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

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

By

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1612200043

FAKULTAS ILMU BUDAYA

UNIVERSITAS 17 AGUSTUS 1945 SURABAYA

2026

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

A THESIS

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



by

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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

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SALSABILLA DAMAYANTI SAMAL

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Salsabilla Damayanti Samal

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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*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Life is full of changes that people cannot always predict. From childhood to adulthood, people have to adjust to new situations and make choices without knowing what will happen next. Some people are very affected and need a long time to recover, while others can adjust quickly or even grow stronger from the experience (Yu & Liu, 2025: 02). The way a person handles these changes is often closely connected to their ability to regulate emotions and find balance through adaptive coping (Honan et al., 2023: 2527). When difficult experiences include loss or trauma, the emotional impact can shape a person's life for years (Lenferink et al., 2023: 2) This shows that life is unpredictable, and the ability to adapt is one of the most important skills people need.

Because life does not follow a clear path, people are often put in situations that go beyond what they can fully understand or control. It is in moments like these that emotions and behaviour become easier to see. Among all the emotional responses that uncertainty can produce, anxiety is one of the most common. Anxiety

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is now widely understood as a response to uncertainty (Brown et al., 2023: 546). It is not the same as fear. Fear is connected to a clear and present danger, but anxiety does not need a real threat to appear. It grows from things that are unknown or that have not happened yet (Ostafin et al., 2022: 379). Recent neuroscience research

also shows how the experience of uncertain over time can create the kind of avoidance and anxious behaviour that becomes hard to break (Holley et al., 2024: 85).

What makes anxiety especially difficult is that it is not always something a person can solve with logic. The mind tries to prepare for what it cannot predict, and this can lead to avoidance and ongoing stress (Wiese et al., 2023: 138). For some people, the inability to tolerate uncertainty becomes a strong driver of anxiety in everyday life (Bottesi et al., 2024: 102871). Anxiety can also affect a person's quality of life across many years if it is not addressed (Wilmer et al., 2021: 77). It is not a sign of weakness. It is a natural human response to the kind of uncertainty that we all face in our daily lives.

Anxiety is not only found in real life. It is also a common topic in literature, where it has been explored for a long time. Through fiction, writers can show what is happening inside a person, including their fears, doubts, and inner conflicts, in a way that feels real to readers. Literary works act as a kind of mirror that reflects the emotional and psychological reality of human life, and readers often respond to these portrayals with strong feelings of empathy and connection (Denham, 2024: 1). The relationship between literature and psychoanalysis has been studied for over a century, with researchers showing how fictional characters can be analysed in the same way as real psychological (Sandbæk, 2021: 27, 2022: 35). Many recent studies have used Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory to analyse the inner lives of characters in novels and films. Researchers have used Freud's framework to study

the id, ego, and superego of literary characters such as Lily Bloom (Wati & Tawami, 2024:1), Kat Stratford (Sheryl Norifly Loway & Nurochman, 2023: 7), and Estella in *Cruella* (Endrawati et al., 2022: 1285). Other studies have applied the same framework to examine the psychological structure of characters in novels such as *The Tragedy Paper* (Mutyarani, 2024: 307) and *Asmarani* (Istiqomah, 2024: 34). Studies have also analysed how anxiety appears in specific literary characters, such as Hazel Grace in *The Fault in Our Stars* (Onthoni et al., 2022: 316) and the moral struggles of characters facing conflict between conscience and external rules (Pramono, 2023: 1). All these studies show that the field of psychology of literature continues to grow, and that Freud's psychoanalytic theory remains a useful framework for understanding fictional characters.

One contemporary novel that explores anxiety in a particularly striking way is Emily St. John Mandel's Sea of Tranquility (2022: 208). The novel tells the story of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts, a young man who lives in Colony One, a settlement on the moon. Gaspery works night shifts as a security officer in a hotel, and his life is quiet and limited. He has lost his mother to a long illness, his marriage has ended, and his relationship with his sister Zoey has become distant over the years. When Zoey, who works at the Time Institute, comes to him with an unusual offer, Gaspery agrees to be trained as a time-travel investigator. His task is to look into a strange anomaly that has been recorded across several centuries, an anomaly that suggests something may be wrong with the structure of reality itself. As Gaspery travels through time and meets people whose futures he already knows, he is faced with growing moral and emotional pressure. He eventually breaks the most important

rule of his work by warning a writer named Olive Llewellyn about a coming pandemic, an action that costs him his freedom. The novel follows him through imprisonment, release, marriage to a woman named Talia, the quiet years on a farm, and finally his life as an old man in Oklahoma City. Throughout the story, Gaspery experiences many forms of anxiety, including the anxiety of loss, the anxiety of moral conflict, the anxiety of breaking the rules he has been trained to follow, and the anxiety of living in a reality that may not be what it seems.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to analyse the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in *Sea of Tranquility* (2022: 208). This novel was chosen for several reasons. First, the anxiety in this novel is not the everyday kind that comes from common problems such as family conflict or social pressure. It is the kind of anxiety that arises when a character loses his sense of reality, time, and identity, which makes it a particularly rich case for psychological analysis. Second, although *Sea of Tranquility* (Mandel, 2022: 208) has received attention from readers and literary reviewers, very few academic studies have examined it through the lens of psychology of literature. Third, the novel offers a clear arc of character development across many years and many situations, which makes it possible to trace not only the causes of anxiety but also its effects on character development and the ways the character copes with it. Through this study, the researcher hopes to give a clearer understanding of how anxiety is represented in literary works, especially through the approach of psychology of literature, and how it appears in the story and in the development of the main character.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. What are the causes of anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*?
2. How does anxiety affect the character development of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*?
3. How does Gaspery-Jacques Roberts cope with his anxiety in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the causes of anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*.
2. To identify how anxiety affects the character development of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*.
3. To identify how Gaspery-Jacques Roberts copes with his anxiety in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study is limited to the examination of the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility* (Mandel, 2022: 208) through the analytical lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The scope of this research is intentionally narrowed to the psychological aspects of the main character, focusing on how anxiety is portrayed through his thoughts, feelings, and actions across different stages of the story. This study mainly focuses on the experience of anxiety as the central psychological condition that shapes the overall

movement of Gaspery's character development. The study does not attempt to explore other literary components such as the experiences of other characters, broader thematic interpretation, stylistic analysis, sociological, cultural, philosophical, historical, or any other non-psychological context. The limitations of this research are further guided by the three research questions. The first research question confines the analysis to identifying the causes of Gaspery's anxiety, the second narrows the discussion to its effects on his character development through his feelings, thoughts, and actions, and the third limits the analysis to the ways he copes with his anxiety as portrayed in the narrative.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the field of literary studies, particularly in the area of psychology of literature, by demonstrating how Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory can be effectively applied to contemporary speculative fiction, specifically a time-travel narrative such as *Sea of Tranquility* by Emily St. John Mandel. The research offers academic value by providing a clear and systematic example of how the concepts of helplessness, the danger-situation, the loss of the object, and the ego's relationship to internal rules can be identified and interpreted within a modern novel. By tracing the causes, effects, and coping responses to the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts across different stages of his life, this study also highlights the flexibility of Freud's framework in explaining the psychological condition of characters in unconventional narrative settings. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reference for future researchers

at the Faculty of Cultural Studies, University of 17 August 1945 Surabaya, particularly those in the English Literature programme, who wish to analyse anxiety or other psychological conditions in similar works, showing that psychoanalytic theory remains a relevant and practical tool for examining how literature represents the inner life of characters.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter I presents the introduction, which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the scope and limitation, the significance of the study, and the organisation of the study. Chapter II contains the review of related literature, which covers previous studies and the theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter III explains the research methodology, including the literary approach, research design, data source, research instrument, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure. Chapter IV presents the analysis of the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*, covering its causes, its effects on his character development, and the ways he copes with it. Chapter V presents the conclusion of the study based on the findings of the analysis. This is followed by the bibliography, which lists all the references cited throughout the study. Likewise, the appendices at the end provide supporting materials related to the research, namely synopsis of the novel, biography of the author, and table of classification.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter the researcher focuses on related literature and theoretical framework, consisting of previous studies, the anxiety paradigm, the causes of anxiety, the effects of anxiety, ways of coping with anxiety, and the theory of Sigmund Freud.

2.1 Previous Study

Several studies related to psychological disorders in literary works have been conducted, particularly those that examine the psychological condition of characters in novels using psychoanalytic approaches. Reviewing these studies is important for two reasons. First, they show that psychological analysis of literary characters is a recognised and developing area of literary studies. Second, they help to identify what has been done before and what still needs to be explored. The following section reviews three previous studies that share both similarities and differences with this study.

The first study was conducted by Feni Asniar & Anik Cahyaning Rahayu (2024: 61), entitled *"Pi's Anxiety in Yann Martel's Life of Pi,"* published in *Austronesian: Journal of Language Science & Literature*. The researchers come from the English Literature Study Program, University of 17 August 1945 Surabaya. This study describes the symptoms, causes, effects, and types of anxiety experienced by the main character, Pi. The researchers use an extrinsic approach,

particularly the psychological approach, with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as the main framework and a qualitative method, with the novel as the primary data source. The findings show that Pi experiences anxiety marked by symptoms such as feeling anxious, being unable to think clearly, and experiencing deep tremors, pain, and sadness. The causes of Pi's anxiety mostly come from external factors, including the disaster at sea, encounters with dangerous animals, and the fear about his own existence.

The second study was conducted by Suwoto & Rahayu (2022: 97), entitled *"Mrs. Wellington's Anxiety in Gitty Daneshvari's School of Fear: The Final Exam,"* published in *Anaphora: Journal of Language, Literary, and Cultural Studies*. The researchers come from the English Literature Study Program, University of 17 August 1945 Surabaya. This study focuses on analysing the anxiety experienced by Mrs. Wellington, the headmistress character in the novel, by applying Freud's psychoanalytic theory and a qualitative method. The findings show that Mrs. Wellington's anxiety appears through symptoms such as feeling anxious, being unable to think clearly, and experiencing trembling, regret, and melancholy. The causes of her anxiety are connected to her fear of losing her school and the strained relationship with her stepson, which affect her emotions, thoughts, and behaviour throughout the story.

The third study was conducted by Cahyaningsih & Wahyono (2023: 580), entitled "Elizabeth Martin Grey's Delusional Disorder in Helena Fox's *How It Feels To Float*," published in the *Proceeding of Undergraduate Conference on Literature, Linguistic, and Cultural Studies*. The researchers come from the English

Literature Study Program, University of 17 August 1945 Surabaya. This study analyses the causes, effects, and coping strategies related to the delusional disorder experienced by the main character, Elizabeth Martin Grey, using a qualitative method and a psychological approach grounded in Freud's psychoanalytic framework. The findings reveal that Elizabeth's delusional disorder was triggered by the loss of her father and manifested in suicidal ideation, self-harm, and social alienation. Her recovery process involved meditation, counselling, and reconnection with trusted relationships.

However, there are also differences between the previous studies and the present one. The first difference is in the choice of object. The previous studies analyse novels set in realistic situations, such as a sea disaster (*Life of Pi*), an everyday family setting (*School of Fear*), and a contemporary coming-of-age story (*How It Feels To Float*). The present study, in contrast, analyses Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*, a speculative fiction novel that involves time travel and instability of reality. This setting produces a different kind of anxiety, one that is shaped not by everyday problems but by losing a clear sense of reality, time, and identity.

The second difference is in the nature of anxiety analysed. The previous studies examine anxiety that arises from concrete, identifiable external threats, such as a life-threatening disaster at sea, fear of institutional loss, and childhood trauma from an abusive father. The anxiety in those studies has a clear source that the characters can recognise. The present study, in contrast, examines anxiety that stems from ontological instability: the loss of a coherent sense of time, reality, and identity

caused by the speculative elements of the novel. This makes the anxiety in the present study less situational and more existential in character, which requires a different emphasis in the analysis.

The third difference is in the scope of analysis. The previous studies focus mainly on the causes and effects of psychological disorders, with some attention to symptoms or types. The present study expands this scope by also analysing how the character copes with his anxiety as a distinct area of discussion. This makes coping one of the three main areas of analysis alongside causes and effects, offering a more complete picture of the character's psychological experience.

Based on these similarities and differences, this study aims to fill the gap left by previous research by analysing anxiety in a speculative fiction setting, by including coping as a major area of analysis, and by using Freud's theory more specifically as the theoretical foundation for understanding the character's inner experience.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study uses a theoretical framework based on the concept of anxiety versus Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The framework is divided into four parts: the anxiety paradigm as the umbrella concept, the causes of anxiety, the effects of anxiety, and the ways of coping with anxiety. These four parts form the foundation for analysing the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*.

