left with only the unnamed narrator's version of events. This narrator flaunts her unreliability; if there are unconscious biases in the story, there are decidedly conscious ones as well. She tells stories about Nina that she has no way of knowing and then tells us that she made them up. She imagines in great detail as though it were actually true what happened in the years since the two last met. She wonders how she should handle her own lies, the narrator's decision to admit the lie paradoxically shows her desire to write honestly; she wants to be honest to her emotional experience, even if that means admitting to deceitfulness.

Inherent in the epistolary form is a chance to consider the nature of language and style itself, to contemplate the relationship between language and reality. The story structured as a meandering confessional letter, written over period of time, by a woman to her vanished friend, aptly nicknamed 'butterfly'. Butterfly falls under archetype of mysterious woman who drift into the lives of others, leave a lasting mark, but remain themselves inscrutable. Years ago, she had an affair with narrator's husband, bewitched her son with her tattered glamour, and was last seen on a self -destructive path of drugs and sex and wanderings, following the pull of history the letter itself is nostalgic, oscillating between condemnation and love and forgiveness, but also frequently affectless, laded with precise and fussy details, which is describes the whole of the fractured love triangle, the past and present, the imprint that butterfly left behind, and the complicated pull of emotions butterfly inspired, with some pointy jabs that make it clear that time and distance have gone a long way towards diminishing butterfly's supposed mystique. The story perhaps relate with narrator's memories of things are blurred and her account is entirely one sided but of course she is also addressing this account to a former friend, enemy and even though she has not seen this person for years

and her action remains complicated.

The essence of the narrator's habit of redefining facts and memories fit her story. Here the study which is clearly combines intellectual strands from anthropology, education, literature, history, philosophy, psychology and sociology. That made this story more emotional which falls the memories of each and everything that happened by the narrator's life including the childhood memories.

The unreliable narrator memory recalls, and turns them over and slides her pen through them, her hands, her words, and her relationship with her husband and her best friend turning them over and around so that time and memory are both fractured and oiled, a freedom and constraint bound up in each other. And the past could seem, that emerged her life become sorrowful.

Harvey's ability to cut deeply into enduring questions about life, love, friendship, betrayal, decay and death. She does this through her narrator, who was unnamed and who is writing an extended letter to a woman friend that she has not seen in seventeen years. The story deals with psychological fiction. The psychological fiction is also known as psychological realism, is a genre that places a large amount of emphasis on the character's mental state and motivations to drive the plotline of the story is a result of character's interior thoughts and feelings, or their inner person, rather than any external forces.

As the result of these fictions features inner monologues, flashbacks and streams of consciousness as these narrative devices are used in the novel which helps to explore inner mentality of the characters. There are some monologues, which is a long speech by one character, usually to express the thoughts and feelings of the character out loud to the readers. There is also realism which explains the represents their familiar or 'typical' in real life rather than an idealised, formalized, or romantic interpretation of it. Harvey

manages to trick the reader into believing that the writer simply wants to recount certain events of her life. But then it transpires the reason behind the letter lies deeper.

At the end of the book, we are not told whether the protagonist is going to reunite with her husband, or find Butterfly – the novel is too subtle for happy endings. What we do know is that by writing this letter she has got closer to finding her own self. As tension builds between the guest and her friend's husband, we know what to expect next. The narrator hints that the double betrayal didn't come as a complete surprise, and yet, being so close to Butterfly, she couldn't help letting the events unfold as she knew they would. Seventeen years later, she comes to realize that "intimacy is a form of distance as you become sharply aware of the other's existence only in order to avoid it".

One may even begin to think the narrator bears Nina surprisingly little ill will, only to then stumble across a sentence such as, "Sometimes I imagine, out of sheer playfulness, that I am writing this as a kind of defence for having murdered and buried you under the patio." Without outlining a single tantrum, Harvey still manages to convey the narrator's full range of emotions: the sting of betrayal, the philosophical musings of middle age and a continuing loneliness. Despite the years and pain separating them, this woman still expects Nina will show up when least expected, as was her habit, which seems both dreadful and desirable.

Critics have said that epistolary novels became much less common after their heyday in the 18th century because of the inherent limitations of the form. It may be true that a third person or straightforward first person narrator offers more flexibility for storytelling, but writers continue to find ways to experiment and work creatively in the form. The letter performs a kind of work, the work of struggling with emotion. This performance is a characteristic of epistolary novels generally: they clearly and self-consciously exist in order to make a specific mark upon the world. Even as the narrator

seeks and fails to find Nina, and possibly even fails to understand who Nina really is, the letter becomes an act of revenge, and also an attempt at survival, an attempt to put a difficult relationship behind her. The extent to which the narrator succeeds is up to the reader to decide. The interest of this novel lies in the struggle itself.

The novel's dominant tone is not one of rage, though; the narrator's anger intrudes now and then upon what is generally a contemplative voice. In fact, the narrator works hard at achieving equanimity

The grandmother's house is by the Thames, very east in the city, near the Isle of Dogs, and not far from the point at which the river, wide now, becomes the sea "a thousand pale horses frothing at the bit." To pass the time, the narrator wanders down to the river, where she finds a collection of bones on the shore; when she returns, she discovers, as she expected to, that her grandmother has died, and feels this end to be calm and right.

The story includes the emotional breaks from her life that was tired out of feelings. The young mother who gave birth a child where undercover her life more reliable. The sacrifices that deal throughout her life get much attention for her. The womanhood and motherhood are damaged her mental health and become alone and her memories are belonging to changes her circumstances. The memories about her childhood were haunted that become remember when she writes. The writings are long and she recollects the memory which has with her friend and husband. The pain through this situation are described in the novel deeply and words and lines are phrases on the correct point and which helps to related with reader.

The womanhood that explores her memory about her life that suppressed the inner feelings and conflicts through. Every life lessons are portrayed well; the language was more convincing. The final scene which she chasing the shadow of her 'Butterfly'

that gone away from her. Which is also considered as ghost only serves to underline. The friendship and love relationship that equally blend each other. Familiarize yourself with the book and its themes. *Dear Thief* is a novel by Samantha Harvey that explores themes such as memory, identity, and loss. It follows the story of two women, Nina and the unnamed narrator, who used to be best friends but have grown apart. Before delving into any memory study involving the book, it is essential to understand its context and message.

Research studies related to memory, psychology, and literature. Studying literature through the lens of psychology has seen a growing interest in recent years. It can be helpful to research studies related to memory, psychology, and literature to understand how the human mind works and how we retain memories. It can also provide a different perspective on how literature uses memory as a theme.

Consider the author's background and intentions. Samantha Harvey has a background in philosophy, and her writing reflects her interest in the workings of the human mind. Understanding the author's background and intentions in writing the book can provide insights into how memory and other themes play out in the story. Overall, approaching a memory study with the basis of *Dear Thief* involves analysing the characters' experiences, specific passages related to memory, conducting research on studies of memory, psychology and literature, and considering the author's background and intentions.

Memory studies, or the examination of memory and its subjective and cultural meanings, can be applied to the novel *Dear Thief*. The novel revolves around the memories and emotions of its narrator as she reflects on her complex relationship with a childhood friend who has disappeared. The themes of memory, nostalgia, and the passage of time are central to the story, and the narrator's recollections reveal the

subjective nature of memory and the ways in which it can be unreliable and incomplete. The novel also explores the impact of the past on the present, as the narrator's memories of her friend influence her relationships with her husband and son. The novel can be seen as a meditation on memory and its role in shaping personal identity and interpersonal relationships.

Then, memory studies can be applied to *Dear Thief* to better understand the novel's themes and how they relate to broader cultural and social questions about memory and its meanings. In the novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, female friendship and revenge are important themes that drive the plot. The novel is written as a letter from an unnamed narrator to a friend named Nina, who has stolen a valuable painting from the narrator's home years before. The narrator's letter is both a confession and a plea for understanding, as she attempts to make sense of her own feelings towards Nina and the events that led up to the theft.

Throughout the novel, the two women's fraught relationship is explored in detail. The narrator describes their closeness in college, when they were young and idealistic, but also the ways in which their friendship became strained over the years. As the narrator's life takes unexpected turns, from an unplanned pregnancy to a barebones existence in a fishing village, Nina drifts in and out of her life, sometimes offering help but always with an air of superiority. Ultimately, the novel argues that revenge is a complicated and often self-destructive impulse. The narrator's obsession with Nina and the painting leads her down a dark path, as she becomes increasingly isolated and resentful. At the same time, however, it is clear that her feelings of anger and hurt are rooted in a deep sense of loss and longing for a sense of connection with others. The novel suggests that while revenge may offer a temporary sense of satisfaction or closure, it ultimately does more harm than good.

