

**ANTICIPATORY TRAUMA IN ADAM SILVERA'S *THEY BOTH
DIE AT THE END*: A TRAUMA-THEORY READING**

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2026**

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THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled *Anticipatory Trauma in Adam Silvera's They Both Die at the End: A Trauma-Theory Reading* is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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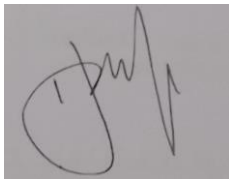
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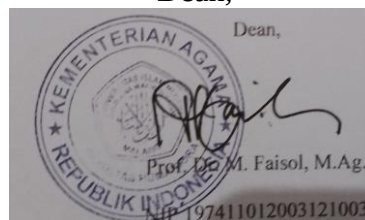
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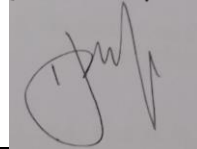
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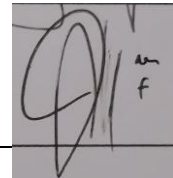
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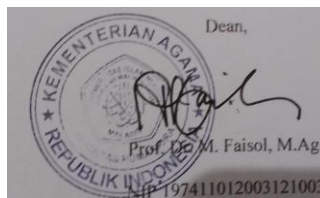
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MOTTO

“Don’t give up! There is no shame in falling down! True shame is not to stand up again”

-Midorima Shintarou- (Kuroko’s Basketball)

“Even if things don’t go as you’d hoped, you can still enjoy the process. That alone is enough to put someone in a good mood.”

-Himmel- (Frieren: Beyond Journey’s End)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have given me love, prayers, and support to complete my studies; to my lecturers and advisors, who have guided and shared knowledge during my studies; and finally to all my friends who have supported and given meaning to my life so that I could grow to this point.

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All praise and gratitude I dedicate to Allah SWT, the Lord of the universe. With His grace, guidance, and blessings, He has directed and helped me to complete this thesis. With His permission, I have completed this thesis as a requirement for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.). This thesis would not have been completed without the support and contributions of many people. Therefore, I am very grateful to have people who care and always provide support for me in completing this thesis.

I dedicate this thesis with great respect to:

1. My parents, who worked hard so that I could study in the English Literature Department, who always sent me to school, and who always supported me throughout my studies until I completed this thesis. The advice you gave me when I was at my lowest point, the prayers you uttered during your prayers for my success, and your presence that motivated me to complete my studies at the Islamic State University of Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Without your help and prayers, I would not have been able to achieve all of this.
2. My closest friends in the English Literature Department, who have accompanied me during my time at university with all the memories and togetherness built over approximately four years. They who have helped me through struggle phases during my studies, the laughter and jokes they shared when I was sad, the support they provided that made my journey meaningful. I am very grateful to have met and grown alongside you.

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Malang, June 3rd, 2026

The Researcher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Syahrul', with a stylized, cursive script.

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ABSTRAK

Luthfi, Muhammad Syahrul (2026). *Trauma Antisipatif dalam Novel They Both Die at the End karya Adam Silvera: Bacaan Teori Trauma*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Hafidhun Annas, M. Hum.

Kata Kunci: *Psikoanalisis, Trauma antisipatif, Acting Out, Working Through*

Penelitian ini menganalisis trauma antisipatif pada kedua tokoh utama dalam novel *They Both Die at the End* karya Adam Silvera dengan menggunakan pendekatan psikoanalisis dan teori trauma Dominick LaCapra Acting Out dan Working Through. Penelitian ini berfokus pada identifikasi trauma antisipatif pada tokoh Mateo Torrez dan Rufus Emeterio dan cara mereka menghadapi trauma yang mereka alami. Novel *They Both Die at the End* digunakan sebagai sumber data utama dengan kritik sastra sebagai desain penelitian. Data penelitian berupa kutipan, dialog, dan peristiwa yang dialami kedua tokoh utama dalam cerita. Peneliti menganalisis data dengan mengumpulkan beberapa kutipan dalam novel yang menunjukkan reaksi traumatis kedua tokoh utama dan mengklasifikasikan ke dalam teori trauma Dominick LaCapra, acting out dan working through. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kedua karakter utama memiliki reaksi yang berbeda dalam menghadapi trauma mereka, seperti Mateo mencerminkan acting out dari dalam yang ditunjukkan dalam tindakan dia yang mengisolasi dirinya dalam apartemen untuk menghindari kematian, sementara Rufus mencerminkan acting out dari luar yang ditunjukkan melalui kekerasan yang dilakukan sebagai bentuk penolakan terhadap kejadian traumatis yang menyimpannya. Seiring dengan berjalannya cerita, kedua tokoh utama mampu menerima trauma yang mereka alami melalui aksi dan perjalanan mereka, menunjukkan transformasi sifat mereka untuk menjadi pribadi yang lebih baik di saat sebelum mereka mengalami trauma antisipatif.

ABSTRACT

Luthfi, Muhammad Syahrul (2026). *Anticipatory Trauma in Adam Silvera's They Both Die at the End: A Trauma-Theory Reading*. Undergraduate Thesis, Department of English Literature. Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Hafidhun Annas, M. Hum.