2.2.1 The Anxiety Paradigm

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological responses that people experience in their daily lives. American Psychiatric Association (2022: 215) defines anxiety as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, usually about an event that has not yet happened or about a situation whose outcome is unclear. Nevid et al. (2018: 158) describe anxiety in this way, explaining that it is a general state of apprehension or fear that appears when a person faces something uncertain, threatening, or beyond their control. Building on this general definition, clinical psychologists such as Barlow (2021: 108) explain that anxiety becomes a recognised psychological condition when it affects a person's ability to function in daily life, even when no real danger is present. From these definitions, anxiety can be understood as an emotional state that grows from the inability to predict or control what is happening. It is not always tied to something concrete in the outside world. It can appear even when the danger is only imagined or expected. Anxiety also varies in how strongly it affects different people. Some people are deeply disrupted by it and need a long time to recover, while others learn to manage it or even grow stronger through the experience (Troy et al., 2023: 547). The way a person handles anxiety is often closely connected to the broader skills of coping and emotion regulation that they have developed over the course of their life (Compas et al., 2017: 939).

Anxiety is often confused with fear, but the two are not the same. Fear is a response to a clear and present danger, such as a sudden threat that the person can see and identify. Anxiety, on the other hand, does not need a real or visible threat to

appear. It grows from things that are unknown or that have not yet happened. LeDoux & Pine (2016: 1083) argue that fear and anxiety are produced by two different systems in the brain. Fear is the response to a specific threat that is happening now, while anxiety is the response to threats that are uncertain or have not yet occurred. Carleton (2016: 5) takes this idea further by proposing that the fear of the unknown may be the central fear behind all anxiety. When people cannot understand or control what is going to happen, the mind treats this uncertainty itself as a danger. This is why anxiety can appear even when nothing actually dangerous is present in the environment.

In modern psychology, anxiety is increasingly understood as a response to uncertainty. Brown et al. (2023b: 844) describe anxiety as a disorder of uncertainty, meaning that the central problem in anxiety is the inability to feel safe when the future is unclear. Modern process-based approaches build on this idea by viewing anxiety as part of a broader pattern in which the mind tries to manage what it cannot control, often leading to avoidance and other unhelpful responses (Hofmann & Hayes, 2019: 37). Sigmund Freud, who studied anxiety in detail in the early twentieth century, came to a similar conclusion through a different route. In his book *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, Freud (1936: 109) argued that anxiety is not a simple emotion but a structured response of the mind to a perceived danger. He explains that anxiety has *"any other function except that of being a signal for the avoidance of a danger-situation"* (1936: 109). For Freud, this danger does not have to be physical. It can come from inside the person, from memories, from the loss of someone important, or from the fear of being judged by one's own

conscience. What unites the modern and the psychoanalytic views is the understanding that anxiety is closely tied to uncertainty, helplessness, and the inability to fully control what is happening.

Anxiety is also a key subject in literary studies. Literary works often portray characters who face uncertain futures, painful losses, or impossible moral choices, which are exactly the kinds of situations that produce anxiety in real life. Through fictional characters, writers can show the inner experience of anxiety with great depth and accuracy, including how it appears, how it develops, and how it affects the person who carries it (Oatley, 2016: 618). Readers also engage with these portrayals in deeply emotional ways, forming attachments to characters and situations that feel close to their own experiences. For this reason, the field of psychology of literature has become particularly relevant for analysing anxiety as it is represented in literary texts (Barry, 2017: 1). Some literary genres are especially suited for exploring extreme forms of anxiety. Speculative fiction, for example, can place characters in situations where reality itself becomes unstable, allowing for psychological experiences that realistic fiction cannot easily show (Miller, 2020: 2). By looking at how a character experiences anxiety in such conditions, the reader can trace the causes that produce it, the effects it has on the character's life, and the ways the character responds to it. This study uses anxiety as the umbrella concept for analysing the experience of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility* (2022: 208). The discussion that follows in this chapter explains the three main aspects of anxiety that will be examined in the analysis: the

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causes that produce it, the effects it has on the person, and the ways the person responds to it.

2.2.2 The Causes of Anxiety

Anxiety does not appear without reason. There is always something behind it, even if the source is not immediately visible to the person who feels it. Psychoanalytic theory has long sought to trace these underlying causes back to specific psychological situations that the ego cannot fully manage (Corradi, 2023: 386; Freud, 1936: 120). In this study, Freud's main categories of the causes of anxiety are used as a framework for identifying which moments in the novel produce anxiety in Gaspery-Jacques Roberts and why. The following five concepts will guide the analysis of the causes of anxiety in *Sea of Tranquility*.

1) Helplessness as the Original Source of Anxiety

   Helplessness is one of the deepest feelings a person can experience. According to Freud (1936: 108), this feeling forms the most basic cause of anxiety, in which the ego feels unable to control or escape what is happening. This Freudian view of helplessness as the foundation of anxiety has been further discussed in contemporary psychoanalytic studies (Corradi, 2023: 387). This concept will be used to identify moments in the novel where Gaspery is placed in situations that overwhelm him and leave him without the power to act. The analysis will pay attention to scenes where his thoughts, reactions, and inner experiences show that he cannot do anything about his condition, in order to understand how helplessness becomes the foundation of his anxiety.

2) The Danger-Situation versus the Traumatic Situation

Not all forms of helplessness are the same. Some are anticipated before the danger fully arrives, while others are already being lived through. Freud (1936: 160) makes this distinction clear by separating the danger-situation, where the ego senses a threat that has not yet happened, from the traumatic situation, where the helplessness is already real and unavoidable. Contemporary psychoanalytic literature has continued to apply this distinction in the analysis of anxiety as a structured response to perceived danger (Corradi, 2023: 388). This concept will be used to separate the moments in the novel where Gaspery responds to expected threats from the moments where he is directly facing painful experiences. The analysis will look at narrative events, internal monologues, and emotional reactions that distinguish anticipation from lived experience, in order to map the different types of anxiety that appear in Gaspery's journey.

3) The Loss of the Object

The experience of losing someone important is one of the most painful sources of anxiety a person can face. According to Freud (1936: 166), anxiety often arises from the loss, or fear of loss, of a person on whom the individual emotionally depends. This concept of object loss as a source of anxiety remains central in contemporary psychoanalytic discussions of grief and emotional attachment (Corradi, 2023: 389; Lemma, 2024: 542). This concept will be used to examine Gaspery's relationships with the important people in his life, such as his mother, his sister Zoey, and his wife Talia. The analysis will focus on scenes that show how the absence, distance, or threatened loss of these figures shapes his anxiety throughout the story.

4) Unresolved Loss: Mourning versus Anxiety

People do not all respond to loss in the same way. Some are able to grieve and gradually move on, while others stay caught in unresolved emotional pain long after the loss has passed. Freud (1936: 166) explains that these two outcomes, healthy mourning and unresolved anxiety, depend on how the person processes what has happened. Recent studies have continued to draw on this Freudian distinction to understand how loss shapes a person's emotional life over time (Lemma, 2024: 545). This concept will be used to trace how Gaspery responds to the losses he experiences across different stages of his life. The analysis will pay attention to whether his reactions move toward acceptance or remain stuck in unresolved emotional distress.

5) The Ego's Fear of the Super-Ego

Some forms of anxiety do not come from the outside world but from within the person. When the ego acts, or considers acting, against the internal rules it has accepted as its own, the result is a deep sense of discomfort that comes entirely from inside. Freud (1936: 90, 111) describes this as one of the most distinct sources of anxiety, where the threat lies not in external danger but in the conscience itself. The role of the super-ego as a source of anxiety has been further explored in recent psychoanalytic scholarship (Jesus, 2023: 1242). This concept will be used to analyse moments in the novel where Gaspery faces a conflict between his conscience and the rules he has been trained to follow as a time-travel investigator. The analysis will examine his moral hesitations, internal

arguments, and acts of breaking protocol, in order to show how acting against accepted rules produces a distinct form of anxiety in the character.

2.2.3 The Effects of Anxiety

When a person experiences anxiety, the experience does not stay hidden inside them. It comes out in many visible ways, in how they feel, how they think, and how they act in the world around them. This view of anxiety as a multidimensional response that affects the whole person has been a long-standing concern in psychoanalytic literature and continues to inform contemporary studies (Ally & Aloka, 2024: 35; Freud, 1936: 162). In this study, the effects of anxiety on Gaspery-Jacques Roberts will be analysed through these three areas. While Freud does not classify the effects of anxiety into these specific categories, his ideas about how anxiety influences the ego provide the basis for examining each area.

1) The Effect on Feeling

Emotions are often the first place where anxiety shows itself. Before the person can think clearly about what is happening or take any action, the body and the heart already feel something is wrong. Freud (1936 108, 162) describes the emotional core of anxiety as a feeling of helplessness, which can appear in forms such as sadness, nervousness, numbness, or quiet despair. Recent psychoanalytic studies have continued to discuss how this emotional dimension of anxiety manifests in different forms across a person's life (Ally & Aloka, 2024: 38; Corradi, 2023: 387). This concept will be used to trace the emotional changes Gaspery goes through as his anxiety develops across the story. The analysis will

focus on his described feelings, his reactions to important events, and the narrative descriptions of his inner emotional state at different points in his life.

2) The Effect on Thinking

The mind does not stay still when anxiety appears. It begins to work harder, faster, and often in more troubled ways than usual. Freud (1936: 109, 160) explains that anxiety changes the way the ego processes information, often making the person measure their own strength against the danger they are facing. This concept will be used to analyse how Gaspery's thinking patterns shift as his anxiety grows, including the moral questions he begins to ask and the way he reconsiders his role in the events around him. The analysis will examine his inner monologues, moments of reflection, and shifts in how he understands his situation.

3) The Effect on Action

Anxiety eventually moves beyond feeling and thinking, and starts to show itself in what the person actually does. The decisions a person makes under the pressure of anxiety can be very different from the decisions they would make in a calmer moment. Freud (1936: 91, 109) explains that anxiety functions as a signal that pushes the ego to act in order to avoid danger, but action itself can also generate anxiety when it breaks the person's internal rules. This idea of anxiety as a signal that motivates action while also producing its own form of inner conflict continues to be applied in contemporary psychoanalytic studies (Corradi, 2023: 390; Jesus, 2023: 1250). This concept will be used to examine the decisions Gaspery makes throughout the novel, especially those that change

the direction of his life. The analysis will focus on key moments of action such as leaving the hotel, breaking the protocol of the Time Institute, and choosing to live in hiding, in order to understand how anxiety shapes his behaviour.

2.2.4 Ways of Coping with Anxiety

A person who experiences anxiety does not simply suffer through it. They respond to it in different ways, depending on what they are facing and what they have learned to do over the course of their life. Psychoanalytic studies have long examined how the ego develops different defensive and adaptive processes to handle anxiety, and this line of work continues in contemporary scholarship (Corradi, 2023: 386; Freud, 1936: 91). In this study, four ways of coping with anxiety will be used to analyse how Gaspery-Jacques Roberts responds to the anxiety he experiences in *Sea of Tranquility*. As with the previous section, Freud does not classify coping into these exact categories, but his ideas about the ego's response to danger provide the basis for examining each one.

1) Avoidance

The first response many people have to anxiety is to step away from whatever is causing it. By turning away from painful subjects, memories, or situations, the person tries to keep the discomfort at a manageable distance. Freud (1936: 91) describes avoidance as the ego's tendency to turn away from what causes discomfort, either by leaving the situation or by refusing to think about it. This concept will be used to identify the moments in the novel where Gaspery avoids facing his feelings, his memories, or the people connected to his pain. The

analysis will focus on his behaviour in the early part of the story, where his withdrawal and emotional distance show how avoidance functions as his first response to anxiety.

2) Reasoning

When avoidance is no longer possible, the next response is often to think the problem through. Rather than running from the discomfort, the person tries to make sense of it by using logic, facts, or self-talk. Freud (1936: 160) explains that the ego can also respond to anxiety by thinking through the situation in order to understand it better. This concept will be used to examine the moments where Gaspery tries to make sense of what he is experiencing, especially during his work as an investigator. The analysis will look at his inner reflections, his attempts to justify his choices, and the way he uses logic to manage situations that feel overwhelming.