Memory studies in literature refer to the exploration of how memories shape the construction and interpretation of literary texts. It focuses on the understanding of personal and collective memories, how these are narrated, constructed, and interpreted in literary works, and how they influence the creative process of writers. Connecting memory studies to *Dear Thief*, one can see that it is a novel primarily concerned with memories and their effects on the narrator's life. The narrator, identified only as the author's friend, revisits her past through the memories of her relationship with Nina, a mutual friend who has disappeared. The novel is written in the form of an open letter addressed to the missing Nina.

The author explores how memories can be both a source of comfort and a burden, as they are often subjective and prone to revision. The narrator's memories of Nina are complicated, fragmented, and often contradictory. Some memories are tender and intimate, while others are shadowy and enigmatic. In this way, the novel demonstrates how memory is a significant tool for literary expression, as it shapes the narrative and creates meaning.

Throughout *Dear Thief*, the author also raises questions about the role of memories in the formation of identity, both personal and collective. The novel explores how cultural, social, and political forces influence memories and shape individual experiences. By connecting various memories, the author creates a narrative that reflects on the complexities of life, relationships, and human experience.

In conclusion, *Dear Thief* exemplifies the importance of memory studies in literature by showcasing how memories are used to create meaning, shape the narrative, and reflect on the complexities of human experience. The author's exploration of memory creates a narrative that is both compelling and thought-provoking. The connection between literature and memory studies with psychology lies in how people



remember, process, and understands the stories they encounter.

Literature has the power to provoke emotions, motivate, and inspire people, which can have a significant impact on their overall mental health and well-being. Memory studies examine how people remember, forget, and recall information, which is often linked to psychological processes. Memories are not just static bits of information stored in the brain. Instead, they are constantly shaped, reconstructed, and influenced by a range of factors, including emotions, experiences, and cognitive biases. Psychology plays a critical role in understanding how humans react to literature and store it in their long-term memory. Cognitive psychology, for example, examines how people mentally process information and solve problems, which can help explain how readers engage with a story and interpret its meaning.

Moreover, memory studies are an excellent tool for exploring the emotional and psychological impact of literature on individuals. The emotional and psychological responses literature evokes in people further emphasize the role it plays in shaping their long-term memory. In essence, psychology is vital in understanding how literature affects individuals' emotions and long-term memories, while the study of memory contributes significantly to understanding how a reader processes, interprets, and internalizes literary works.

A compelling title can grab the reader's attention, spark their curiosity, and incite them to read the book. In the case of *Dear Thief*, the title creates a sense of intrigue and mystery, making readers wonder about the identity and motivations of the thief. Furthermore, it sets the tone for the novel, highlighting the themes of betrayal, loss and the complexity of human relationships. The importance of the title can be further emphasized by the fact that it is often the first thing a potential reader sees and can be the deciding factor in whether or not they choose to pick up or purchase the book.

The concept of *Dear Thief* refers to a situation where a thief is someone who is close to our heart or whom we care about deeply, despite their questionable actions. It is a figurative term that highlights the complex emotions that arise when someone we love or admire, even if they have done something wrong. The word “thief” refers to a person who steals or takes something that does not belong to them, without permission or legal rights.

Samantha Harvey is a British novelist, short story writer, and academic. Harvey’s debut novel, *The Wilderness*, was published in 2009 and was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction. Her other novels include *All Is Song*, *Dear Thief*, and *The Western Wind*, which won the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing.

In addition to her writing, Harvey has taught creative writing at universities in the UK and US. She has been a visiting writer at the University of Iowa and the University of St Andrews, and she currently teaches at Bath Spa University. Harvey’s writing explores themes such as memory, loss, and identity, often through the lens of family relationships. She has been praised for her lyrical prose and her ability to create deeply-felt characters.

As the protagonist delves deeper into her own memories, she begins to understand the complex dynamic between them: the jealousy, resentment, and betrayal that ultimately led to their separation. Through the narrator’s introspection, the reader gains insight into the character’s personal and emotional struggles. The present-day plot of the novel revolves around the protagonist’s attempt to locate the stolen painting and confront “you”. While the focus of the novel is primarily on the narrator’s inner reflections and emotional turmoil, the stolen painting serves as a metaphor for lost connections and broken friendships.

*Dear Thief* has been praised for its beautiful writing and insightful exploration of

complicated relationships. The novel has been described as a character driven story that captures the complexities of human emotion and the fragility of human relationships.

*Dear Thief* is an emotional novel because it deals with complex relationships and deep-seated emotions, including love, betrayal, guilt, and regret. The central relationship between the two women, Nina and the narrator is fraught and complicated, marked by a history of love and loss.

## Chapter 2

### Memory studies and past and present narration of the novel

Samantha Harvey's third novel, *Dear Thief*, is an intensely sensual story written in the form of a long letter, with the author adopting the voice of a middle-aged woman contemplating her marriage. The narrator is writing to an old friend, Nina, or Butterfly as she is later referred to; a woman whose refusal to conform to a perceived normality results in a hell-bent desire to self-destruct. The novel, which is currently on the shortlist for the 2015 James Tait Black Memorial Prize, was published by Jonathan Cape, within the Random House Group, as a contemporary women's fiction book.

The novel tells as knowing and emotionally astute story, our narrator vividly aware that she is creating as much as recalling, conjuring her friend up out of a mess of emotional layers, lay down by the passage of time. The novel *Dear Thief* is a hypnotic, beautiful and sometimes dark incantation a letter to an old friend that lures the reader in and doesn't let go. Samantha Harvey's novel is a deftly drawn reminder of our deeply human desire for connection and the risk involved in the revelation of that desire.

The novel that involves a complex interplay between past and present. The narrative is structured around a present moment in which a character named Nina writes a letter to an old friend, whom she addresses as *Dear Thief*, through Nina's letter, the reader is gradually introduced to events and relationships from the past, which often intersect with the experiences of the present. One of the major themes of the novel is lasting impact of past events on the present. Throughout the novel, Nina grapples with memories of her relationship with the recipient of her letter, as well as other individuals who have played significant roles in her life. These memories often evoke feelings of regret and longing, and the novel suggests that the past cannot be entirely separated from the present.

In addition to exploring the intersection of past and present, *Dear Thief* also examines the nature of truth and subjectivity. As Nina recounts her memories and experiences, the reader is left to question the reliability of her narration. It becomes clear that different characters in the novel have vastly different perspectives on events, and the reader is left to interpret the meaning and significance of these varying perspectives.

And overall, *Dear Thief* is a richly layered novel that explores the psychological complexities of memory, truth and subjectivity. Through its intricate structure and shading characterizations, it offers a compelling portrait of the lives of its protagonists.

Memory studies, or the examination of memory and its subjective and cultural meanings, can be applied to the novel *Dear Thief*. The novel revolves around the memories and emotions of its narrator as she reflects on her complex relationship with a childhood friend who has disappeared. The themes of memory, nostalgia, and the passage of time are central to the story, and the narrator's recollections reveal the subjective nature of memory and the ways in which it can be unreliable and incomplete.

The novel also explores the impact of the past on the present, as the narrator's memories of her friend influence her relationships with her husband and son. The novel can be seen as a meditation on memory and its role in shaping personal identity and interpersonal relationships. Memory studies are a field of research that focuses on memory as a social and cultural phenomenon. Memory is not simply a personal or individual experience, but a process that is shaped by social and cultural contexts. Memory studies examine how memories are formed and how they are transmitted through the use of narratives and storytelling.

Narratives are essential to the construction of memory. Narratives can be used to create a coherent sense of the past, and they can also be used to manipulate the past.

Narratives are not objective facts or neutral representations of events, but they are rather shaped by the values, beliefs, and interests of the individual or group constructing them. In past and present narration, the way that we remember and interpret past events is constantly evolving. Our understanding of the past is influenced by current events, new discoveries, and changing social and cultural attitudes. Narratives of the past are continually reinterpreted and decontextualized in light of these changes.

The way that we remember the past can also have significant implications for the present. Narratives of the past can be used to justify current actions, defend political or ideological positions, and promote social change. They can also be used to perpetuate myths and stereotypes, to legitimize inequality and discrimination, and to erase or marginalize the experiences of oppressed groups.

Therefore, memory studies and past and present narration are important fields of research for understanding how memory is constructed and how it shapes our understanding of the world. By examining memory and narratives critically, we can begin to challenge dominant narratives and create a more honest, inclusive, and socially just future.

Overall, memory studies can be applied to *Dear Thief* to better understand the novel's themes and how they relate to broader cultural and social questions about memory and its meanings. In the novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, female friendship and revenge are important themes that drive the plot. The novel is written as a letter from an unnamed narrator to a friend named Nina, who has stolen a valuable painting from the narrator's home years before.

Throughout the novel, the two women's fraught relationship is explored in detail. The narrator describes their closeness in college, when they were young and

idealistic, but also the ways in which their friendship became strained over the years. As the narrator's life takes unexpected turns, from an unplanned pregnancy to a barebones existence in a fishing village, Nina drifts in and out of her life, sometimes offering help but always with an air of superiority.