Keywords: *Psychoanalysis, Anticipatory Trauma, Acting Out, Working Through*.

This research analyzes anticipatory trauma in the two main characters in the novel *They Both Die at the End* by Adam Silvera using a psychoanalytic approach and Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory of Acting Out and Working Through. This study focuses on identifying anticipatory trauma in the characters Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio and how they cope with the trauma they experience. The novel *They Both Die at the End* is used as the primary data source with literary criticism as the research design. The research data consist of quotations, dialogues, and events experienced by the two main characters in the story. The researcher analyzes the data by collecting several quotes from the novel that show the traumatic reactions of the two main characters and classifies them into Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory, acting out and working through. The research results show that the two main characters have different reactions to their trauma, such as Mateo reflecting internal acting out, demonstrated by his action of isolating himself in the apartment to avoid death. In contrast, Rufus reflects external acting out, shown through the violence he commits as a form of denial of the traumatic event that befell him. As the story progresses, both main characters come to accept the trauma they experienced through their actions and journeys, demonstrating a transformation into better individuals than before they experienced anticipatory trauma.

المخلص

لطفى، محمد شاهرول (٢٠٢٦). الصدمة التوقعية في رواية آدم سيلفرا "dnE eht ta eiD htoB yehT": قراءة من منظور نظرية الصدمة. أطروحة بكالوريوس، قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. كلية الآداب، جامعة إسلام نيجري مالانغ مولانا مالك إبراهيم. المستشار حافظون أنس، ماجستير في الآداب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحليل النفسي، الصدمة التوقعية، التصرفات المندفعة، المعالجة.

تحلل هذه الدراسة الصدمة التوقعية في الشخصيتين الرئيسيتين في رواية "كلاهما يموت في النهاية" لأدام سيلفرا باستخدام نهج نفسي تحليلي ونظرية الصدمة لدومينيك لأكابرا حول التصرف والتعامل. تركز هذه الدراسة على تحديد الصدمة التوقعية في الشخصيتين ماتيو توريس وروفوس إيميتريو وكيفية تعاملهم مع الصدمة التي يواجهونها. يتم استخدام رواية "كلاهما يموت في النهاية" كمصدر البيانات الرئيسي مع النقد الأدبي كتصميم البحث. تتكون بيانات البحث من اقتباسات وحوارات وأحداث عاشها الشخصيتان الرئيسيتان في القصة. يقوم الباحث بتحليل البيانات من خلال جمع عدة اقتباسات من الرواية التي تظهر ردود الفعل الصادمة للشخصيتين الرئيسيتين وتصنيفها وفقاً لنظرية الصدمة لدومينيك لأكابرا، التصرف الخارجي والمعالجة. تظهر نتائج البحث أن الشخصيتين الرئيسيتين لديهما ردود فعل مختلفة في مواجهة صدمتهما، مثل ماتيو الذي يعكس التصرف الداخلي، والذي يتجلى في عزله نفسه في الشقة لتجنب الموت، بينما يعكس روفوس التصرف الخارجي، الذي يظهر من خلال العنف الذي يرتكبه كنوع من الإنكار للحدث الصادم الذي تعرض له. مع تقدم القصة، يتمكن كلا الشخصيتين الرئيسيتين من قبول الصدمة التي تعرضا لها من خلال أفعالهما ورحلاتهما، مما يظهر تحولاً في شخصيتهما ليصبحا أفراداً أفضل قبل أن يتعرضوا للصدمة التوقعية.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several components. First, it presents the research background, discussing the topic and relevant prior studies. Second, it presents the background of the study to clarify the issues addressed. In addition, it explains the significance of the study and the scope and limitations.

A. Background of the Study

Trauma theory has emerged as a crucial field of study in literary criticism to understand how trauma, whether it stems from past or anticipated future events, is portrayed in literary works. Trauma theory examines how literature depicts individual and group pain in storytelling. It emerges from psychoanalytic and cultural studies (Caruth, 1996). In literature, trauma is often represented not only through memory of the past but also the anxiety of an unpredictable event. This research is inspired by Caruth's (1996) concept of trauma, which involves a form of trauma when the event is so overwhelming for the mind to handle, called unclaimed experience. Trauma oscillates between acting out (repeating the wound) and working through (trying to find purpose and healing) (LaCapra, 2014).

Furthermore, this research is inspired by the concept of anticipatory traumatic reaction (ATR), a condition where an individual experiences future distress from large-scale negative events from media and social discussion. The trauma comes from

uncertainty, fear of future events that trigger some behaviors like denial, anger, and feelings of vulnerability (Hopwood, Schutte, & Loi, 2019). This situation can be described as anticipatory trauma, a psychological condition that causes individuals to experience distress caused by future events such as death. According to Phipps (2022), Anticipatory Trauma is described as future distress caused by unpredictability of future threats from news reports (Phipps, 2022). Anticipatory trauma is different from the anxiety that is triggered by large-scale future threats such as war, natural disasters, and death, causing a reaction like over-preparation as a response to approaching future danger, depression, and stress. Meanwhile, anxiety is triggered by internal conflict, feelings of guilt, or real threats, causing an individual to feel discomfort and experience fear (Rahayu & Arrifah, 2025).