3) Action

Some situations cannot be solved by avoiding them or thinking about them. They require the person to actually do something, even when doing so carries its own cost. Freud (1936: 109) explains that the ego can also respond by acting on the situation, even when the action itself produces a new form of anxiety. This dual nature of action as both a response to and a source of anxiety has been further discussed in recent psychoanalytic studies on the conflict between the ego and the super-ego (Jesus, 2023: 1252). This concept will be used to analyse Gaspery's decisive moments, especially when he chooses to break the protocol and save Olive Llewellyn. The analysis will focus on his decision-

making process, the costs of acting, and the way action becomes a turning point in his character development.

4) Acceptance

Not every source of anxiety can be removed, reasoned away, or solved through action. Some things simply have to be lived with, and learning to live with them is itself a slow and difficult process. Freud (1936: 166) describes acceptance through the example of mourning, where the person stops fighting the loss and learns to live with what cannot be changed. The Freudian understanding of mourning as a slow process of accepting loss continues to be discussed in contemporary psychoanalytic scholarship (Lemma, 2024: 548). This concept will be used to examine the later parts of the novel, when Gaspery begins to settle into his new life despite the costs of his earlier choices. The analysis will focus on the scenes that show his quiet peace, his settled relationships, and his acceptance of the consequences he has carried for many years.

2.2.5 Theory of Sigmund Freud

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Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory serves as the main theoretical foundation of this study. Although Freud's framework was originally proposed in (1936) in his book *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, his core concepts remain central in contemporary psychoanalytic and literary scholarship. Recent studies have continued to apply and develop Freud's ideas about anxiety, the structural hypothesis of id, ego, and super-ego, the role of helplessness, and the experience of loss in both clinical and literary contexts (Ally & Aloka, 2024: 35; Corradi, 2023: 386; Jesus, 2023: 1242; Najia Almas et al., 2024: 662; Singh et al., 2025: 57). Freud

developed his ideas about anxiety throughout his career, and his most complete discussion of the topic appears in his book *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1936). His framework explains anxiety as a psychological response that grows from the interaction between different parts of the human mind.

Freud explains that human behaviour is shaped by the interaction of three psychological structures: the id, the ego, and the super-ego. The id contains instinctual desires that seek immediate satisfaction. The super-ego represents internalised moral values and rules. The ego stands between them and tries to balance their demands with the conditions of the outside world. When the conflict between the id and the super-ego becomes too strong *"that the ego, unable to carry out its office of mediator"* (Freud, 1936: 72). This tripartite model of personality continues to provide a useful framework for analysing the inner conflict of literary characters in contemporary research (Najia Almas et al., 2024: 663; Singh et al., 2025: 58).

Within this framework, Freud (1936: 109) describes anxiety as a signal that warns the ego of a danger-situation. The danger does not have to come from the outside world. It can also come from inside the person, from memories, from internal conflict, or from situations the ego cannot control. Freud (1936: 162) also argues that anxiety is rooted in an earlier experience of helplessness, which is reproduced later in life whenever the ego faces a new situation that resembles the original feeling of being unable to act. This helplessness is the deepest source from which all later forms of anxiety develop. Contemporary psychoanalytic research has reaffirmed the relevance of these Freudian concepts in understanding how

anxiety functions both as a warning signal and as a deep psychological response (Ally & Aloka, 2024: 39; Corradi, 2023: 387).

Freud (1936: 109) identifies several specific causes that can produce anxiety. The loss of an important person, or the fear of losing their love, is one of the strongest sources. Acting against the rules the ego has accepted as part of itself produces another kind of anxiety, which Freud describes as an internal discomfort that comes from within the person. These two sources of anxiety, namely object loss and the conflict between the ego and the super-ego, continue to be central themes in contemporary psychoanalytic discussions (Jesus, 2023: 1250; Lemma, 2024: 542). The central concepts taken from Freud's work for this study include the structure of id, ego, and super-ego; the function of anxiety as a signal of danger; the role of helplessness as the original source of anxiety; the experience of loss as a powerful trigger of anxiety; and the internal conflict that arises when the ego acts against its accepted rules. These concepts form the foundation for the analysis presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researcher divides the discussion into six parts: the first is literary approach, the second is research design, the third is data source, the fourth is research instrument, the fifth is data collection procedure, and the last is data analysis procedure.

3.1 Research Approach

This study uses an extrinsic approach, which means it looks at elements outside the text of the novel to understand the literary work more deeply, with the focus placed on the psychological side of the main character rather than on intrinsic elements such as plot or setting. The researcher applies Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory focusing on the experience of anxiety to analyse the character of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's Sea of Tranquility, particularly his ideas about helplessness, the danger-situation, the loss of the object, and the ego's relationship to internal rules. According to Barry (2017: 1), the psychoanalytic approach is one of the most established forms of extrinsic literary analysis because it focuses on the psychological aspects of characters and allows readers to understand the deeper emotional and mental processes that intrinsic analysis alone cannot fully reveal. The novel remains the primary source of insight, and Freud's theory is used as the framework for interpreting the experiences shown in the text.

3.2 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design because the data are in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and narration taken from the novel Sea of Tranquility. A qualitative method is suitable because it focuses on understanding and explaining meaning rather than measuring data with numbers. According to (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016: 6), *"Qualitative researchers are inter ested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences"*. As a descriptive study, this research aims to describe and analyse the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts based on the evidence found in the text of the novel, without imposing categories or labels that go beyond what the text actually shows. The data are taken directly from the text and then interpreted using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as the theoretical framework, which helps the researcher show clearly how anxiety appears in the character, how it affects his growth and decisions, and how he deals with it as the story develops.

3.3 Source of Data

The primary source of data for this study is the novel *Sea of Tranquility* written by Emily St. John Mandel, published in 2022 in the United States by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York. The novel consists of 208 pages and is divided into eight parts: Part 1, "Remittance" (1912: 1), with ten chapters; Part 2, "Mirella and Vincent" (2020: 32), with three chapters; Part 3, "Last Book Tour on Earth" (2203: 53), which has no chapter divisions; Part 4, "Bad

Chickens" (2401: 83), with eleven chapters; Part 5, "Last Book Tour on Earth" (2203: 134); Part 6, "Mirella and Vincent" (File Corruption: 156), with five chapters; Part 7, "Remittance" (1918, 1990, 2008: 169), with five chapters; and Part 8, "Anomaly," with thirteen chapters. The novel presents a total of thirty characters, including seven main characters. It provides all the textual data required for the analysis, including dialogues, narrative passages, descriptions, and key events that illustrate the anxiety experienced by the main character Gaspery-Jacques Roberts, as well as the scenes that show the causes of his anxiety, its effects on his character development, and the ways he copes with it throughout the story.

3.4 Research Instrument

In this study, the researcher serves as the main research instrument. In qualitative literary research, the researcher plays a central role in planning the study, collecting data, interpreting findings, and presenting results. The researcher becomes the key instrument because she interacts directly with the text, makes decisions about which passages are relevant to the analysis, and determines how the data should be interpreted. Throughout the research process, the researcher reads the novel *Sea of Tranquility* carefully, takes notes, collects and organises the data, interprets them using the theoretical framework, and reports the results of the analysis.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data in this study are collected and analysed through the following procedure. The researcher begins by reading the novel *Sea of Tranquility* carefully

and repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of the story and its main character, then identifies the parts of the text that show the experiences of Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in relation to anxiety, including his thoughts, feelings, and actions throughout the novel. Relevant data in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and narration are then collected and organised into three categories based on the research questions of this study, namely the causes of anxiety, the effects of anxiety on character development, and the ways the character copes with his anxiety. After the data are classified, the researcher analyses them descriptively, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as the framework to interpret the patterns of anxiety shown in the novel, and interprets how anxiety influences Gaspery's feelings, thoughts, and actions, and how it shapes his character throughout the story. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the results of the analysis to answer the three research questions of this study.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The data in this study are analysed through several steps. The researcher first selects the data from the novel that are most relevant to the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in *Sea of Tranquility*, then classifies the selected data into three categories: the causes of anxiety, the effects of anxiety on character development, and the ways the character copes with his anxiety. The data are then analysed descriptively, using Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as the framework to interpret the patterns of anxiety shown in the novel. The researcher interprets how anxiety influences Gaspery's feelings, thoughts, and actions, and

how it shapes his character throughout the story, and finally draws conclusions based on the results of the analysis to answer the three research questions of this study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the anxiety experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility* (2022: 208) The analysis is based on Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory as the main theoretical framework. The discussion is organised according to the three research questions stated in Chapter I, which focus on the causes of anxiety, the effects of anxiety on Gaspery's character development, and how he responds to his anxiety throughout the novel. Each part of the analysis looks at evidence from the novel, including narration, dialogue, and the character's actions, and explains how they relate to the theories used in this study. Through this analysis, it can be seen that anxiety in *Sea of Tranquility* is not just a simple feeling. It is something that grows from Gaspery's difficult situation as a time traveller, shapes the way he thinks and behaves, and influences the decisions he makes throughout the story.

4.1 The Causes of Anxiety Experienced by Gaspery-Jacques Roberts

Gaspery's anxiety in *Sea of Tranquility* does not arise from a single source. It grows from several different psychological situations that build on one another throughout his life as a time traveller. Freud's framework, developed in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1936: 108) identifies several main concepts that help to explain why anxiety appears in different forms across a person's experience, including helplessness, the danger-situation, the loss of the object, the question of unresolved loss, and the ego's relationship to the super-ego. This section examines

each of these five sources in turn, drawing on evidence from the novel to show how anxiety appears in Gaspery's life through specific situations, relationships, and inner conflicts that he cannot resolve on his own.

4.1.1 Gaspery's Anxiety Before the Investigation

Gaspery is a young man who is dealing with a loss he has never properly faced before the investigation begins. He started working at a hotel in Colony One only one month after his mother died. His mother had been ill for a long time, and in her final weeks, he and his sister Zoey lived at the hospital to be near her. The novel captures how quickly Gaspery returned to an ordinary routine after she was gone.

> "I started work at the hotel about a month after my mother died. She'd been sick for a long time, years, and at the end Zoey and I all but lived at the hospital. That last week we were there every day and every night, exhausted comrades keeping watch, while our mother murmured and slept." (Mandel, 2022: 89)

Gaspery does not allow himself time to grieve. He moves from the hospital directly into a hotel uniform, filling the empty hours with routine rather than sitting with the pain. The grief does not disappear; it simply has nowhere to go, so it settles beneath the surface of everything he does and becomes a quiet but persistent source of anxiety that stays with him long after his mother is gone.

Gaspery works night shifts as a hotel security officer, and the job leaves him with almost nothing to hold his attention. He spends his evenings watching strangers check in and out of the lobby, wearing a suit cut in an antique style and a peculiarly shaped hat called a fedora, and his mind wanders because there is nothing to engage it. He describes the job honestly:

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> "The job was terminally boring… I've always enjoyed watching other people, but people in hotels turned out to be surprisingly boring. They checked in and checked out. They appeared in the lobby at odd hours, asking for coffee… The job was quiet. My mind wandered." (Mandel, 2022: 93)

Gaspery's description of the job as *"terminally boring"* is not just a complaint about the work. He is describing a deeper condition: his whole life has started to feel like this hotel lobby, a place where time passes without producing anything meaningful. He has a strong ability to pay close attention to people, a quality that even impressed his employer, and yet there is nothing in his days that actually needs that attention. His anxiety here is the quiet anxiety of a person who senses, without being able to say it clearly, that his life is going by without leaving a mark.

Gaspery also carries the weight of a failed marriage that he rarely mentions but has never fully worked through. He left the Night City, the place where he grew up, after his marriage ended. He mentions his ex-wife only once, briefly, during a job interview, noting that *"that was how I knew my ex-wife had fallen in love with someone else, just by being attentive"* (Mandel, 2022: 91).

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Gaspery says this and moves on, which is itself a pattern in how he handles pain: by not looking at it directly. He left the Night City and told people it was because of a bad divorce and a desire for a fresh start, which was true but also incomplete. He carries the anxiety of someone who has been through a significant loss and has chosen to live beside it rather than through it. His past is a weight he has learned to carry without acknowledging what it costs him.

Gaspery lives alone in a bland apartment on the far edge of Colony One. On his dark nights off from work, he develops a small and private ritual that reveals how far he feels from where he wants to be.