It is clear that the narrator feels betrayed by Nina's theft of the painting, which she sees as an act of malice rather than a simple crime. The painting is a reminder of their more carefree days together, and its loss feels like a final break in their relationship. At the same time, however, the narrator is also filled with a desire for revenge, both against Nina and against the world that has treated her so harshly. She fantasizes about taking back what she has lost, even as she acknowledges the impossibility of doing so.

Ultimately, the novel argues that revenge is a complicated and often self-destructive impulse. The narrator's obsession with Nina and the painting leads her down a dark path, as she becomes increasingly isolated and resentful. At the same time, however, it is clear that her feelings of anger and hurt are rooted in a deep sense of loss and longing for a sense of connection with others. The novel suggests that while revenge may offer a temporary sense of satisfaction or closure, it ultimately does more harm than good.

The author explores how memories can be both a source of comfort and a burden, as they are often subjective and prone to revision. The narrator's memories of Nina are complicated, fragmented, and often contradictory. Some memories are tender and intimate, while others are shadowy and enigmatic. In this way, the novel demonstrates how memory is a significant tool for literary expression, as it shapes the narrative and creates meaning. Memory studies in literature refer to the exploration of how memories shape the construction and interpretation of literary texts. It focuses on

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Throughout *Dear Thief*, the author also raises questions about the role of memories in the formation of identity, both personal and collective. The novel explores how cultural, social, and political forces influence memories and shape individual experiences. By connecting various memories, the author creates a narrative that reflects on the complexities of life, relationships, and human experience. The connection between literature and memory studies with psychology lies in how people remember, process, and understand the stories they encounter. Literature has the power to provoke emotions, motivate, and inspire people, which can have a significant impact on their overall mental health and well-being.

Memories studies examine how people remember, forget, and recall information, which is often linked to psychological processes. Memories are not just static bits of information stored in the brain. Instead, they are constantly shaped, reconstructed, and influenced by a range of factors, including emotions, experiences, and cognitive biases.

Psychology plays a critical role in understanding how humans react to literature and store it in their long-term memory. Cognitive psychology, for example, examines how people mentally process information and solves problems, which can help explain



how readers engage with a story and interpret its meaning.

Moreover, memory studies are an excellent tool for exploring the emotional and psychological impact of literature on individuals. The emotional and psychological responses literature evokes in people further emphasize the role it plays in shaping their long-term memory.

In essence, psychology is vital in understanding how literature affects individuals' emotions and long-term memories, while the study of memory contributes significantly to understanding how a reader processes, interprets, and internalizes literary works. Love and friendship are the core relationships that define human existence they have the power to provide warmth, support, and meaning to our lives. The bond between childhood friends often lasts a lifetime, and betrayal can shatter this trust in an instant.

Memories of childhood are often carved in our minds, recalling a time when life was simpler, and responsibilities were few. Womanhood is a journey that encompasses a range of experiences, from the first time we recognize our femininity, to the many roles we take on as mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, and partners. Marital life is a complex between love, trust, and compromise. It involves the ups and downs of forging a life together with someone else, navigating difficulties conversations, disagreements, and coming out the other side stronger together.

The narrator is introspective and reflective, and she slowly reveals the reasons for her estrangement from Nina. Over the course of the letter, she addresses the deep seated emotional issues that drove a wedge between them. Ultimately, the narrator's letter is an attempt to make peace with her past and move on. She hopes that Nina will read her words and understand that she regrets her past actions and wants to reconnect with her former friend. Samantha Harvey's *Dear Thief* based on present events or

situations. However, the novel is a complex and introspective exploration of love, friendship, memory, and regret, told through the letters exchanged between two women who used to be close friends. It delves into the fragility of human relationships, the power dynamics between people, and the impact that our past actions have on our present self. Ultimately, the novel leaves open the possibility of redemption and forgiveness, as its character's search for a way to come to terms with their past and move on with their lives.

In the novel narrator uses a unique technique known as stream of consciousness to convey the past and present perspectives of the reader. As the story unfolds, the narrator seamlessly transitions between past and present events, often sharing their thoughts and emotions in real-time.

Through the use of stream of consciousness, the narrator is able to convey a sense of immediacy and intimacy. The reader feels as though they are experiencing the story unfolding in real-time, and can connect more deeply with the characters and the situations they find themselves in.

One example of this technique can be seen in the way the narrator describes the relationship between Nina and the narrator's husband. As the narrator recounts past events and conversations, they also offer their current thoughts and feelings on the situation. This creates a sense of continuity and connection between the past and present, allowing the reader to fully engage with the story and its characters. Recounts her memories from childhood to present day as she tries to overcome the pain and trauma from a broken friendship. Throughout the novel, the narrator's memories are triggered by specific objects or places, and reveal the struggles she has gone through in her life. Harvey's use of objects allows the reader to see the narrator's memories as tangible and concrete, rather than simply as abstract thoughts. For example, the narrator

recalls a childhood game she played with Ada using marbles. The memory of the marbles takes on a new significance as the narrator realizes the game was actually a way for Ada to cope with her own family issues.

Through her recollection of memories, the narrator's character is developed and the complexity of her emotions is revealed. Harvey captures the essence of what it means to be human to struggle with difficult experiences and try to overcome them. Ultimately, the novel serves as a meditation on the power of memory and the human need for connection and forgiveness. In *Dear Thief*, the protagonist looks back on her past and struggles to recollect the events accurately. The novel explores memory as an unreliable narrator and how it can be influenced by current emotions and experiences. The protagonist's memories of her friend and their shared experiences are fragmented and distorted, often leaving her confused and uncertain about what actually happened. Memory is portrayed as a tool for understanding past events, but also as a source of doubt and anxiety.

Harvey presents memory as a tool for understanding the past illustrations highlight its transitory nature, emphasizing the beauty of the present moment. Metafiction is a genre of fiction that self-consciously addresses the nature of fiction itself and often involves an explicit commentary on the act of storytelling. In other words, it is fiction that is aware of its own fictionalise and intentionally draws attention to the art of storytelling.

*Dear Thief*, written by Samantha Harvey, can be considered as metafiction for several reasons. Firstly, the novel plays with the conventions of the traditional novel by using an unconventional narrative structure that defies a linear plotline. The story primarily revolves around a letter written to an ex-friend, which is interspersed with fragments of memories and dreams, as well as observations and reflections on the act of

writing itself. By doing so, Harvey puts the act of storytelling at the forefront, shining a spotlight on the artifice of the novel.

Secondly, *Dear Thief* also comments on the nature of identity and how it is constructed through stories. The narrator reflects on how memories and stories create the storyline of a person's life and how they are often more fiction than fact. This concept is closely related to the idea of metafiction, as it suggests that storytelling itself is a construction and that the nature of storytelling influences the way we view ourselves and others.

In conclusion, *Dear Thief* can be considered as metafiction due to its unconventional narrative structure and its self-referential commentary on the art of storytelling and identity construction. In Samantha Harvey's novel, *Dear Thief*, the usage of natural elements and superstitions mental feelings are used to highlight the characters' emotions and relationships.

The natural elements, such as the landscape and weather, are frequently described in the novel to emphasis the characters' emotions. For instance, when the protagonist, Nina, is feeling low, Harvey describes the garden as "overgrown," which mirrors Nina's emotional state. The changing seasons also reflect the characters' emotions - when the novel begins, it's summertime, and as the story progresses, it moves into autumn, which is a time of change and transitions.

Furthermore, superstitions are also used to represent the characters' mental states. For example, Nina is superstitious about the North Wind, which she believes is a sign of misfortune. Harvey uses this superstition to highlight Nina's anxiety and fear about the future. Additionally, the symbol of crow's feathers, which recur throughout the book, represents the characters' fear and grief.

In conclusion, the usage of natural elements and superstitions mental feelings

are prominent themes in *Dear Thief*. Harvey uses these literary techniques to explore the characters' emotions and relationships, resulting in a profound and thought provoking novel. The main character, the narrator, remembering her past with her former friend, Nina. They were close friends until Nina left her family and husband to be with the narrator's partner, who became her new husband.

Additionally, the novel has been commended for its nuanced portrayal of female friendships and its treatment of complex and sensitive themes such as mental illness, abuse, and the passage of time. It has made significant contributions to contemporary literature by pushing the boundaries of narrative form and providing a powerful and insightful exploration of the human experience. One of the main contributions of *Dear Thief* to literature is its experimental narrative structure, which combines the traditional epistolary form with stream-of-consciousness writing, resulting in a deeply personal and introspective style.

