ANXIETY IN EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL'S *SEA OF TRANQUILITY*

A THESIS

Presented in a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for Completing the
Sarjana Degree in Department of English Literature

By:

SALSABILLA DAMAYANTI SAMAL
1612200043

FAKULTAS ILMU BUDAYA
UNIVERSITAS 17 AGUSTUS 1945 SURABAYA

2026

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This is to certify that the thesis of SALSABILLA DAMAYANTI SAMAL entitled "**ANXIETY IN EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL'S *SEA OF TRANQUILITY***" has been approved by the thesis advisor for further approval by the Examining Committee.

Surabaya, 10 June 2026

Advisor



Drs. Danu Wahyono, M.Hum.

APPROVAL SHEET II

This is to certify that the Sarjana Thesis of SALSABILLA DAMAYANTI SAMAL entitled "**ANXIETY IN EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL'S *SEA OF TRANQUILITY***" has been examined and approved by thesis Examining Committee as the requirement for Sarjana Degree in English Literature.

Surabaya, 1 July 2026
Thesis Examining Committee

Drs. Yoseph Bavo Agung Prasaja, M.Hum. — Chairperson

Mateus Rudi Supsiadji, S.S., M.Pd. — Secretary

Drs. Danu Wahyono, M.Hum. — Member

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TELP. 031 593 1800 (Ext. 311)
e-mail : perpus@untag-sby.ac.id

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MOTTO

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear."— QS. Al-Baqarah: 286

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a psychological condition that often emerges when individuals face situations beyond their control, and literary works provide a meaningful space to explore how such experiences shape human behaviour and identity. This study examines the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts, the main character in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility* (2022) a speculative fiction novel that places its characters in a reality shaped by time travel and instability. The research addresses three questions: the causes of Gaspery's anxiety, its effects on his character development, and the ways he copes with it throughout the story. To answer these questions, the study applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly his concepts of helplessness, the danger-situation, the loss of the object, and the ego's fear of the super-ego, as the framework for interpreting the character's psychological experiences. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive design and a psychology of literature approach, using a close reading technique to collect and interpret textual data such as dialogues, narration, and key events involving Gaspery. The findings show that Gaspery's anxiety arises from a series of causes tied to the chronological phases of his journey, affects his character development across the dimensions of feeling, thinking, and acting, and is managed through avoidance, reasoning, action, and acceptance. These findings reveal that Gaspery's anxiety leads to significant changes in his character, including the development of his moral conscience and a gradual movement from emotional distance toward genuine connection. This research highlights the deep relationship between anxiety and character development in literary works, and demonstrates how speculative fiction allows for the exploration of psychological experiences that go beyond the limits of realistic narratives.

Keywords: *anxiety, coping, psychoanalysis, qualitative descriptive, time travel*