> "Sometimes on dark nights I liked to cross the street to the Periphery, to look through the composite glass at Colony Two glittering in the distance. My life in those days was as bland and limited as my apartment. I tried not to think about my mother too much. I slept through the days." (Mandel, 2022: 94)

Gaspery crosses the street on dark nights, presses himself up against the edge of his world, and stares at something brighter and further away than where he is standing. He is not going anywhere. He is just looking. This small repeated gesture is the gesture of someone who senses that more is possible but has not yet found a way to move toward it. His choice to sleep through the days adds to this picture: sleep is a way of getting through time without having to be fully present in it, a way of keeping at a distance the feelings he has not been able to process since his mother died and his marriage ended.

Gaspery carries a particular guilt toward his sister Zoey, the person who matters most to him. He calls her on her birthday and realises in the moment before she answers that he forgot to congratulate her on receiving tenure a whole month earlier. The guilt is immediate, and he reflects on what it says about the kind of brother he has been, admitting that *"I felt a familiar variety of guilt... I couldn't entirely parse why this made me feel so awful. There's a low-level, specific pain in having to accept that putting up with you requires a certain generosity of spirit in your loved ones"* (Mandel, 2022: 94)

Gaspery's use of the word *"familiar"* is the most important detail in this moment. He is not surprised by the guilt because he has felt it before, many times, in many small moments where he has failed to show up for his sister. He describes it as a *"low-level, specific pain,"* which captures something precise about this kind of anxiety. It is not dramatic or overwhelming. It is always there, quiet and specific, sitting inside him like something he carries everywhere without ever setting it down.

Gaspery's sense of unease takes on a new and strange quality when Zoey calls him in and shows him footage connected to an anomaly her research team has been investigating. He watches a video of a forest path and a maple tree, and a strange glitch of darkness and sound that should not exist. He then reads a passage from his mother's favourite novel, Marienbad by Olive Llewellyn, that contains a strikingly similar description of an inexplicable moment of darkness in an airship terminal. After putting down his device, he finds himself feeling *"unsettled in a way I couldn't explain"* (Mandel, 2022: 99)

Gaspery cannot name what he is feeling, but the feeling is real. He has just encountered the possibility that something is wrong with the structure of the world around him in a way he has no framework to understand. As Zoey continues to explain the implications, he finds he cannot even finish the sentence that the explanation leads him to:

> "'But if moments are files…' I couldn't finish the sentence. The room we were in seemed much less real than it had only a moment ago. The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet." (Mandel, 2022: 102)

His mind begins listing everything around him, trying to ground himself in the physical world because the idea Zoey is describing has made that world feel suddenly unstable. He also senses something deeper underneath the explanation that he cannot yet bring into focus, something he describes as *"something vast and terrible, swimming just outside of my grasp"* (Mandel, 2022: 102). His anxiety here is not directed at anything specific. It is the anxiety of someone standing at the edge of a realisation too large to take in all at once.

Gaspery's anxiety grows again when he learns what happens to people who break the rules of the Time Institute. Gaspery reads a specific piece of information that stays with him:

> "I knew that one hundred forty-one of the two hundred and five people serving life sentences on the moon were there because they'd attempted time travel. It didn't matter if they'd been successful or not; the attempt was enough to send you away for life." (Mandel, 2022: 105)

Gaspery holds these numbers in his mind as facts rather than fears, which is itself a way of keeping the anxiety they produce at a safe distance. He knows exactly what the rule is and exactly what the consequences would be. He uses this knowledge not to stop himself but to understand the shape of the risk he is taking. His anxiety here comes from a real and known danger, and yet he chooses to move toward it anyway, because staying in his empty life feels, in its own way, equally impossible.

Gaspery's anxiety takes a new form when he visits the Time Institute and discovers that Ephrem, a man he has known since high school and has always believed to be an arborist, has in fact been working there for years. He walks into

his office expecting an old friend and instead has to completely rebuild his understanding of someone he believed he knew.

3 3

> "I was overcome by the strangeness of the moment, the disorienting sense of one reality slipping away and being replaced by another. But I've known you for years, I wanted to say, and you're an arborist, not a suit at the Time Institute. We graduated high school together." (Mandel, 2022: 113)

Gaspery is not simply surprised. He is overwhelmed by the feeling of one reality replacing another before he has had a chance to resist it. He wants to insist on the version of Ephrem he has always known, but the new reality is already in place and he cannot argue against it. His anxiety here comes from the sudden collapse of something he had believed to be solid. This experience of reality slipping away and being replaced will repeat itself throughout the rest of the story.

Gaspery's anxiety is sharpened further by a conversation with Talia, who walks with him along the river and tells him what happened to her parents after they worked for the Time Institute. He listens carefully to what she is saying, but something about her words produces a reaction in him that goes beyond thinking. He cannot entirely follow her meaning, but describes feeling that *"listening to her made me so uneasy that I couldn't meet her eyes"* (Mandel, 2022: 119).

Gaspery's body responds to Talia's warning before his mind has finished processing it. He cannot bring himself to look at her while she is speaking. He leaves the conversation without fully understanding what she meant, and yet the unease she created stays with him long after. This physical response, the inability to hold eye contact, shows that the anxiety Talia's words produce is something Gaspery cannot manage through logic or reasoning alone.

Gaspery's most difficult source of anxiety before the investigation actually begins comes from learning about Olive Llewellyn, the novelist he is assigned to interview, who he is told will die only three days after their meeting. He spends the days before the interview reading all her books, and finds he cannot separate the experience of reading her words from the knowledge of what is coming, admitting that *"it was hard to parse whether this was the fault of the books or the fault of the dread I felt when I thought of her, given the timing of the scheduled interview... 'I know.' I felt a little sick about it"* (Mandel, 2022: 132).

Gaspery feels physically sick at the thought of what he knows, unable to read Olive's work without the weight of her fate pressing down on every page. This dread does not stay in one place, and it leads directly into a thought that keeps returning to him no matter how many times he tries to push it away, as *"the thought of breaking the protocol occurred to me, then and in the morning two days later when I reported to the travel chamber, when the coordinates were entered into my device, when I stepped into the machine to meet her"* (Mandel, 2022: 133).

Gaspery is not just anxious about Olive's fate. He is now caught between two things that feel equally necessary: the duty to follow the rules of the Time Institute and the feeling that knowing someone will die and doing nothing about it is wrong. This is the conflict that will define everything that follows.

4.1.2 Gaspery's Anxiety During the Investigation

Gaspery arrives at a social gathering in 2007 as part of his investigation and is immediately unsettled by the people around him. In his own time, the dangers of

large crowds and physical contact are well understood because of major global health events people have lived through, but the people at this party have no experience of those things. The way they shake hands and stand close together produces a strong and immediate anxiety in him, and he has to remind himself that *"these people have no direct experience of pandemics"* (Mandel, 2022: 165) in order to keep functioning. Gaspery looks around the room and then experiences something even heavier, something his sister had warned him about before he started: *"Here was the awfulness that Zoey had warned him of, the utterly miserable knowledge of how everyone else's stories would end. He looked out over the room, and for the first time in his life, Gaspery felt old"* (Mandel, 2022: 167).

Gaspery knows what is coming for the people around him. He knows which ones will suffer and which ones are already closer to the end of their lives than they can imagine. He cannot say a word about any of it. He has to stand in the middle of their ordinary evening and carry that knowledge entirely by himself. The feeling makes him feel old in a way he has never felt before, not because of his age but because of the distance that knowledge creates between him and every other person in the room. This is one of the sharpest causes of anxiety that time travel creates in Gaspery: the isolation of knowing what no one else around him is allowed to know.

Gaspery reaches a point in the investigation where thinking clearly about what is happening becomes something he cannot do without being overwhelmed. He knows what his choices will likely cost him, and he knows that the things he has already done may have consequences for Zoey as well. Rather than face all of this directly, he finds a way to redirect his attention: *"He closed his eyes and considered*

the course of the investigation, because that was preferable to thinking about his sister, or thinking of what awaited him if he returned to his own time" (Mandel, 2022: 158).

Gaspery is not focused on the investigation at this moment. He is hiding inside it. The work gives him something specific and contained to put his mind on because everything else that is pressing on him is too painful to look at directly. He also feels, in this moment, something that the novel describes as a *"fathomless guilt"* (Mandel, 2022: 158), a guilt so deep it has no bottom, because he is looking at Zoey and understands what his actions may have already cost her. His anxiety here is not just about the future. It is about what he has already done and what it means for the person he loves most.

Gaspery's investigation also takes him to a forest in British Columbia in the year 1994, where he is tasked with observing the moment a young girl named Vincent Smith films the original anomaly on her camera. The mission requires him to wait silently in hiding for hours, in an environment that is completely unfamiliar to him. Gaspery describes the experience with a clear sense of discomfort,

> "Walking through this forest was easier now than when he'd been wearing a priest's robe, but he still had no talent for it. The ground was too soft; branches caught at his clothes; he felt assailed from all sides… He was very still, listening. Another thing he didn't like about forests was the constant sound… There was no pattern to the white noise of a forest, and the randomness put Gaspery on edge. Time passed, hours. His muscles cramped. He was desperately thirsty." (Mandel, 2022: 160)

Gaspery is physically uncomfortable, but the anxiety here goes beyond physical discomfort. He has grown up in the moon colonies, where the air, the gravity, and even the sound are carefully controlled. The randomness of the forest,

with its unpredictable sounds and shifting ground, is the opposite of everything he is used to. The fact that his body cannot relax, that his muscles cramp from the long wait, shows how deeply unsettling the unfamiliar environment is for him.

The anxiety deepens when Gaspery finally sees Vincent Smith, the thirteen-year-old girl whose footage will later become the centre of the anomaly investigation. Gaspery has read about her, studied her records, and prepared for the moment, but seeing her in person creates a different kind of pressure, as the novel describes the moment with quiet intensity: *"Vincent Smith at thirteen: she looked like she'd cut her own hair with blunt scissors before she'd dyed it bright blue. Her eyes were ringed in black. She radiated neglect"* (Mandel, 2022: 160).

Gaspery understands what is about to happen, but he cannot interfere. He is there only as an observer. The anxiety of having to remain hidden, of having to watch a child who clearly carries her own troubles walk into a moment that will affect the rest of her life, adds another layer to what he is already feeling. He must stay still, stay silent, and let the moment unfold exactly as it is supposed to unfold.

Gaspery experiences the anomaly directly for the first time during one of his investigation missions, and his reaction is immediate and completely physical. When two moments in time appear at once in a way that has no explanation, his body responds before his mind can:

> "Gaspery's hands were clasped over his mouth, because he wanted to scream, and the terminal was gone. It's one thing to know in the abstract that one moment might corrupt another moment; it's another to experience both moments at once; it's something else again to suspect what it might mean." (Mandel, 2022: 161)

Gaspery presses both hands over his own mouth to stop himself from screaming, not because he has been physically hurt but because what he is experiencing is completely beyond what his mind can hold. He has read about the anomaly. He has been told about it. But experiencing two moments at once, with no framework for understanding what it means, produces a raw and uncontrollable terror that bypasses everything logical. He then moves through three stages: knowing something in theory, experiencing it in reality, and standing at the edge of understanding what it might actually mean. Each stage is more frightening than the one before it.

Gaspery makes the choice to break the rules of the Time Institute when he finds he cannot follow them while knowing what is coming for Olive Llewellyn. The moment after he acts, he is fully aware of what he has done and what it means: *"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him"* (Mandel, 2022: 162). He is not deceiving himself. The repetition of *"he knew… he knew"* shows that his conscience is not letting him look away from what has happened. He sees his situation completely clearly. The only thing standing between him and the full weight of that reality is described as a *"sliver"* of hope: something extremely small, something that might not hold. He knows the Time Institute monitors its investigators. He knows the rules he has broken and how seriously they are taken. The anxiety he feels in this moment is the anxiety of a person who has made an irreversible choice and now has to live with exactly that knowledge.

4.1.3 Gaspery's Anxiety After Breaking the Protocol

Gaspery is arrested and imprisoned in a century that is not his own after the Time Institute discovers what he has done. He has known that this was coming ever since he made his choice, but the knowledge that something is coming and the experience of actually living through it are different things entirely. The novel puts his situation in plain and direct language: *"What had happened now was terrible, he was in prison in the wrong century and he was going to die here, but as months slipped into years, he found his regrets were very few"* (Mandel, 2022: 181).

Gaspery has lost his freedom. He has lost his time. He has been removed from everyone and everything he has ever known. The phrase "the wrong century" adds a particular weight to his imprisonment that goes beyond ordinary confinement, because he is not simply in the wrong place; he is in the wrong time, separated from his life by something that cannot be corrected by walking out a door. Even the absence of the moon from where he is lying is a source of pain, as the novel describes him in his prison bed: *"I couldn't see the moon from my bed, so there was nothing for it now but to close my eyes and play old movies: walking to school in the Night City… holding hands and laughing with my mother on a sunlit day"* (Mandel, 2022: 186). Gaspery retreats into memories of his mother and his early life because that is the only place he can go.