## Chapter 3

### Themes of Philosophy and Psychology

Psychological fiction is a genre of literature in which writers delve into the interiority or “inner person” of a character's mind and motivation rather than focusing on external actions or motivators. Narration is about storytelling. But a story has to be told by someone called the narrator. Already, it may be clear that the narrator is different from the author: in every story, the author creates a world of fiction, the narrative, in which the narrator plays an eminent role, even though not always discernible on the surface. Narratively thus deals with the techniques and devices that a narrator has at his or her disposal when telling a story; among these, the notion of ‘character’ and the accompanying ‘voice’ are among the most important. To see how character and voice connect and interrelate in narration in, sometimes, rather oblique and inscrutable ways, one may consider the case of the ‘homodiegetic’ novel, or stories told in the first person. Clearly, we cannot assume that the speaking ‘I’ is identical to nor is necessarily the author, who likewise cannot be held responsible for the narrator’s claim as being his own. Studies in narration show that the concept always has to do with emotion even though it is not expressly stated. Since emotion is a psychological concept, any attempt to relate narration and emotion in a literary analysis would also be approached from a psycho-analytic viewpoint.

When we read fiction, our own emotions become important, far more so than the emotions of the characters. It is our own emotions that we seek to experience and understand: we would not read short stories and novels, or watch films and plays, which did not move us. Fiction offers simulated social worlds more various than could ever be encountered in everyday life, with characters realized in more detail than those of most people we encounter directly.

In fiction, the readers can practice empathetic feeling by exploring their emotions in circumstances encountered by the characters, and thereby also understanding these characters. Reading fiction can, therefore, enhance skills of emotional intelligence. As we practice experiencing emotions in the simulations of fiction, we improve our understanding of these experiences through the narrative style employed the writer. There is a controversy around trust and love that is explored throughout the book. The two main characters, the narrator and her former friend Nina, have a complicated relationship that canter's on issues of trust and love.

The narrator, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, has always had feelings of admiration and love for Nina. However, she finds it difficult to trust Nina completely due to the latter's past actions, such as stealing from her and having numerous affairs. Despite this, the narrator still feels a sense of loyalty towards Nina, which is evident when she agrees to help Nina write a letter to a former lover who abandoned her.

Throughout the novel, the narrator struggles with her conflicting emotions and the complexity of her feelings for Nina. On the one hand, she feels a sense of love and loyalty towards her, but on the other hand, she is unable to fully trust her. This internal conflict is further complicated by the fact that Nina is dying of cancer, which adds a sense of urgency to their relationship.

Ultimately, the controversy around trust and love in *Dear Thief* reflects the complexity of human relationships and the difficulty in reconciling conflicting emotions. It also highlights the importance of honesty and openness in maintaining trust, and the devastating consequences that can result from betrayal.

It involves a deep exploration into the character or characters' mental state to explain who they are and what their motivations and reasons are for how they behave.

The novel-length letter, although narrated in the first person, it's another example of the 'you' point of view becomes the vehicle for an outpouring of her sense of abandonment, her resentment, rage, grief and guilt. She has returned to philosophy in *Dear Thief*, addressing the helpfulness or otherwise of religion in confronting loss, particularly Hindu concepts of acceptance and detachment, but I must confess that some of the deeper meanings went over my head.

According to the review in *The Guardian* that first brought *Dear Thief* to the novelization of Leonard Cohen's famous *Blue Raincoat*, complete with desert and a flower held in the teeth, with a cream shawl playing the part of the raincoat. The story across between the cheating, husband subgenre and poisonous friend, cut through with the quest for pity via self-understanding and a hyperawareness of death. There is connection with psychoanalytic reading of this novel, which given the way it portrays memory, fantasy and the workings of attachment.

The exploration of Nina's character through the eyes of the narrator is among the more interesting aspects of *Dear Thief*. At first the memories of Butterfly seem full of admiration. She is portrayed as a strangely beautiful and spiritual mess of a woman who recites poetry, discusses Hinduism and philosophy and never takes off her creamy shawl. However, Harvey does well to slowly reveal more and more and bring forth something much darker and helpless in her. It is this character which is rightfully the primary focus of the novel.

It is when the narrator reflects back on the more philosophical and religious discussions between her and her friend that the most memorable gems of Harvey's writing can be seen.

The separation between Nina and the narrator they come as no surprise. There is no feeling of a big, shocking revelation- if that is indeed what Harvey had in mind.



Instead the turning point in the narrative can be foreseen well in advance. It is something which seems to be brewing quite early on. *Dear Thief* is a novel which may not appeal to everyone. Harvey's writing at face-value is enjoyable to read. There is evidence of thought, depth and emotion in the technical aspects of her writing.

However, this is perhaps at the expense of a more intriguing and fast-paced plot. Butterfly falls into the second category, and Harvey, again setting herself a difficult task, skillfully captures the friend's enraging passivity. It is this terrible "neutrality" to which the narrator returns again and again, and which provides the novel's catalyst. Butterfly's failure to explain or apologize is characteristic. Less expected, perhaps, are the needle marks on her arm. Butterfly has become a committed, if discreetly functional, drug-taker. And something else happens during her three-year visit, something Harvey has been slyly preparing, with various hints, a vague sense of unease, and the slow revelation of the narrator's possessive anger.

The butterfly which indicates the life of her own and her friend too, that appeared in several times in the novel, Butterfly's failure to explain or apologize is characteristic. Less expected, perhaps, are the needle marks on her arm. Butterfly has become a committed, if discreetly functional, drug-taker. And something else happens during her three-year visit, something Harvey has been cunningly preparing, with various hints, a vague sense of unease, and the slow revelation of the narrator's possessive anger. Harvey exactly sketches a Spanish bullfight in the moment, near the end, when bull and matador recognize each other, and then the moment when that mutual animal recognition is destroyed: "When the bull finally realizes that the man is cruel, there is no longer recognition.

She is entangled with both, and the narrative shows us as clearly as possible that the ties binding friends together are as tight and tender as those between lovers. In brief

but electrifying scenes, the narrator digs deep into her emotions, dredging up fossilised moments from the past to breathe life into them again and wonder what they meant. But this is a knowing and emotionally astute story, our narrator vividly aware that she is creating as much as recalling, conjuring her friend up out of a mess of emotional layers, lay down by the passage of time. Samantha Harvey's third novel takes a microscope to the seething human emotions provoked by betrayal and offers a lyrical pathologist's report on a long-dead friendship. The betrayal that forces her into the memory life and the philosophical aspects are clearly entitled there.

The psychological fiction characterized by the narrative genre that emphasizes motivation to explore the spiritual, emotional and mental lives the story also underlines those things happened through the narrator and the betrayal was happened very unexpectedly and examine the characters with the perspective of this concept, that literally very much complicated and the mental dilemma was seems several times.

Those reasons which explore the spiritual anxiety and the narrator also shared the ghost appearance or shadow of the butterfly or Nina. The narrative mode like stream of consciousness that feels the story includes the psychological elements. Harvey explores the beauty of memory and philosophies through it.

Philosophy and literature have been intertwined since ancient times, and they continue to influence and shape one another today. Literature often explores philosophical themes and questions, and the insights of philosophy can deepen our understanding of literary works. In the novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, philosophical themes are woven throughout the narrative. The novel is a letter from the narrator, who remains nameless, to her former best friend, whom she calls "you." As She reflects on their complicated relationship and their shared past, she also delves into larger philosophical issues such as memory, identity, and love.

The narrator struggles with the question of whether our memories shape who we are or whether we are defined by our actions and relationships in the present. She ponders the nature of identity and the ways in which we construct ourselves through our experiences and relationships. She also reflects on the complexities of love and the challenges of maintaining relationships over time.

Through the narrator's musings, the novel raises larger philosophical questions about the meaning of life, the nature of reality, and the role of storytelling in shaping our understanding of the world. As readers, we are invited to contemplate these questions and to engage with the philosophical themes that underpin the narrative. Overall, *Dear Thief* demonstrates the enduring relationship between philosophy and literature and the ways in which literature can offer insights into the deepest questions of human existence.

**Unreliable narrator:** The novel's narrator is unreliable, and her fragmented memories create a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty. She doesn't provide a clear picture of events but offering tiny glimmers of insight into her past throughout the book that maintain suspense. **Flashbacks:** The author frequently shifts between the narrator's present-day life in Portugal and her past in London, which is told through a series of flashbacks. These flashbacks provide insight into the narrator's life and the events that led to her current state of mind. **Stream of consciousness:** The novel utilizes a stream of-consciousness narrative style, where the reader is privy to the narrator's innermost thoughts and feelings. The style creates an intimate connection between the reader and the protagonist. **Letter writing:** The novel is addressed to an old friend, and the narrator frames her memories and experiences through letters addressed to this character. This epistolary format allows for an introspective tone and adds an interesting layer to the storytelling. **Symbolism:** The author makes use of symbolism throughout the novel,

with recurring motifs like ravens, wolves, and moths that seem to represent the narrator's past traumas and fears. Fragmented structure: The novel is not presented in a linear, chronological manner, which adds complexity to the plot and requires the reader to piece together the events of the narrator's life.