Gaspery is eventually released from prison and sent to live quietly on a farm in an earlier century. But the release does not bring him safety. He is afraid of being

found, afraid that moving through the world will somehow trigger the detection systems of the Time Institute and bring everything crashing back down on him.

> "I didn't leave the farm at all those first few years, but I feared that eventually I'd have to… I imagined surveillance cameras picking up my face and setting off alarms through the centuries, a Time Institute agent arriving to investigate, a cascade of horrors." (Mandel, 2022: 190)

Gaspery does not just worry in a vague way. He constructs a very specific and detailed scenario in his mind: cameras, alarms, an agent arriving, a cascade. The specificity of this imagining is part of what makes it such a strong source of anxiety. He cannot step outside the farm without the whole scenario playing out in his head. He is not imagining something unlikely. He is someone who knows exactly how the Time Institute works, and this knowledge means his fear is informed by reality rather than separated from it.

Gaspery's most final and perhaps most painful source of anxiety comes from the loss of Talia, the woman who becomes his companion during his years on the farm. When Talia dies, Gaspery is left entirely alone in a century that is not his own, with no one who knows who he actually is or where he has come from. The novel describes what this isolation costs him in terms that go beyond loneliness.

> "What I didn't tell him: I felt that without Talia I might disappear into thin air, out there by myself. Just me and the dog and the farm robots, day after day. Loneliness wasn't a strong enough word for it. All that empty space. At night I sat on the porch with my dog, avoiding the silent house." (Mandel, 2022: 201)

Gaspery says that loneliness is not a strong enough word for what he feels, and this admission points to something that is harder to name and harder to carry. He feels that without Talia he might simply cease to exist, not in a physical sense but in the sense of having no one to confirm that he is real. He avoids the silent house

because the silence inside it is the silence of a life he shared with someone who is now gone. His anxiety here connects back to the very beginning of his story: the loss of his mother, the failed marriage, the empty apartment in Colony One. What runs through all of it is the anxiety of a person who has spent most of his life being close to loss, and who has never fully found a way to live inside it without being undone.

4.2 The Effects of Anxiety on Gaspery-Jacques Roberts' Character Development

Gaspery is a person whose anxiety does not simply stay inside him as a hidden feeling. His anxiety produces real and visible changes throughout the story, in the way he feels about himself and others, in the way he thinks about the world around him, and in the actions and decisions he makes. He does not come out of his experiences the same person he was when they began. Gaspery changes, slowly and sometimes painfully, and many of those changes are a direct result of the anxiety he carries through every stage of his journey. His anxiety is not only something that causes him suffering but also one of the forces that shapes him, challenges him, and eventually leads him toward a version of himself that is more at peace with the world and with his own choices than he has ever been before. This section describes those changes by following three areas of his character that are most clearly affected: how he feels, how he thinks, and how he acts.

4.2.1 How Anxiety Changes the Way Gaspery Feels

Gaspery begins the story as a person who does not feel very much at all. He works his night shifts, sleeps through his days, and moves through his life without any strong emotional connection to what is happening around him. He describes his life in Colony One as *"bland and limited"* (Mandel, 2022: 94), and this blandness extends not just to his apartment and his job but to his inner emotional life as well. He is not happy, but he is not devastated either. He is simply numb, existing in a kind of emotional flatness that he has mistaken for stability. This early emotional state is not the absence of anxiety. It is anxiety in its quietest form, the kind that has been pressing on him for so long that he no longer recognises it as anything unusual. The loss of his mother, the failure of his marriage, and the distance from his sister. All of these have been pushed beneath the surface, where they continue to shape him without his being aware of it.

Gaspery's first significant emotional shift comes not from joy or relief but from anxiety itself. He has just spoken with Talia by the river and heard her warning about the Time Institute. He walks back toward his hotel and something in him suddenly changes. He admits that *"I felt such impatience with my life. I turned back to the hotel, and found that I couldn't go in. The hotel was the past. I wanted the future"* (Mandel, 2022: 120). His feeling of impatience in this moment is not small or manageable. He feels it so strongly that his body refuses to cross the threshold of the hotel. He has been living in emotional flatness for so long that when a real and strong feeling finally arrives, it does not come gently. His anxiety about wasting his life has built up over time into something that finally breaks through the surface

and forces him to act. The anxiety, in this moment, is not only a source of pain but also the thing that finally moves him forward.

Gaspery's emotional life changes again, and far more painfully, during a quiet moment with his sister Zoey after the investigation has begun. He looks at her and suddenly understands something he has not fully seen before, that she is the only person he has, and that he has put her at risk. The novel describes his feeling simply but with great weight: *"He felt a fathomless guilt"* (Mandel, 2022: 158). His guilt here is not the quiet, familiar guilt he has known before when forgetting Zoey's tenure or failing to call on time. His guilt in this moment is something far deeper and heavier, something that has no bottom. He has spent most of his life keeping his emotions at a manageable distance, and yet in this single moment, the full weight of what he has done to the person he loves most breaks through everything he has used to keep himself protected. This is the moment when his anxiety stops being something he can manage and becomes something that breaks him open.

Gaspery's emotional world changes yet again at the social gathering in 2007, when he looks out over the crowd and feels the full weight of knowing everyone's futures. He has been trained for this, and he has been told it will be difficult, but nothing in his training has fully prepared him for the actual experience of standing in a room full of living people and carrying the knowledge of how their stories will end. The novel describes what happens to him: *"Here was the awfulness that Zoey had warned him of, the utterly miserable knowledge of how everyone else's stories would end. He looked out over the room, and for the first time in his life, Gaspery felt old"* (Mandel, 2022: 167).

Gaspery feels old for the very first time. He is not physically old at this point in the story. He has not aged dramatically or suffered a physical decline. He feels old in a deeper and more permanent way, in the way that only comes from carrying too much knowledge for too long, from knowing things that cannot be shared or changed or set down. His emotional experience of the world has been permanently altered by the anxiety of this moment. He will never again be able to look at a crowd of people without carrying the weight of what he knows about them, and this changes something in him that will not change back. Gaspery here is helpless to do anything about the futures he sees, and that helplessness is what produces the heavy, ageing feeling that settles into him in this moment.

Gaspery's most surprising emotional transformation comes not in the most difficult moments of his journey but in one of the quietest. He is in prison, serving his sentence in the wrong century, surrounded by strangers in a time that is not his own. He has been through more anxiety, guilt, and fear than most people experience in an entire lifetime. He should, by any reasonable measure, be broken by this point. And yet something unexpected has happened inside him. The novel describes it that *"He was calm these days, in a way he wouldn't have expected"* (Mandel, 2022: 182). He is calm. He has reached a place of quiet that he did not plan for and did not expect. His calmness here is not indifference or defeat. He has not given up on caring about the world or about the people in it. He has simply worked through enough of the anxiety and guilt that has been pressing on him to find, on the other side of it, something steady and still. His emotional development has brought him to a place that his earlier self would not have recognised, and this transformation

has been made possible precisely because of everything the anxiety put him through.

Gaspery's emotional journey is not finished even after prison. He lives alone on the farm after Talia dies, and for a long time he sits on the porch every night watching the airships rise over the distant city rather than going inside the silent house. He sits with his dog and watches the lights, and one night he realises something that surprises him, reflecting: *"At first I thought I was putting off moving to the city because I loved the farm, but one night it hit me: I longed for those lights. After all this time, I wanted to be around people again"* (Mandel, 2022: 197).

Gaspery longs for connection. He, who has spent much of his life keeping emotional distance from the world and the people in it, has been changed by everything he has been through into someone who genuinely wants to be near others again. His anxiety and grief and isolation, rather than closing him off permanently, have slowly opened him up to a deeper understanding of what he actually needs. His emotional development across the story is a long and painful journey from numbness to feeling, from emptiness to longing, and from fear to something that finally resembles peace.

4.2.2 How Anxiety Changes the Way Gaspery Thinks

Gaspery's thinking is also reshaped by the anxiety he carries throughout the story. At the beginning of the novel, his thinking is mostly practical and surface-level. He observes people in the hotel lobby, notices small things about his routine, and avoids thinking about anything that might disturb the bland stability of his life.

But as the investigation begins and his anxiety grows, the way his mind works begins to change in ways he cannot control. The first major shift in Gaspery's thinking happens in Zoey's office when she explains the simulation hypothesis and shows him the strange video. His mind, which has been quietly grounded in physical reality for years, suddenly cannot hold onto what is in front of him.

> "'But if moments are files…' I couldn't finish the sentence. The room we were in seemed much less real than it had only a moment ago. The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet." (Mandel, 2022: 102)

Gaspery's thinking here is panicked. He lists physical objects around him as a way of holding onto reality, because the alternative is too much to handle. He cannot finish the sentence he started, because the implication of what he was about to say is too large for his mind to accept. This is a man whose mental world has just been destabilised, and his anxiety forces him to grasp at any solid thing within reach.

In the weeks that follow this conversation, the anxious thinking spreads into Gaspery's daily life. He stands behind his glasses in the hotel lobby and finds his mind constantly listing the things around him that might not be real. The simulation hypothesis has not left him alone, and his thinking has been changed by it in a way that quiet routine cannot undo. The very ground of his mental world has shifted, and from this point onward he is no longer the same kind of thinker he was before. Anxiety has opened a door in his mind that he cannot close. As the investigation progresses, anxiety pushes his thinking into new and more difficult territory. When Gaspery learns about Olive Llewellyn's coming death, his mind cannot stop

returning to a possibility that, according to his training, should not even be entertained.

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> "But of course the thought of breaking the protocol occurred to me, then and in the morning two days later when I reported to the travel chamber, when the coordinates were entered into my device, when I stepped into the machine to meet her." (Mandel, 2022: 133)

The repetition in this passage is doing important work. The thought returns again and again, at every stage of his journey to meet Olive. Anxiety has now started to reshape the moral structure of his thinking. He is no longer simply following the rules. He is questioning them. His mind is moving toward a different way of understanding what he should and should not do, and this movement is being driven by the dread he feels about what is going to happen to Olive. Gaspery's mind in this passage is caught in exactly that conflict, between the rules he has been trained to follow and the moral pressure that anxiety has produced in him.

After Gaspery is imprisoned, his thinking continues to develop, but in a very different way. With nothing but time, he reviews his choices repeatedly, turning the moment of breaking the protocol over in his mind from every possible angle. The result, surprisingly, is not regret but clarity.

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> "He found his regrets were very few. Warning Olive Llewellyn of the approaching pandemic was not, no matter how he turned the moment over in his mind, the wrong thing to do. If someone's about to drown, you have a duty to pull them from the water. His conscience was clear." (Mandel, 2022: 181)

Gaspery's thinking here is no longer panicked or torn. The anxiety that once produced confusion has now produced clarity. He has thought through what he did, examined it carefully, and arrived at a conclusion he can live with. This is a major development in the way his mind works. The same kind of thinking that once made

him list physical objects to hold onto reality is now capable of considering moral questions with calmness and arriving at considered answers. The years of anxiety have, in a sense, trained his mind to hold difficult ideas without falling apart.

The most striking transformation in Gaspery's thinking comes years later, on the farm with Talia. The same simulation hypothesis that once shook his grip on reality no longer disturbs him at all: *"This is what the Time Institute never understood: if definitive proof emerges that we're living in a simulation, the correct response to that news will be So what. A life lived in a simulation is still a life"* (Mandel, 2022: 194). Gaspery who panicked in Zoey's office has become the Gaspery who can say *"so what."* The same intellectual problem that once destabilised him is now something he can hold with peace. His thinking has moved from anxious to philosophical, from reactive to reflective. By the time he is an old man being interviewed in the airship terminal, his thinking has settled into a quiet contemplative depth: *"I've been thinking a great deal about time and motion lately, about being a still point in the ceaseless rush"* (Mandel, 2022: 202). Anxiety has carried his mind from panic, through moral struggle, into clarity, and finally into a kind of wisdom that the younger Gaspery would not have been able to imagine.

4.2.3 How Anxiety Changes Gaspery's Actions and Decisions

Gaspery's anxiety also produces visible changes in what he does. The same anxiety that shapes his feelings and reshapes his thinking eventually forces him to make choices, and those choices direct the course of his life in ways he could not have predicted. The first action driven by anxiety happens right after the river walk

with Talia. The feeling of impatience with his life has built to a point where he can no longer continue his old routine, and he makes a sudden, definitive decision, calling Ephrem at the Time Institute and asking: *"'Could I start early?' I asked. 'I know the plan was to give the hotel two weeks' notice, but could I just start the training now? Tonight?'"* (Mandel, 2022: 120). This is the action of a man who has finally been moved. The anxiety about his empty life has accumulated to the point where it can no longer be contained by sleeping through the days. He leaves the hotel job that has held him in place for years and steps into something completely unknown. This is significant because it shows that anxiety in Gaspery's life is not only destructive. It is also generative. It produces movement where there was none, and it pushes him toward changes he would never have made on his own.

The most important action Gaspery takes in the entire novel is the decision to warn Olive Llewellyn about the approaching pandemic. He knows the rules, and he knows the consequences, but he acts anyway: *"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him"* (Mandel, 2022: 162). His anxiety that has been building in him is about Olive's fate, the dread he described as making him *"a little sick"* (Mandel, 2022: 133), has finally pushed him to act. This is not the action of someone following orders. This is the action of someone whose conscience has been awakened by anxiety to the point where he can no longer remain passive. The decision changes everything about his life. He will lose his freedom, his time, his sister, and most of what he has built. But he makes the decision anyway, because the anxiety of watching her die without doing anything

has become unbearable. His conscience has overtaken his training, and the result is a decision that defines him for the rest of his life.

After Gaspery's release from prison, however, his anxiety produces a very different kind of action, or rather, the absence of action. The fear of being detected by the Time Institute keeps Gaspery confined to the farm for years: *"I didn't leave the farm at all those first few years, but I feared that eventually I'd have to. When Mariam fell ill, Clara drove her to the hospital, but who would drive Clara?"* (Mandel, 2022: 190). His is action here is the opposite of his earlier breakthrough. The same anxiety that once pushed him toward courage now keeps him locked in place. This shows that anxiety in his life does not always lead to growth in a straight line. Sometimes it pushes him forward, and sometimes it holds him back. The fear of detection is concrete and reasonable, given what he knows about the Time Institute, but it also limits his life in ways that he eventually has to break out of.

The breaking out comes after Talia's death. Gaspery sits alone on the porch for a long time, watching the airships rise over Oklahoma City, until one night the realisation arrives: *"I longed for those lights. After all this time, I wanted to be around people again"* (Mandel, 2022: 197). His action of leaving the farm and moving toward the city completes a long arc. The man who once hid in his bland apartment in Colony One has become a man who deliberately moves toward other people. This is not the impulsive escape of his earlier life, when he left the Night City after his marriage ended. This is a considered, deliberate choice, made after years of reflection and grief. The anxiety of being alone has finally outweighed the anxiety of being seen, and he chooses connection over hiding.

The final action Gaspery takes in the novel is one of the quietest but most significant. As he plays the violin in the airship terminal and meets his younger self for an interview, he keeps performing through the strange ripples of reality around him: *"I kept playing, sweating now, holding on for dear life to my lullaby for Talia"* (Mandel, 2022: 198). This is no longer the passive Gaspery of the opening chapters. This is a man whose actions are now connected to what he loves, what he has lost, and what he chooses to hold onto. Anxiety has not disappeared from his life. He is still sweating. He is still afraid. But he keeps playing, and the music he plays is for his wife. The action is small, but it captures everything that has changed in him. The man who once slept through his days is now a man who holds on to his lullaby for dear life.

4.3 How Gaspery-Jacques Roberts Copes with His Anxiety

Throughout *Sea of Tranquility*, Gaspery does not face his anxiety in only one way. He responds to it differently depending on what he is going through and what kind of pressure he is under. In some moments, he turns away from what causes him pain. In other moments, he tries to reason with himself in order to feel less overwhelmed. In other moments still, he takes action, even when the action is risky or costly. And finally, in the later part of his life, he begins to find peace with the things he cannot change. This section describes those four ways of coping by following Gaspery's responses across the novel, looking at when each one appears and what it tells the reader about the kind of person he is becoming.

4.3.1 Avoidance: Turning Away from What Hurts

Gaspery's earliest and most consistent way responds to his anxiety is by simply turning away from it. He does not face his feelings directly. He does not talk about them. He moves through his life in a way that allows him to keep the most painful parts of his experience at a manageable distance. This pattern begins long before the investigation starts and shows up again and again throughout the novel, in different forms.

Gaspery's pre-investigation life is built almost entirely around avoidance. He works night shifts at the hotel, sleeps through the days, and lives in *"a bland little apartment in a block of other bland little apartments on the far edge of Colony One"* (Mandel, 2022: 94). He describes his choice plainly: *"I tried not to think about my mother too much. I slept through the days"* (Mandel, 2022: 94). The sentences are short, almost casual, but they describe something serious. The death of his mother is one of the most significant losses of his life, and yet he has chosen to handle it by refusing to engage with it. Sleep becomes a way of skipping over time that would otherwise have to be spent with his own feelings. The bland apartment is not just a place to live but a kind of buffer against everything that might disturb him. Even his explanation for leaving the Night City, *"bad divorce, I just wanted a fresh start"* (Mandel, 2022: 117), is a form of avoidance. He has moved physically away from the place that holds painful memories rather than working through what those memories mean.

Gaspery's pattern of avoidance does not disappear once he begins the investigation; it just takes new forms. After Zoey explains what she fears about the

anomaly and what it could mean for him, Gaspery has to face a situation that he cannot escape physically, and he responds by retreating inward instead. The novel describes the moment with quiet clarity: *"He closed his eyes and considered the course of the investigation, because that was preferable to thinking about his sister, or thinking of what awaited him if he returned to his own time"* (Mandel, 2022: 158). The phrase *"preferable to thinking"* is doing important work here. Gaspery is not denying that these things are happening. He knows what awaits him. He knows what he is putting Zoey through. But the act of thinking about them is more than he can bear, so he closes his eyes and turns his attention to the investigation, which is at least bounded and concrete. The investigation has become a kind of refuge from the larger things he cannot face. This shows that even when Gaspery has grown into a more capable and more morally awake person, his old habit of avoidance is still there, ready to be used when the pressure becomes too great.

The most extended example of avoidance comes after Gaspery is released from prison and sent to live on the farm. He has technically been given back his life, but the fear of being detected by the Time Institute keeps him confined: *"I didn't leave the farm at all those first few years, but I feared that eventually I'd have to"* (Mandel, 2022: 190). The fear is real and reasonable, given what he knows about the Time Institute and its surveillance capabilities. But the response is the same response he has used for most of his life. He stays small. He stays out of sight. He limits his world to the smallest possible space and waits for the danger to pass. Avoidance has been his default for so long that even when his situation has completely changed, it is still the first place he goes. The novel shows the cost of this pattern by quietly

noting that Mariam falls ill and that Clara has to drive her to the hospital, which raises the question of who will drive Clara when her time comes. The world keeps moving forward, and Gaspery's avoidance threatens to leave him stranded behind it.

4.3.2 Reasoning: Explaining Things to Himself

When avoidance is not possible, Gaspery turns to a different way of coping. He tries to explain things to himself, using logic, facts, and reminders to make overwhelming situations feel smaller and more manageable. This is a less passive response than avoidance, because it requires him to engage with what is happening, but it still keeps his deeper feelings at a distance. The first major appearance of this pattern is in Zoey's office, immediately after the simulation hypothesis has been explained to him. Gaspery cannot escape the idea, and he cannot push it away by sleeping or moving, so instead he turns to the physical world and starts listing what is real: *"The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet"* (Mandel, 2022: 103).

The repetition of *"real"* in this passage shows what he is doing. He is using language to anchor himself. By naming each object and labelling it real, he is trying to keep his grip on a world that has just been shaken. This is not denial. He knows what Zoey has said. But he is buying himself time, using the act of reasoning to keep himself from being overwhelmed all at once. The same pattern continues in the weeks after that conversation, when he stands in the hotel lobby behind dark glasses and finds himself *"thinking of all of the things around me that might not be real"* (Mandel, 2022: 106). The reasoning has continued, only now it has turned the

other way. Instead of listing what is real to feel safe, he is examining everything to see what might not be real. The anxiety has changed shape, but the method of handling it is the same.

This pattern shows up most clearly during the investigation itself, at the social gathering in 2007. Gaspery is surrounded by people who behave in ways that, from the perspective of his time, are dangerous. They shake hands. They stand close to each other. They kiss on the cheek. His training has prepared him intellectually for what he will see, but the actual experience produces an automatic reaction of unease. He responds by reminding himself of facts:

> "These people have no direct experience of pandemics, he reminded himself. None of them were old enough to remember the winter of 1918–1919; Ebola was a few years out and would mostly be confined to the other side of the Atlantic; Covid-19 would not arrive for another thirteen years." (Mandel, 2022: 165)

Gaspery reasoning here is precise. He gives himself dates, history, and context, as if the act of explaining the situation in factual terms can make his unease manageable. By listing the reasons why the danger is not what his body is telling him it is, he allows himself to keep functioning in the room. Without this reasoning, the anxiety would be too strong for him to continue with his work.

The most important action Gaspery takes in the entire novel is the decision to warn Olive Llewellyn about the approaching pandemic. He knows the rules, and he knows the consequences, but he acts anyway: *"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him"* (Mandel, 2022: 162). The phrase *"tried to convince himself"* shows what reasoning is for in Gaspery's life. It is a way

of holding himself together when the world has stopped making sense. The cold water in his pants becomes a piece of evidence he can use against the larger uncertainty pressing in on him. This is the same Gaspery from Zoey's office, listing the desk and the flowers, only now the stakes have grown much higher.

There is also a quieter version of this reasoning that runs through Gaspery's professional life as a whole. Early in the novel, the Time Institute gives him a mantra to follow: *"Follow the evidence"* (Mandel, 2022: 157). This phrase becomes, in his own words, a compass for him throughout his five years of training and during the investigation itself. The mantra is more than just a rule. It is a way of organising his anxious mind. By focusing on the next piece of evidence, the next step in the investigation, he is able to keep moving forward without being paralysed by the larger questions about what the evidence might mean. Reasoning, in this form, becomes a structure he can lean on when his feelings are too much to face directly.

4.3.3 Action: Doing Something Concrete

When neither avoidance nor reasoning is enough, Gaspery responds to his anxiety by taking action. These are the moments in the novel where he stops trying to manage the feeling and starts trying to change his situation. Each of these actions marks a turning point in his life, and each of them is driven, in some way, by anxiety that has built up to the point where it can no longer be contained.

Gaspery's first major action of this kind comes right after his walk along the river with Talia. The conversation has stirred up everything he has been avoiding: his impatience with his life, his sense that he has been wasting his time, his fear that

he is running out of chances. He turns back to the hotel and finds that he cannot go inside, then picks up his device and makes a phone call: *"'Could I start early?' I asked. 'I know the plan was to give the hotel two weeks' notice, but could I just start the training now? Tonight?'"* (Mandel, 2022: 120). The request is direct and immediate. There is no plan, no transition period, no slow shift from one life to the next. Gaspery has been pushed to a point where action has become the only way forward. The anxiety about his bland and limited life has accumulated to the point where it overflows, and the overflow takes the form of a concrete decision. This is a significant change for a man who has spent years sleeping through his days and watching strangers in hotel lobbies. The same anxiety that once kept him passive is now the thing that moves him.

The most important action Gaspery takes in the entire novel is the decision to warn Olive Llewellyn about the approaching pandemic. The anxiety leading up to this moment has been building for days: he has been reading her books with growing dread, and he has felt "a little sick" (Mandel, 2022: 133) about meeting her. The thought of breaking the protocol has returned to him over and over, even though his training tells him it must not be entertained. When the moment arrives, he acts: *"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him"* (Mandel, 2022: 162). The phrasing in this passage is striking. *"He knew what he'd done"* is repeated, not because Gaspery does not understand what he has done, but because the weight of the action is so heavy that the narration has to acknowledge it twice. The action has been taken. There is no going back. He has

chosen to act on his conscience rather than on his training. He experiences this very discomfort, but the discomfort of not acting has, in this moment, become greater than the discomfort of acting. His anxiety about Olive's fate has done what no amount of training could do. It has pushed him to make a choice that defines the rest of his life.