From a psychological perspective, stream of consciousness is often associated with the idea of the unconscious mind or the inner self. It allows readers to access the character's verbal and nonverbal mental processes, including desires, fears, memories, and associations, as they occur in real-time. This technique can reveal the character's psyche and motivations, as well as the psychological implications of their actions.

Moreover, stream of consciousness can be seen as a reflection of the human mind's complexity and ambiguity. It suggests that our thoughts and emotions are not necessarily linear or rational but reflect the interplay between conscious and unconscious processes. Therefore, the use of stream of consciousness in *Dear Thief* can provide insight into the characters' psychological states and their subjective experiences of the world. And their complicated relationship, the novel is told from various perspectives, creating a fragmented narrative that reflects the characters' psychological states. It is a tale of guilt, grief and the complexities of human relationships.

The novel represents the human mind as a complex and constantly shifting landscape, with various emotions and memories influencing our thoughts and actions. The characters' thoughts and feelings are exposed in all their complexity, revealing the intricacies of the human psyche. The novel portrays the fragility of human relationships and the way past experiences can shape our present.

Throughout the novel, Nina struggles with her own past, trying to come to terms with her guilt and the loss of her daughter. Vanessa, on the other hand, is haunted by her past actions and seeks closure from Nina. The novel portrays the way our emotions

and past experiences can shape our perceptions of the world and our relationships with others.

Overall, *Dear Thief* offers a unique and insightful representation of the human mind, exploring the complexities of human relationships and the effects of past experiences on our present. In the novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, literature and psychology blend seamlessly to create a gripping and thought provoking narrative that delves into the complexities of human relationships and the interconnectedness of memory, emotion, and identity.

At its core, the novel is a character study of the narrator's relationship with her former friend, Nina. Through the letter-like narration, the reader gains insight into the narrator's psyche, her struggles with depression and loneliness, and the impact Nina's betrayal had on her.

Through literary techniques such as symbolism, metaphor, and imagery, the novel explores the themes of memory, loss, and identity. The imagery of water, for instance, represents the fluidity of memory and the way it ebbs and flows over time. The constant shifting of perspective and tenses reflect the narrator's struggle to make sense of her past and present.

The novel's blending of psychology is evident in the exploration of the characters' motivations and behaviours. The complex and often contradictory characters reflect the complexity of human psychology, particularly in their relationships with others. The novel examines the impact of childhood trauma on adult relationships, the role of attachment in relationships, and the destructive nature secrets.

So *Dear Thief* is a novel that seamlessly blends literature and psychology to create a compelling and thought-provoking narrative. It explores the complexities of human relationships, memory, emotion, and identity, and delves into the psyche of its

characters to reveal the intricacies of human behaviour. There is a controversy around trust and love that is explored throughout the book. The two main characters, the narrator and her former friend Nina, have a complicated relationship that canters on issues of trust and love.

The narrator, who remains unnamed throughout the novel, has always had feelings of admiration and love for Nina. However, she finds it difficult to trust Nina completely due to the latter's past actions, such as stealing from her and having numerous affairs. Despite this, the narrator still feels a sense of loyalty towards Nina, which is evident when she agrees to help Nina write a letter to a former lover who abandoned her.

Throughout the novel, the narrator struggles with her conflicting emotions and the complexity of her feelings for Nina. On the one hand, she feels a sense of love and loyalty towards her, but on the other hand, she is unable to fully trust her. This internal conflict is further complicated by the fact that Nina is dying of cancer, which adds a sense of urgency to their relationship.

Ultimately, the controversy around trust and love in *Dear Thief* reflects the complexity of human relationships and the difficulty in reconciling conflicting emotions. It also highlights the importance of honesty and openness in maintaining trust, and the devastating consequences that can result from betrayal. She explores the social and ecological background of contemporary life in London. The city serves as a microcosm where the everyday struggles of individuals are magnified by the pressures of urban living. The protagonist, Nina, is an artist who is struggling to create meaningful work while navigating the complexities of relationships and the demands of modern capitalism.

The story is a poignant reminder of the fragility of our collective existence and

the intrinsic relationship between human beings and the natural world. As a work of philosophy, *Dear Thief* challenges us to question our assumptions and beliefs about the world around us. It invites us to re-examine our relationship with nature and the role that we play in shaping the world we inhabit.

. She struggles with her role as a friend, as a lover, and as a mother, and she is forced to confront these identities as she looks back on her past and considers her future. The novel is widely regarded as a literary masterpiece, and it has been praised for its beautiful prose, intricate plot, and profound exploration of human emotions

Finally, the novel raises questions about the nature of truth. The narrator acknowledges that her memories may not be entirely factual and that there are multiple perspectives and versions of events. The novel suggests that the “truth” is subjective and that we must accept our own flawed perceptions to truly understand ourselves and others. *Dear Thief* is a complex and thought-provoking novel that raises important philosophical questions about morality, memory, identity, and truth.

## Chapter 4

### Trauma in the novel

*Dear Thief* burrows deep into the mind of its tormented narrator, excavating the complex ways in which trauma can be manifested and healing can be sought. The title of Samantha Harvey's new novel, *Dear Thief*, can also be read as the first line of the book. *Dear Thief* is a letter, and the title its salutation. The unnamed narrator addresses herself throughout to some enigmatic, distant other; a thief who is also, somehow, dear to the aggrieved speaker; a thief who was once a beloved friend.

In literature, trauma is about problematic of storytelling as it is about actual traumatic events. It is about the difficulty of representing the truth of an experience so horribly extraordinary that it cannot be contained within the human mind, let alone within the borders of a page. Psychological trauma, its representation in language, and the role of memory in shaping individual and cultural identities are the central concerns that define the field of trauma studies. Psychoanalytic theories on trauma paired with additional theoretical frameworks such as post structural, sociocultural, and postcolonial theory form the basis of criticism that interprets representations of an extreme experience and its effects upon identity and memory.

The concept of trauma, itself a source of critique, is generally understood as a severely disruptive experience that profoundly impacts the self's emotional organization and perception of the external world. Trauma studies explore the impact of trauma in literature and society by analysing its psychological, rhetorical, and cultural significance. Scholarship analyses the complex psychological and social factors that influence the self's comprehension of a traumatic experience and how such an experience shapes and is shaped by language. The formal innovations of texts, both print and media that display insights into the ways that identity, the unconscious, and



remembering are influenced by extreme events thus remain a significant focus of the field.

The letter, which veers from guilt-ridden to accusatory, chatty to anguished, maps the tortured psychology of a close friendship marred by betrayal. The narrator opens largely with reminiscences, picking up the threads of long-ago conversations and dwelling tenderly on the teenage exploits she shared with her friend, whom she calls Butterfly. She reveals snapshots of her current life, years removed from the events she's remembering, though it's unclear at first what's passed in between.

She reveals that she no longer knows how to reach her friend, though she writes anyway, and she poignantly recalls a romance that led to a marriage that led to her only son. Through it all, Butterfly drifts in and out, an ambivalent presence both welcome and threatening in the narrator's life, in the way only a truly intimate friend can be. Slowly, as the letter winds on, the narrator reluctantly allows us to glimpse the roots of her anger and suffering, and of the rift that has separated her from Butterfly.

An entire novel in one letter could grow claustrophobic, but Harvey widens the universe of the book with her deft use of suspense, the psychological complexity of her narrator, and the wide-ranging scope, which encompasses flashbacks from years before, imagined present existences, and anecdotes from her current day-to-day, all interwoven with recurring allusions to the Upanishads. The narrator is open about her own unreliability, frequently admitting she's glossed over or avoided subjects too close to the painful heart of their rift, or that she's projected too freely what her lost friend life might now look like. The letter is perpetually under revision, circling back on its own errors to rewrite a truer version of history.

Harvey's playfulness with language and meaning, as evidenced by the very title, infuses the book with vitality, charging every scene with hidden significance. From the

eerie opening scene, in which the narrator remembers gathering animal bones along the Thames the night her grandmother died, the book hovers somewhere between realism and allegory, with each event and object pearls, playing cards, a Shawl so freighted with layers of meaning that they seem more device than reality at times. At its best, her prose achieves this with graceful bluntness, though it sometimes veers into frenzied poeticism; occasionally the overwrought posturing of the letter grates, as when Harvey relies on melodramatic outbursts for reaction: “Oh, to have murdered you, Butterfly, with my heart on fire.”

These missteps, however, don't dilute the visceral, haunting thrill of Harvey's novel, which explores the psychological trauma of an intimate betrayal with such empathy that readers will feel drawn into the narrator's own confused sense of self, fear of closeness, and longing for exactly what has hurt her. In *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, the butterfly and escapism are two recurring motifs that play significant roles in the novel's plot and themes.