There are smaller actions throughout the novel that follow this same pattern. After his interview with Edwin, Gaspery quietly tells him the truth about what he saw in the forest: *"I thought perhaps it might ease your mind just a little to know that you might be saner than you think"* (Mandel, 2022: 174). The action is small. It will not change the course of history. But it is action driven by feeling, by an awareness of someone else's suffering, and by a willingness to bend the rules in order to ease that suffering. This is the same impulse that will, only a short time later, lead him to break the protocol for Olive. The smaller actions and the larger ones are connected.

In the later years of Gaspery's life, the pattern of action takes a different form. After many years of staying on the farm and limiting his world, he eventually marries Talia, who has come to live on the neighbouring farm. The novel describes the decision in a single sentence: *"We were married within a year, Talia and I, and when Clara and Mariam died, they left the farm to us"* (Mandel, 2022: 194). For a man who has avoided emotional closeness for most of his life, the choice to marry is itself an action against his earlier patterns. The same is true of his decision, after Talia's death, to leave the farm and move toward Oklahoma City. The realisation comes quietly: *"I longed for those lights. After all this time, I wanted to be around*

people again" (Mandel, 2022: 197). The action of moving toward the city is the opposite of his lifelong action of moving away from connection. Each of these decisions is, in its own way, a response to anxiety. The anxiety has just changed shape, from the anxiety of running away to the anxiety of being alone, and Gaspery, having learned what avoidance costs, finally chooses the harder action of opening himself to other people.

4.3.4 Acceptance: Finding Peace with What Cannot Be Changed

Gaspery's final way of responding to his anxiety is the slowest and the deepest. It does not come quickly, and it does not come from a single decision. It develops over years, through prison and through love and through loss, until it becomes a way of holding his experience that is no longer about fighting his anxiety but about living alongside it. The first sign of this acceptance appears in prison. Gaspery has been imprisoned in the wrong century, surrounded by strangers, with little hope of ever returning to his own life. He has every reason to be broken by this experience. And yet, as months stretch into years, something unexpected happens inside him. The novel describes it with quiet precision:

> "He kept talking, but Gaspery stopped listening. He was calm these days, in a way he wouldn't have expected. In the early evenings Gaspery liked to sit on the farthest possible edge of his bunk, almost falling off the end, because from that angle there was a sliver of sky visible through the window, and through it he could see the moon." (Mandel, 2022: 182)

Gaspery's calmness here is not numbness. He is not the same man who slept through his days in Colony One. This is a calmness that has been earned. He has thought through everything he has done, examined his choice from every angle, and come to a place where the anxiety no longer controls him. He even finds small

comforts in his confined world, like sitting on the edge of his bunk so that he can see the moon. These small comforts matter precisely because he has stopped demanding that his life be different than it is. The same kind of acceptance shows up in his clear conscience about saving Olive: *"His conscience was clear"* (Mandel, 2022: 181). The phrase is simple, but it carries the weight of years of reflection. He has made peace with the choice that cost him everything, because he has decided, after carefully considering it, that the choice was right.

A different kind of acceptance appears later, on the farm with Talia. The simulation hypothesis that once destabilised Gaspery so badly that he had to list the objects in Zoey's office no longer disturbs him at all. The novel describes how this change feels from inside:

> "This, I found myself thinking in the years that followed, on nights when my wife and I played the violin together, when we cooked together, when we walked in our fields watching the movements of the farm robots, when we sat on the porch watching the airships rise up like fireflies on the horizon over Oklahoma City, this is what the Time Institute never understood: if definitive proof emerges that we're living in a simulation, the correct response to that news will be So what. A life lived in a simulation is still a life." (Mandel, 2022: 194)

Gaspery's phrase *"So what"* is the most concentrated expression of his acceptance in the entire novel. It is also the most striking, because it answers the very question that once produced the deepest anxiety in him. The young Gaspery who stood in Zoey's office listing real things would not have been able to say *"so what."* He needed reality to be solid. He needed certainty. But the older Gaspery, after everything he has been through, has come to a different conclusion. Whether or not the world is real, the experiences he has had with Talia and with the farm and

with the violin are real to him. The reality of his life lies in the living of it, not in the philosophical question of what kind of universe it takes place in. Anxiety has not disappeared. The question has not been answered. He has simply chosen to let the question stop mattering.

Gaspery's final form of acceptance comes in his life as an old man, playing the violin in the airship terminal and meeting his younger self. The encounter is strange and disorienting, the kind of situation that should produce overwhelming anxiety. And yet Gaspery keeps playing: *"I kept playing, sweating now, holding on for dear life to my lullaby for Talia"* (Mandel, 2022: 198). The sweat shows that the anxiety is real. He is still afraid. He is still under pressure. But he does not stop playing, and the music he plays is the lullaby he composed for his wife. The acceptance, at this stage of his life, is not the absence of anxiety. It is the ability to keep doing what he loves even while the anxiety is present. Earlier in his life, anxiety made him retreat. Now, anxiety is something he can hold while continuing to live. His reflection later confirms this: *"I've been thinking a great deal about time and motion lately, about being a still point in the ceaseless rush"* (Mandel, 2022: 202). The phrase *"still point"* captures the place Gaspery has finally arrived at. He has stopped trying to escape from his life. He has stopped trying to outrun what he cannot control. He has become, in the end, a quiet centre in the middle of everything that moves around him.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, this study concludes that Gaspery-Jacques Roberts, the main character of Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility* (2022), experiences a layered form of anxiety that shapes his entire psychological journey. Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly his ideas about helplessness, the danger-situation, the loss of the object, and the ego's relationship to internal rules, this anxiety is shown to grow from specific situations across different stages of his life, to produce real changes in his character, and to push him toward different ways of responding throughout the story.

Beginning with the causes of his anxiety, the analysis identifies three chronological phases of his journey where the sources of his anxiety become especially clear. Before the investigation begins, his unease is rooted in personal losses such as the death of his mother, the end of his marriage, and the empty routine of his life in Colony One. During the investigation itself, the unease sharpens into more painful forms, including the helplessness of watching others suffer, the moral conflict of carrying knowledge he cannot share, and the decision to break the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn. After the protocol is broken, his suffering takes its most concrete shape through imprisonment in a century not his own, the constant fear of being discovered, and the eventual loss of his wife Talia. These

causes do not stand alone. They build on each other and produce a layered condition that grows in response to specific situations throughout Gaspery's life.

These causes produce real and visible changes in Gaspery across three areas of his character. In the area of feeling, he moves from a state of emotional numbness in his early years, through experiences of guilt and the heavy weight of feeling old, to an unexpected calmness in prison and finally to a longing for human connection after Talia is gone. In the area of thinking, his panicked attempts to grasp at reality develop into repeated moral questioning, then into hard-earned clarity, and eventually into a philosophical acceptance summed up in the phrase "so what." In the area of action, his passive withdrawal becomes a series of decisive choices, from leaving the hotel for Time Institute training, to breaking the protocol to warn Olive, to choosing to move toward Oklahoma City to be among people once again. Taken together, these three areas show that anxiety in Gaspery's life is not only a source of suffering but also one of the forces that shapes him into the person he eventually becomes.

To respond to these changes, Gaspery uses four ways of coping that develop gradually across the story. He uses avoidance most clearly in the early part of his life, sleeping through his days and trying not to think about his mother, and later refusing to leave the farm for years after his release from prison. He turns to reasoning when avoidance is no longer possible, listing physical objects in Zoey's office to feel anchored in reality and using the principle of following the evidence as a compass through his investigation. He chooses action when reasoning is no longer enough, beginning his training at the Time Institute and finally breaking the

protocol to save Olive's life. He arrives at acceptance in the later parts of his life, finding stillness in prison, building a quiet life with Talia on the farm, and reaching a place where the simulation hypothesis that once destabilised him no longer disturbs him at all. These four responses are not separate from each other but trace the shape of his entire psychological development.

Through the portrayal of Gaspery's anxiety, *Sea of Tranquility* shows how a psychological condition can grow from personal loss and moral conflict, transform a character's emotional and mental life, and eventually settle into the structure of a person's existence. Freud's psychoanalytic framework provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding why these patterns take the forms they do, while the novel itself remains the primary source of insight into how anxiety can be both a source of suffering and a force that leads a person toward a deeper and more honest way of living.

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APPENDIX I

SYNOPSIS *SEA OF TRANQUILITY*

Sea of Tranquility is a novel that travels across five centuries and follows several different characters who are all connected by one mysterious event: a sudden flash of darkness, the sound of a violin, and the strange feeling of being somewhere else, all for just a moment.

The story begins in 1912, when a young English nobleman named Edwin St. Andrew is sent to Canada by his family after he says some uncomfortable truths at a dinner party. He travels across the country and eventually arrives in a small village called Caiette in British Columbia. One morning, while walking alone in the forest, he experiences something he cannot explain. Everything goes dark, he hears a few notes of violin music, and then it is over. He is deeply disturbed, but no one believes him.

The next story takes place in New York City in 2020. A woman named Mirella attends an art show and learns that her old friend Vincent has died at sea. After the show, she meets a mysterious man called Gaspery Roberts, who asks questions about a video that Vincent filmed in a forest when she was a teenager. That video contains the same strange moment of darkness and violin music. Mirella also recognises Gaspery from a terrible incident she witnessed as a child, but he does not appear to have aged at all, which frightens her.

Then the story moves to 2203, where a successful novelist named Olive Llewellyn lives in a human colony on the Moon. She is on a book tour on Earth

when Gaspery approaches her with an urgent warning: a deadly pandemic is coming, and she must return home immediately. Olive is shocked, but she chooses to trust him, and this decision saves her life. What is even more surprising is that her own novel, called *Marienbad*, contains a passage that describes a character having the exact same strange experience in an airship terminal two centuries later.

The heart of the novel belongs to Gaspery Roberts himself. He is a quiet and somewhat aimless man who works as a security guard at a hotel on the Moon. His sister Zoey is a brilliant physicist at the Time Institute, a secret organisation that uses time travel to protect the stability of history. One evening, Zoey shows Gaspery something alarming: the same mysterious moment appears in historical records from four completely different time periods. She believes these are signs that time itself is being corrupted, like a broken computer file. Gaspery volunteers to travel back in time to investigate, visiting each of the people who experienced the anomaly. But when he breaks the most important rule and warns Olive about the pandemic, saving her life, he faces serious punishment. The Time Institute sends him back to the 1990s, where he is framed for a crime and imprisoned.

After many years in prison, Zoey secretly rescues him and brings him to a farm in Oklahoma in the year 2172. There he meets a woman named Talia, who was also displaced from her own time. They fall in love, marry, and build a quiet life together. Eventually, in his old age, Gaspery moves to Oklahoma City and begins playing violin in the city's airship terminal.

In the final and most surprising moment of the novel, Gaspery realises that he himself caused the anomaly all along. Because he existed in the same forest location at Caiette across three different time periods at once, the world struggled to process the impossibility. The corrupted files were his own footprints in history. The novel ends with old Gaspery playing violin in the terminal, being interviewed by his own younger self, and keeping this secret completely to himself.

APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Emily St. John Mandel was born in 1979 and grew up on a small island in British Columbia, Canada. As a young woman, she moved to Toronto to study contemporary dance at the School of Toronto Dance Theatre. After finishing her studies, she relocated to New York City, where she has lived ever since with her husband and daughter. She began writing fiction while working various jobs to support herself in New York. Her debut novel, *Last Night in Montreal*, was published in 2009, followed by *The Singer's Gun* in 2010 and *The Lola Quartet* in 2012. These early books established her as a talented writer, but it was her fourth novel that made her internationally famous.

Station Eleven, published in 2014, tells the story of a deadly flu pandemic that destroys modern civilisation and follows several characters as they try to rebuild their lives and preserve culture. The novel won the Arthur C. Clarke Award and the Toronto Book Award, and was also a finalist for the National Book Award. It was later adapted into a critically acclaimed TV series. Many readers found the book especially powerful after the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, even though Mandel had written it years before and the experience it described felt surprisingly familiar. Her fifth novel, *The Glass Hotel*, was published in 2020. It tells the story of a massive financial fraud and the many lives it ruins. This book shares a character named Vincent Smith with *Sea of Tranquility*, creating a quiet connection between the two stories.

Sea of Tranquility, published in 2022, is her sixth novel. It brings together many of the themes she has explored throughout her career: the power of art, the fragility of society, the experience of living through a pandemic, and the question of what makes a life feel meaningful. The novel also reflects on what it was like to be a writer during the COVID-19 pandemic, since one of its main characters, Olive Llewellyn, is a novelist on a book tour as a pandemic begins.

Emily St. John Mandel is known for writing novels that are both literary and very readable. She often uses elements from other genres such as science fiction, mystery, or thriller, but always keeps her focus on human emotion, relationships, and moral choices. Her work is widely admired for being thoughtful and hopeful, even when it deals with loss, disaster, or uncertainty.

APPENDIX III

TABLE OF DATA CLASSIFICATION

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
1	"I started work at the hotel about a month after my mother died. She'd been sick for a long time, years, and at the end Zoey and I all but lived at the hospital. That last week we were there every day and every night, exhausted comrades keeping watch, while our mother murmured and slept."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Mother)	89
2	"I tried not to think about my mother too much. I slept through the days."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Mother)	94
3	"Remember how Mom used to quote Marienbad at us when we were kids? ... I was transported back to the hospital, the last days of our mother, the week outside of time and space when we never left her side."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Mother)	133

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
4	"holding hands and laughing with my mother on a sunlit day in the Night City when I was a small child."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Mother)	187
5	"that was how I knew my ex-wife had fallen in love with someone else, just by being attentive."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Marriage)	91
6	"Bad divorce, I just wanted a fresh start."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Marriage)	118
7	"I felt a familiar variety of guilt... I couldn't entirely parse why this made me feel so awful. There's a low-level, specific pain in having to accept that putting up with you requires a certain generosity of spirit in your loved ones."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Sister Zoey)	94
8	"He felt a fathomless guilt."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Sister Zoey)	158
9	"What I didn't tell him: I felt that without Talia I might disappear into	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Talia)	203

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	thin air, out there by myself. Just me and the dog and the farm robots, day after day. Loneliness wasn't a strong enough word for it. All that empty space. At night I sat on the porch with my dog, avoiding the silent house."			
10	"Quietly in the night of an aneurysm when she was seventy-five."	Causes of Anxiety	Loss of the Object (Talia)	197
11	"The job was terminally boring... I've always enjoyed watching other people, but people in hotels turned out to be surprisingly boring. They checked in and checked out. They appeared in the lobby at odd hours, asking for coffee... The job was quiet. My mind wandered."	Causes of Anxiety	Helplessness (Empty Life)	93
12	"Sometimes on dark nights I liked to cross the street to the Periphery, to look through the composite glass at Colony Two glittering in the distance. My life in those days was as bland and limited as my apartment."	Causes of Anxiety	Helplessness (Empty Life)	93

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
13	"I put down my device. I was unsettled in a way I couldn't explain."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Anomaly Footage)	99
14	"'But if moments are files…' I couldn't finish the sentence. The room we were in seemed much less real than it had only a moment ago. The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Anomaly Footage)	103
15	"something vast and terrible, swimming just outside of my grasp."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Anomaly Footage)	102
16	"I knew that one hundred forty-one of the two hundred and five people serving life sentences on the moon were there because they'd attempted time travel. It didn't matter if they'd been successful or not; the attempt was enough to send you away for life."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Time Institute Threat)	105

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
17	"I was overcome by the strangeness of the moment, the disorienting sense of one reality slipping away and being replaced by another. But I've known you for years, I wanted to say, and you're an arborist, not a suit at the Time Institute. We graduated high school together."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Reality Slipping)	113
18	"Listening to her made me so uneasy that I couldn't meet her eyes."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Talia's Warning)	119
19	"You don't have to be a terrible person to intentionally try to change the time line. You just have to have a moment of weakness. Really just a moment. When I say weakness, I might mean something more like humanity."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Zoey's Warning)	132
20	"It was hard to parse whether this was the fault of the books or the fault of the dread I felt when I thought of her, given the timing of	Causes of Anxiety	Super-Ego Conflict (Knowing Olive's Death)	133

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	the scheduled interview... 'I know.' I felt a little sick about it."			
21	"But of course the thought of breaking the protocol occurred to me, then and in the morning two days later when I reported to the travel chamber, when the coordinates were entered into my device, when I stepped into the machine to meet her."	Causes of Anxiety	Super-Ego Conflict (Thought of Breaking Protocol)	133
22	"These people have no direct experience of pandemics."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Knowing Futures at 2007)	165
23	"Here was the awfulness that Zoey had warned him of, the utterly miserable knowledge of how everyone else's stories would end. He looked out over the room, and for the first time in his life, Gaspery felt old."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Knowing Futures at 2007)	167

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
24	"Walking through this forest was easier now than when he'd been wearing a priest's robe, but he still had no talent for it. The ground was too soft; branches caught at his clothes; he felt assailed from all sides… There was no pattern to the white noise of a forest, and the randomness put Gaspery on edge. Time passed, hours. His muscles cramped. He was desperately thirsty."	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Forest Investigation)	161
25	"Vincent Smith at thirteen: she looked like she'd cut her own hair with blunt scissors before she'd dyed it bright blue. Her eyes were ringed in black. She radiated neglect."	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Forest Investigation)	161
26	"Gaspery's hands were clasped over his mouth, because he wanted to scream, and the terminal was gone. It's one thing to know in the abstract that one moment might corrupt another moment; it's another to experience both moments at once;	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Experiencing the Anomaly)	161

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	it's something else again to suspect what it might mean."			
27	"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him."	Causes of Anxiety	Super-Ego Conflict (Aftermath of Breaking Protocol)	162
28	"What had happened now was terrible, he was in prison in the wrong century and he was going to die here, but as months slipped into years, he found his regrets were very few."	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Imprisonment)	181
29	"I couldn't see the moon from my bed, so there was nothing for it now but to close my eyes and play old movies: walking to school in the Night City... holding hands and laughing with my mother on a sunlit day."	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Imprisonment)	187
30	"I didn't leave the farm at all those first few years, but I feared that eventually I'd have to… I imagined surveillance cameras picking up my	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Fear of Detection)	186

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	face and setting off alarms through the centuries, a Time Institute agent arriving to investigate, a cascade of horrors."			
31	"My life in those days was as bland and limited as my apartment."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Emotional Numbness)	94
32	"I felt such impatience with my life. I turned back to the hotel, and found that I couldn't go in. The hotel was the past. I wanted the future."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Sudden Impatience)	120
33	"He felt a fathomless guilt."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Guilt Toward Sister)	158
34	"For the first time in his life, Gaspery felt old."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Feeling Old)	168
35	"He was calm these days, in a way he wouldn't have expected."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Unexpected Calm)	183

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
36	"I longed for those lights. After all this time, I wanted to be around people again."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Longing for Connection)	198
37	"The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Reality Destabilised)	103
38	"I found myself thinking of all of the things around me that might not be real."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Doubting Reality)	106
39	"The thought of breaking the protocol occurred to me, then and in the morning two days later when I reported to the travel chamber, when the coordinates were entered into my device, when I stepped into the machine to meet her."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Recurring Moral Question)	133
40	"His conscience was clear."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Hard-Earned Clarity)	182

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
41	"This is what the Time Institute never understood: if definitive proof emerges that we're living in a simulation, the correct response to that news will be So what. A life lived in a simulation is still a life."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Philosophical Acceptance)	195
42	"I've been thinking a great deal about time and motion lately, about being a still point in the ceaseless rush."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Still Point Reflection)	204
43	"'Could I start early?' I asked. 'I know the plan was to give the hotel two weeks' notice, but could I just start the training now? Tonight?'"	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Sudden Decision to Train)	120
44	"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Breaking the Protocol)	163
45	"I thought perhaps it might ease your mind just a little to know that you might be saner than you think."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Compassionate	175

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
			Disclosure to Edwin)	
46	"We were married within a year, Talia and I, and when Clara and Mariam died, they left the farm to us."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Marriage to Talia)	195
47	"I longed for those lights. After all this time, I wanted to be around people again. 'I'll take you with me,' I told Odie, who wagged his tail."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Moving to Oklahoma City)	198
48	"I kept playing, sweating now, holding on for dear life to my lullaby for Talia."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Action (Playing Violin Through Anomaly)	199
49	"I tried not to think about my mother too much. I slept through the days."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Sleeping Through Days)	94
50	"A bland little apartment in a block of other bland little apartments on the far edge of Colony One."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Withdrawal to Bland Apartment)	93

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
51	"Bad divorce, I just wanted a fresh start."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Moving to Escape Past)	118
52	"He closed his eyes and considered the course of the investigation, because that was preferable to thinking about his sister, or thinking of what awaited him if he returned to his own time."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Retreating into Investigation)	158
53	"I didn't leave the farm at all those first few years, but I feared that eventually I'd have to."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Staying Confined on Farm)	191
54	"The desk is real, I told myself. The wilted flowers on the desk are real. The blue paint on the walls. Zoey's hair. My hands. The carpet."	Ways of Coping	Reasoning (Listing Real Objects)	103
55	"These people have no direct experience of pandemics, he reminded himself. None of them were old enough to remember the winter of 1918–1919; Ebola was a few years out and would mostly be	Ways of Coping	Reasoning (Historical Context Reminder)	166

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	confined to the other side of the Atlantic; Covid-19 would not arrive for another thirteen years."			
56	"He closed his eyes, sank his hands into the mud, and tried to convince himself that the cold water seeping through the knees of his pants was real."	Ways of Coping	Reasoning (Grounding in Physical Sensation)	162
57	"Follow the evidence."	Ways of Coping	Reasoning (Professional Mantra)	157
58	"'Could I start early?' I asked. 'I know the plan was to give the hotel two weeks' notice, but could I just start the training now? Tonight?'"	Ways of Coping	Action (Calling Ephrem to Begin Training)	120
59	"He knew what he'd done, he knew he'd broken the most important rule by saving Olive Llewellyn, but he retained a sliver of hope that the message might save him."	Ways of Coping	Action (Breaking Protocol to Save Olive)	163

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
60	"I thought perhaps it might ease your mind just a little to know that you might be saner than you think."	Ways of Coping	Action (Telling Edwin the Truth)	175
61	"Warning Olive Llewellyn of the approaching pandemic was not, no matter how he turned the moment over in his mind, the wrong thing to do. If someone's about to drown, you have a duty to pull them from the water."	Ways of Coping	Action (Moral Justification After the Fact)	182
62	"He was calm these days, in a way he wouldn't have expected. In the early evenings Gaspery liked to sit on the farthest possible edge of his bunk, almost falling off the end, because from that angle there was a sliver of sky visible through the window, and through it he could see the moon."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Peace in Prison)	183
63	"His conscience was clear."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Clear Conscience)	182

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
64	"If definitive proof emerges that we're living in a simulation, the correct response to that news will be So what. A life lived in a simulation is still a life."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Philosophical 'So What')	195
65	"I kept playing, sweating now, holding on for dear life to my lullaby for Talia."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Holding On Through Anxiety)	199
66	"I've been thinking a great deal about time and motion lately, about being a still point in the ceaseless rush."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Becoming a Still Point)	204
67	"She kind of warned me off coming here, to be honest."	Causes of Anxiety	Danger-Situation (Early Warnings from Talia)	131
68	"It's possible to get lost in time, Zoey had said, in a different century. Why go to the bother of incarcerating a man for life on the moon, when that man can be sent	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Realising the Framing)	181

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
	elsewhere, framed, and imprisoned at someone else's expense?"			
69	"He let the gun fall from his hand, and it clattered away like a harmless thing. There were lights washing over him now, red and blue. The girls were staring at the two dead men, then the younger girl looked at him, and he recognized her. 'Mirella,' he said."	Causes of Anxiety	Traumatic Situation (Framed for a Crime)	181
70	"No star burns forever. Gaspery scratched the words on a wall in prison some years later, so delicately that from any distance at all it looked like a flaw in the paint."	Ways of Coping	Acceptance (Small Mark of Meaning in Prison)	182
71	"Not long after my sixtieth birthday I developed some heart trouble, the kind of thing that could have been easily fixed in my own century but was dangerous in this time and place, and I was transferred to the prison hospital."	Causes of Anxiety	Helplessness (Aged Body in the Wrong Century)	187

No	Quotation	Category	Subcategory	Page
72	"I did look completely different. But I recognized my face."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Feeling (Identity After Surgery)	192
73	"A countdown had begun. I sensed it in the background of all my days. Sometime soon, I knew, I would move to Oklahoma City. I was scheduled to begin playing the violin in the airship terminal by 2195. I knew, because I remembered the interview, that my wife was going to die first."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Living with Foreknowledge)	196
74	"She's barely left that farm in thirty years."	Ways of Coping	Avoidance (Talia's Own Long Withdrawal)	193
75	"I had no idea... You know I believe in privacy, Clara said. So does she, by all appearances."	Effects of Anxiety	Effect on Thinking (Recognising Hidden Others)	193