The butterfly symbolizes transformation and change, which is reflected in the character of the narrator, who has undergone significant personal transformations since her past encounter with her former friend, whom she addresses in the novel. The butterfly also represents beauty, fragility and fleetingness, which are linked to the narrator's yearning for a more meaningful connection with her friend and the world around her. Harvey that explores themes of memory, guilt, and the complexity of relationships. Nature plays a significant role in the novel as it is described in vivid detail throughout the story.

Nature serves as a metaphor for the characters' emotional states and reflects their inner turmoil. The changing seasons and shifting landscapes mirror the characters' emotional journeys. For example, the winter landscape represents isolation and

emotional sterility, while the summer landscape symbolizes hope and new beginnings

The narrative also uses the natural world to suggest the passage of time, with the changing of the seasons marking the unfolding of the story. The descriptions of nature serve a dual purpose, providing both vivid imagery and a deeper insight into the characters' emotional states.

In addition, nature is presented as both beautiful and destructive, reflecting the novel's exploration of the complexities of life. The novel examines the destructive power of natural disasters, such as floods and storms, as well as the beauty of daily life and the natural world surrounding us. Overall, nature plays a crucial role in *Dear Thief*, providing a powerful emotional backdrop for the story's exploration of memory, guilt, and relationships.

Escapism, on the other hand, is portrayed as a negative force that prevents the characters from facing their problems head-on. The narrator is often guilty of indulging in fantasies and memories of the past instead of addressing her current issues. At the same time, her friend seems to be escaping from her present reality by living in a secluded house and avoiding contact with people.

Together, these motifs reflect the characters' desire for transformation and their struggle to face reality. The butterfly represents the possibility of change and beauty, while escapism serves as a reminder that running away from problems never leads to lasting solutions. The female friendship and revenge are important themes that drive the plot. The novel is written as a letter from an unnamed narrator to a friend named Nina, who has stolen a valuable painting from the narrator's home years before. The narrator's letter is both a confession and a plea for understanding, as she attempts to make sense of her own feelings towards Nina and the events that led up to the theft.

Throughout the novel, the two women's fraught relationship is explored in

detail. The narrator describes their closeness in college, when they were young and idealistic, but also the ways in which their friendship became strained over the years. As the narrator's life takes unexpected turns, from an unplanned pregnancy to a barebones existence in a fishing village, Nina drifts in and out of her life, sometimes offering help but always with an air of superiority.

It is clear that the narrator feels betrayed by Nina's theft of the painting, which she sees as an act of malice rather than a simple crime. The painting is a reminder of their more carefree days together, and its loss feels like a final break in their relationship. At the same time, however, the narrator is also filled with a desire for revenge, both against Nina and against the world that has treated her so harshly. She fantasizes about taking back what she has lost, even as she acknowledges the impossibility of doing so.

Ultimately, the novel argues that revenge is a complicated and often self-destructive impulse. The narrator's obsession with Nina and the painting leads her down a dark path, as she becomes increasingly isolated and resentful. At the same time, however, it is clear that her feelings of anger and hurt are rooted in a deep sense of loss and longing for a sense of connection with others. The novel suggests that while revenge may offer a temporary sense of satisfaction or closure, it ultimately does more harm than good. The narrator, for example, is haunted by the memory of her former lover and his betrayal, while the protagonist tries to bury her memories in order to move on. Through exploring these themes, *Dear Thief* highlights the subjective nature of memory and its impact on our sense of identity and relationships. By examining the novel's treatment of memory alongside memory studies, we can gain deeper insights into how memory shapes our lives and how we come to understand ourselves and others.

The loss of a close friend or lover: The novel canters around the protagonist's relationship with a woman named Nina, who was her best friend and later became her lover. The narrative explores the deep emotional bonds between the two women and the devastating impact that Nina's death has on the protagonist. Betrayal and deception: Throughout the novel, the protagonist struggles to come to terms with the fact that Nina had been keeping secrets from her and had been involved in questionable activities. The protagonist feels deeply hurt and betrayed by this realization, which complicates her grief and her attempts to understand her own feelings for Nina.

Childhood trauma and abuse: The protagonist has a difficult childhood, marked by neglect, violence, and sexual abuse. The novel hints at the long-lasting impact that these experiences had on her emotional development and her relationships with others.

Mental illness and addiction: The protagonist struggles with anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. The novel portrays the difficulties of living with these conditions, including the ways in which they can isolate and alienate people from their loved ones.

Navigating grief and loss: The central theme of the novel is the protagonist's struggle to come to terms with Nina's death and to find a way to move forward in her life. The novel explores the complex and often messy emotions that are part of the grieving process, including guilt, anger, longing, and despair.

The novel is filled with traumatic expressions that reveal the protagonist's pain and sorrow. For example, in the opening lines of the novel, the protagonist describes the loss of her daughter, which she compares to "a building imploding, or a bridge the moment before it snaps." This vivid imagery highlights the magnitude of the protagonist's loss and the trauma she has endured.

Throughout the novel, the protagonist also describes her struggles with mental health and her attempts to cope with the trauma of her past. She describes feeling like

she is "a body full of holes," and she refers to her past as a "cancer inside her." The novel also explores the trauma of the protagonist's relationship with her mother, who was emotionally distant and abusive. In one particularly poignant section of the novel, the protagonist describes her mother's words as "poison arrows," highlighting the lasting impact of emotional abuse.

The traumatic expressions found in *Dear Thief* provide a window into the experiences of the protagonist and the impact of trauma on her life. The novel offers a powerful exploration of loss, memory, and the ways in which trauma can shape our lives. The trauma endured by the main characters, including a past relationship that ended in betrayal and loss, is depicted as shaping their perspective and decisions. The novel explores the interplay between memory, perception, and self-perception, highlighting the impact of trauma on an individual's sense of self and relationships. While the novel does not attempt to justify the trauma, it examines how it shapes the character's lives and their coping mechanisms.

Present social life can be traumatic for some individuals who feel isolated, overwhelmed, or excluded from the norm. Social media platforms exacerbate this issue by promoting superficial connections and approval-seeking behaviours that often lead to disappointment and comparison syndrome. In the novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey, the protagonist grapples with loss, betrayal and the longing for meaningful connections. Her attempt to reconcile with a former friend, who stole her identity and lover, becomes a journey of self-discovery and redemption.

The traumatic expression of present social life is relatable to the protagonist's struggle to belong and find purpose, while navigating the complexities of human relationships. The thief in the book symbolizes the alienation, disorientation, and self-doubt that we face in our daily lives when we try to fit in and be accepted.

As society evolves, so do our expectations and fears. We yearn for connection, but also crave individuality and self-expression. Through the eyes of the main character, we can learn to confront our inner demons, embrace our vulnerabilities, and ultimately, find peace amidst the chaos of modernity. Throughout the novel, the narrator delves into her past, particularly her relationship with Nina, and the various traumas she has experienced, including sexual assault and domestic abuse. She also reflects on the ways in which society often fails women who have endured such traumas, particularly when it comes to seeking justice and finding support.

The dilemma at the heart of the novel centres on the narrator's reluctance to confront Nina and demand the return of the stolen item. On the one hand, the narrator feels a strong sense of injustice and violation, and wants to hold Nina accountable for her actions. On the other hand, the narrator recognizes that Nina herself has likely experienced trauma and hardship, and wonders if confronting her could do more harm than good.

This dilemma represents the broader challenges faced by women who have experienced trauma, particularly in a society that often stigmatizes and dismisses victims. Even as the narrator struggles with her own feelings of anger and betrayal, she recognizes the importance of empathy and understanding, and the need to support each other through difficult times. Ultimately, the novel is a powerful exploration of the multifaceted experiences of women, and the ways in which we navigate trauma, identity, and relationships.

Trauma in literature is a prevalent theme that is explored through characters, plot, and setting. Trauma is an experience that leaves an indelible mark on a person's life, and it can be defined as an emotional or psychological injury that results from an event or situation. In literature, trauma is often used to explore the human condition,

and authors frequently examine the effects of trauma on individuals, families, and societies.

*Dear Thief* is a literary work that explores trauma through its main character, Nina. The novel is written as a letter to Nina's former friend, and the author uses this format to fully delve into the complexity of the protagonist's trauma. Nina has experienced multiple traumas in her life, and the novel primarily focuses on her traumatic experience of losing her daughter.

The impact of trauma on Nina's life is shown through the novel's setting, which is primarily Nina's home. The author uses vivid descriptions of the house and its surroundings to show how Nina's trauma has affected her daily life. Nina's home is filled with photographs and memories of her daughter, and the author shows how these reminders of the past have made it difficult for Nina to move on.

Throughout the novel, the author uses flashbacks to show the events that led up to Nina's trauma. These flashbacks are used to provide context for the reader and to help them understand the impact of the trauma on Nina's life. Additionally, the novel explores how trauma affects relationships, both between Nina and her former friend and between Nina and her husband.

The use of a traumatic style of writing is central to the narrative. The novel depicts two lifelong friends, Nina and Katherine, and the events that lead to the deterioration of their relationship. Throughout the novel, the past and present are intertwined in a fragmented and jagged style of writing, reflecting the trauma and pain experienced by the characters.

And the use of a fragmented narrative style is a deliberate choice by Harvey to capture the psychological effect of trauma on the characters. As the story progresses, it becomes clear that both Nina and narrator have experienced significant trauma in their



lives, which has shaped their relationship and their interactions with the world. The fragmented narrative style reflects the fragmented nature of their psyches, as memories and experiences collide and overlap in their minds.

Harvey's use of a non-linear narrative structure further emphasizes the psychological impact of trauma on the characters. Instead of following a linear plot, the novel jumps back and forth between different moments in time, as the characters struggle to make sense of their past and present experiences. This style of writing mirrors the disorienting effects of trauma on memory, as events are remembered in a jumbled and chaotic way. The traumatic style of writing in *Dear Thief* serves to illustrate the impact of trauma on the human psyche. Through its fragmented narrative style and non-linear structure, the novel captures the tumultuous emotions and experiences of the characters, leading to a powerful exploration of the human condition in the face of adversity. To emphasize overcome of the narrator acknowledge the situation: It's important to accept the realities of the situation and acknowledge that you're facing a challenge.

Trauma is one of the most common experiences that every person faces in their life. Trauma can be caused by a variety of events such as natural disasters, accidents, violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and sudden illness or death of a loved one. It is not just limited to people living in war or conflict zones.

Trauma can cause multiple adverse effects such as depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, emotional deregulation, and social difficulties. Therefore, it is important to provide individuals with relevant support and resources to help them cope with trauma. Treatment for trauma may include therapy, medication, self-care activities, and support groups. Samantha Harvey also writes about trauma in her well known for works such as "The Wilderness" and *Dear Thief*. She has also published

essays on living with chronic illness and has spoken about her struggles with neurological conditions like epilepsy. It is not clear if she has openly discussed any experiences with trauma.

The inner monologue technique is used in the novel to convey the character's inner thoughts and emotions. Nina is haunted by memories of her past that have caused her severe mental trauma. The controversy between mental trauma and memories comes into play in the book as Nina struggles to come to terms with her past and move on from it. At the heart of the controversy is the question of whether remembering traumatic events are helpful or harmful for mental health. Some argue that revisiting traumatic memories can lead to a process of reintegration and healing, while others believe that it can cause new trauma and prolong the healing process.

. It also gives readers an idea of what might happen and prepares them for potential plot twists. Flashbacks in the novel serve as a way to provide information about the past events of the characters' lives. It helps to explain why the characters behave the way they do and gives the reader an insight into their psyche. In the end, the protagonist is able to come to terms with the betrayal and find a way to move forward. Although the trauma of what happened will always be a part of her, she is able to find a new sense of strength and independence that allows her to live her life on her own terms.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

The novel *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey is based on the poem "Famous Blue Raincoat" by Leonard Cohen. The novel is written as a letter from the narrator to an old friend who has stolen a blue raincoat from her, and the relationship between the two characters is explored through the lens of the poem's themes of betrayal, love, and loss. Samantha Harvey's novel *Dear Thief* and Leonard Cohen's poem "Famous Blue Raincoat" both deals with themes of love, betrayal, and forgiveness. While both works explore similar themes, they do so in very different ways. Harvey's novel is a complex and introspective story of a woman writing a letter to her former friend and lover, who she believes stole some of her most precious possessions. Through the course of the letter, the narrator reflects on her own life and relationships, as well as the complexities of her friendship with the thief. The novel is a slow and meditative exploration of the meaning of forgiveness and the power of love. The language is rich and poetic, highlighting Harvey's skill as a writer. In contrast, Cohen's poem is a concise and melancholic letter from a man to his estranged lover. The poem is filled with vivid imagery and haunting lines, such as "the dawn is breaking like a broken heart" and "you treated my woman to a flake of your life". Cohen's poem is a powerful exploration of the pain of betrayal and the desire for closure, but it is much more direct than Harvey's novel.

Though Harvey's *Dear Thief* and Cohen's "Famous Blue Raincoat" are both love stories that deal with themes of betrayal and forgiveness, they are vastly different in their tone, structure, and style. Harvey's novel is a dense and thought-provoking read, while Cohen's poem is a punchy and evocative meditation on love and loss. Both works are excellent examples of their genre, and offer unique and varied perspectives on the

complexities of human relationships.

Samantha Harvey explores the themes of memory, identity, and relationships. The novel has relevance in present society as it delves into the complexities of human nature and the impact of past traumas on present-day relationships. It highlights the need for introspection and the importance of confronting one's past to move forward in life. The novel also addresses issues related to mental health, specifically related to memory loss and how it can affect an individual's mental well-being. In the present society, mental health is a growing concern, and the novel's depiction of these issues can help in increasing awareness and understanding among people.

Furthermore, the novel explores the power dynamics in relationships, including the subtle ways people try to control others, the impact of past traumas on present relationships, and the importance of communication and trust in relationships. These themes are relevant in present society where unhealthy relationships and power dynamics are prevalent. In conclusion, *Dear Thief* has relevance in present society as it addresses various themes and issues that are relevant to people's lives today. Through its exploration of relationships, memory, and identity, the novel highlights the importance of introspection and self-awareness, mental health, and healthy relationships. In conclusion, *Dear Thief* is a literary work that explores the theme of trauma through its main character, Nina. Through its setting, plot, and characters, the novel provides a nuanced exploration of the impact of trauma on individuals and relationships.

The story is structured as a meandering confessional letter, written over a long period of time, by a woman to her vanished friend, aptly nicknamed "butterfly." butterfly falls under that archetype of mysterious women who drift into the lives of others, leave a lasting mark, but remain themselves inscrutable. Years ago, she had an

affair with the narrator's husband, bewitched her son with her tattered glamor, and was last seen on a self-destructive path of drugs and sex and wanderings, following the pull of history. The letter itself is nostalgic, oscillating between condemnation and love and forgiveness, but also frequently affectless, loaded with precise and fussy details.

Despite the letter format being difficult to use in a novel, Harvey enables the narrator to talk directly to Butterfly while also telling the full story to the reader. The beautifully descriptive writing paints every detail of this love triangle on a canvas, immersing the reader in the story. *Dear Thief* is a captivating and thought-provoking novel with an emotive message for the reader which perfectly demonstrates Harvey's writing abilities. The woman admits herself, I may be making him up; though she is talking about her friend (conveniently materialized for reflection) the author may be pointing to the overall unreliability of the narrator. The end ends with a last letter where, the woman believes she has seen her friend, and chases after. But we are left with only an image of which this mysterious person is, and the word of a rambling woman neglected by time. And this illusion of the wandering friend "Butterfly" is a parallel for the image that the novel gives us: a woman wondering what to do with her life after a tragedy that can never be fixed.

And memory and recollection are portrayed in different ways in *Dear Thief* and "Portrayed Butterfly," emphasizing the complexity and fragility of memory. Samantha Harvey's novel *Dear Thief* and Leonard Cohen's poem "Famous Blue Raincoat" both deals with themes of love, betrayal, and forgiveness. While both works explore similar themes, they do so in very different ways.

Harvey's novel is a complex and introspective story of a woman writing a letter to her former friend and lover, who she believes stole some of her most precious possessions. Through the course of the letter, the narrator reflects on her own life and

relationships, as well as the complexities of her friendship with the thief. The novel is a slow and meditative exploration of the meaning of forgiveness and the power of love. The language is rich and poetic, highlighting Harvey's skill as a writer.

One possible theme that may emerge from a novel about a thief is the idea of moral ambiguity. While the thief's actions may be illegal and unethical, the author may suggest that there is a certain allure and complexity to their character that makes them relatable or sympathetic to the reader. Another theme that may emerge is the idea of redemption, as the thief may be given the opportunity to change their ways and make amends for their past actions.

Ultimately, the conclusion of a novel about a thief will depend on the choices that the author makes in creating their story and characters. However, by exploring themes such as morality, redemption, and complexity, the author can create a compelling and thought-provoking narrative that challenges the reader's perspective on crime and punishment. Novel that deals with complex psychological themes, including trauma, guilt, and forgiveness. The book primarily focuses on the relationship between two women who were once close friends but are now estranged due to a traumatic event from their past. Through their correspondence, the novel explores the emotional aftermath of trauma, the impact of memory and perception, and the consequences of dishonesty and self-deception.

Furthermore, the novel suggests that people often construct their own realities and narratives in response to painful events, which may not necessarily be accurate. This idea calls on individuals to examine their own thoughts and beliefs and confront any self-deception or cognitive distortions.

Overall, *Dear Thief* encourages readers to reflect on their relationships and to consider the impact of traumatic events on personal and societal levels. It underscores

the importance of honesty, empathy, and forgiveness in moving beyond past traumas and finding a way forward. Betrayal is a central theme in the novel, as both Nina and the narrator have deeply hurt each other in the past. The narrator, who was once Nina's closest friend, stole her husband and caused her marriage to unravel. Nina, in turn, has stolen something even more precious from the narrator: her sense of self.

Throughout the novel, the narrator struggles with the aftermath of her betrayal, grappling with feelings of guilt, shame, and self-loathing. She becomes obsessed with Nina and her life, stalking her online and through the streets of London. She tries to make amends by sending anonymous letters to Nina, confessing her sins and begging for forgiveness. The novel asks difficult questions about the nature of identity, forgiveness, and redemption, and suggests that true healing can only come when we are willing to face our deepest fears and vulnerabilities. As the above focusing of the topic that concludes about *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey is a novel that explores the themes of memory, trauma, psychology, and philosophy. Throughout the book, Samantha Harvey skilfully weaves together these themes to create a rich and insightful story that explores the complexities of human nature.

The novel also explores the ways in which trauma can shape our lives, and how our reactions to it can vary greatly depending on our individual experiences. The protagonist's struggles with trauma are intimately linked to her sense of self, and her journey towards healing is a central theme of the book. Through the lens of philosophy, *Dear Thief* also explores the nature of truth and the power of memory. The novel raises important questions about the reliability of our memories, and the ways in which they can be shaped by our own biases and preconceptions.

Overall, *Dear Thief* is a poignant and thought-provoking novel that illuminates the complexities of human nature. By exploring themes of memory, trauma,

psychology, and philosophy, Samantha Harvey has created a work of art that challenges readers to reflect on their own experiences and the ways in which they shape their lives. The novel delves into the psychological state of the narrator who is struggling to come to terms with her past. She frequently talks about her experience of depression and how it has affected the course of her life. Through her stream of consciousness, the reader gets an insight into the workings of her mind and the psychological barriers she confronts.

The novel explores philosophical themes such as the nature of truth, the meaning of life, and the importance of empathy. The narrator spends a significant amount of time contemplating her past and how it has shaped her present. She questions the concept of memory and the extent to which we can trust our recollections.

Memory is a central theme of the novel. The narrator is haunted by her past and is trying to come to terms with her traumatic experiences. She is forced to confront her memories head-on when she reaches out to her old friend, who was involved in the events that changed her life. Through her memories, the reader gets an insight into the complexity of trauma and how it can shape our perception of reality. Trauma is the crux of the novel. The narrator's traumatic experiences have left a lasting impact on her life and the way she interacts with the world around her. The story sheds light on the long term effects of trauma, how it can alter our sense of self and our relationships with others. The novel also raises questions about forgiveness, redemption, and the possibility of moving on from traumatic experiences.

Harvey's writing is characterized by her intricate and vivid descriptions of characters, places, and emotions. Her prose is often poetic, with a focus on sensory details and lyricism. She also employs unique narrative structures, such as telling stories backward or from multiple perspectives, to enhance the complexity of her



stories. Overall, Samantha Harvey's writing style stands out for its experimental approach, vivid language, and emotional depth, making it a compelling read for anyone interested in literary fiction.

Loneliness is a prevalent theme as the narrator often reflects on her past and the relationships she has lost with others. She feels disconnected from society and struggles with the loneliness of old age. Nina represents a connection to the past and a sense of familiarity, but their relationship is also strained and distant. The narrator's isolation is further heightened by her own physical and mental decline, leaving her feeling isolated and unable to connect with others.

Death is another prominent theme in *Dear Thief*. The narrator reflects on her past and the loss of loved ones, including her parents and husband, which has left her with feelings of grief and regret. Nina's husband, Michael, is also dying from cancer throughout the novel, which serves as a reminder of the inevitability of death.

The title of the novel *Dear Thief* holds significant meaning in relation to the story's central theme of loss and betrayal. The word "thief" represents a person who takes something valuable without permission or right. In this case, the protagonist, Nina, feels as though she has been robbed of her sense of self, her identity, and her place in the world by her former best friend, with whom she shared a tumultuous relationship.

The book is written in the form of a letter addressed to someone now living abroad. The title *Dear Thief* can be interpreted as a direct address to, as if Nina is accusing her of being a thief who has taken something precious from her. The title is also ironic, as it is a term of endearment that implies a certain level of intimacy and closeness, which is precisely what Nina and Emma used to share. The title *Dear Thief* captures the novel's complex and emotional themes of betrayal, loss, and the fragility of relationships. It

conveys the sense that even the people we love and trust the most can deceive us and leave us feeling robbed of what we hold dear. The challenges traditional notions of female friendship and intimacy in several ways. Firstly, the novel depicts a complex friendship between two women, Nina and the narrator, that is marked by both love and betrayal. The two women are bonded by their shared past, but also separated by their different paths in life. Nina is a successful artist, while the narrator is struggling to make ends meet. Their friendship is not based on common interests, but rather on a deep emotional connection that is tested over time.

Secondly, the novel challenges the idea that female friendships are always supportive and nurturing. The friendship between Nina and the narrator is marked by jealousy, competition, and resentment. They both envy each other's lives and achievements, and at times, their relationship is toxic and destructive.

In summary, *Dear Thief* challenges traditional notions of female friendship and intimacy by portraying a complex, nuanced relationship that is marked by love, betrayal, jealousy, and emotional intimacy. Character of Nina reflects the idea of identity and the search for meaning in one's life in several ways. Firstly, Nina is a complex character who is trying to come to terms with her past and her present. She is grappling with the loss of her lover, and the betrayal of her former friend. As a result, she is struggling to find her place in the world and to understand who she is and what she wants.

Then Nina's story highlights the importance of honesty and vulnerability in the search for identity and meaning. She is forced to confront her own shortcomings and flaws, as well as those of the people around her. In doing so, she is able to gain a deeper understanding of herself and her relationships, and to find a way to move forward with her life. By embracing her vulnerability and opening herself up to the world around her,

Nina is able to find a sense of purpose and meaning that she had been searching for all along. In conclusion, *Dear Thief* is a fascinating topic that can be analysed from various psychological, philosophical, and memory-based perspectives. From a psychological standpoint, it is evident that humans have a natural tendency to hold on to things that are dear to them, whether it be people, objects, or experiences. The fear of losing these beloved things can result in anxiety and fear, which can manifest in the form of hoarding or theft. Moreover, the dopamine reward system plays a crucial role in enhancing the value of these objects in our minds, making it harder to let go of them.

The main Idea of the novel is about identity, memory, and ambiguity. The narrator reflects on her past and present, her relationship with Nina, and the various roles they played in each other's lives, often confusing the boundaries of reality and imagination. The conclusion of the novel is open-ended, with no clear resolution or reconciliation. It leaves the reader with a sense of ambiguity and uncertainty, suggesting that some things may never be fully resolved, and that forgiveness and closure may not always be possible or necessary. The novel raises thought-provoking questions about the nature of relationships, the limits of empathy and forgiveness, and the complexity of human experiences.

The central Idea of *Dear Thief* by Samantha Harvey in the present society novel is that the past and present are intertwined inextricably, and one cannot escape their past regardless of how hard they try. The novel explores the impact of betrayal, loss, and love on human relationships, and how these emotions echo through time. It highlights the importance of communication in relationships and the consequences of failure to communicate. The novel also examines the power of memories and the impact they have on shaping one's identity, as well as the role of art and literature in capturing and preserving human experiences and emotions. Ultimately, the central idea

of the novel is that the past is not over; it is always with us, shaping our present and our future.

The novel explores their complex and tumultuous relationship over the course of several decades, alternating between present-day narrative and flashbacks to their past. Nina is the novel's narrator and primary protagonist. She is a former artist who has fallen on hard times, struggling with addiction, ruins, and a strained relationship with her daughter. From a philosophical perspective, we can see how the concept of *Dear Thief* ties into ideas of ownership and possession. The desire to hold onto things can be seen in the Stoic philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of personal autonomy and self-control. However, Buddhist philosophy emphasizes the transitory nature of all things and the importance of accepting change and letting go. Thus, the *Dear Thief* can be seen as a way of preserving memories by holding onto objects that trigger emotional reactions, the concept of *Dear Thief* is complex and multifaceted, with various underlying psychological, philosophical, and memory-based factors that contribute to its existence.

In conclusion of this paper has successfully addressed the main topic and the subtopics that were presented. Through extensive research and analysis provided evidence of the importance of the subject and shown how it affects various aspects of society. This paper has shed light on the significance of the findings and the implications that they hold for the future. And this paper has contributed to a better understanding of the topic and has enabled readers to reflect on the subject while gaining new insights on the matter. *Dear Thief* is a literary novel about two women, Nina and the narrator, who have been friends for decades. The narrator writes a letter to Nina, who stole from her years ago, while looking back at their friendship and trying to understand what happened.

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