Anticipatory trauma has similar symptoms to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), where individuals with PTSD will feel that they are always in danger because their danger senses are enhanced (Satriawan & Rahayu, 2020). This condition is quite similar to one of the symptoms of anticipatory trauma; individuals who experience anticipatory trauma have the sense that they will not be safe after knowing that imminent danger is certain to occur. This causes someone to prepare for future danger (Phipps, 2022).

Medical and psychological studies have shown that anticipatory trauma is an emotional state that people go through when they expect to lose something or die. For example, a qualitative study that looked at the experiences of families who were caring

for patients who were near death discovered that crying in anticipation of death caused emotional stress and role conflict when death appeared to be inevitable (Toyama & Honda, 2016). According to Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End* (2017), the anonymous organization "Death-Cast" serves as a narrative simulation of this pre-loss condition: characters are informed that their death is imminent, which causes them to engage in denial, fear, and meaning-making behaviors.

The object the researcher used in this research is *They Both Die at the End* (2017) by Adam Silvera. This novel tells the story of two people who do not know each other but share the same fate, as they will die in 24 hours. The story introduces one of the main characters, Mateo, who receives a call from Death-Cast, a company famous for predicting death. For seven years, Death-Cast has accurately predicted death within 24 hours. Knowing he has only about 24 hours to live, Mateo becomes paranoid and still doesn't believe he will die. Moreover, the history of Death-Cast Company remains mysterious, as it provides details of death to people. Mateo has now become a Deckers, a person who has received a call from Death-Cast. Mateo spends his life in his room, but he realizes he wants to live as a human for just one day. Then he downloads the Last Friend app, an application to make friends on their last day. On the other side, Rufus receives a call from Death-Cast that he only has 24 hours to live. Later in the story, Rufus downloads the Last Friend app and meets Mateo, who shares the same fate with him until death comes to them.

One contemporary novel that explores trauma and death is *They Both Die at the*

End (2017) by Adam Silvera. The main characters in the novel, and Rufus, are informed by a service called "*Death-Cast*" that they will die within 24 hours (Silvera, 2017). This novel is a significant subject for anticipatory trauma analysis because it encompasses the pre-existing theme of death, as well as the characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings as they face their final days. The themes of death, existential awareness, and identity are typically the focus of current literary research. As in the research by Mahyuzar & Wulandari (2025), which analyzed the image of death and its influence on changes in characters' emotions and habits through Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which includes the id, ego, and superego (Mahyuzar & Wulandari, 2025).

Books such as *They Both Die at the End* (2017) are appealing because they combine popular fiction elements such as young adult, dystopian/speculative, and introspection with deep reflections on the uncertainty of life and death. In this context, the theme of anticipatory trauma offers a reading that helps us understand how fiction addresses both post-loss trauma and pre-loss trauma, which, in many cases, is caused by technology and the awareness of time. This kind of reading aligns with humanistic literary research that aims to understand the meanings of emotional and human experiences and how texts influence readers, helping them feel closer to the human condition. Adam Silvera's narration shows how the human condition shapes their actions, triggering their trauma. In the twenty-first century, trauma fiction now focuses on the psychological effects of temporality, isolation, and identity in addition to historical tragedies (Balaev, 2014).

Time becomes a subject of trauma in *They Both Die at the End*, with existential significance permeating every hour. Scenes such as the Death-Cast call, the initial hours after receiving notice, the protagonists' choice to meet via the "Last Friend" app, and their last moments of intimacy show how foreknowledge of death causes human behavior to oscillate between paralysis and vitality. In the novel, after receiving a phone call from Death-Case that they will die within 24 hours, Mateo goes into denial. He isolates himself in his room until he downloads the Last Friend application, which is designed to help him make friends for the rest of his life. At the same time, Rufus receives a phone call from *Death-Cast* that he will die within 24 hours. He is not taking it seriously; he is facing death with external action by confronting his ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend and visiting his foster family, the Pluto.

According to the main character's reaction, their trauma reshapes their entire perception of time and identity (Caruth, 1996). Mateo's self-isolation represents his shock and denial phase of anticipatory trauma, unable to process foreknowledge of death. However, in the middle of the story, Mateo tries not to get trapped in his trauma by meeting Rufus and a few of his closest friends, which leads to a purpose and meaning in his life on his last day. Humans have the purpose of fulfilling their needs throughout their lives, and through these needs, humans can fully become their true selves (Annas, Fredia, Furaida, & Dzozef, 2023). This goal aligns with LaCapra's (2014) concept of working through, where a person with trauma attempts to confront

the trauma, acknowledge the trauma they have experienced, and then reflect it into their life instead of being completely trapped in the trauma they have experienced.

Several studies have investigated anticipatory anxiety in medical and psychological contexts, where most of the studies examined patients knowing their death affects their psychology (Toyama & Honda, 2016; Holm, et al., 2019; Paulsen et al., 2025). For example, conducting an integration check on the family experiences of patients experiencing anticipatory grief revealed issues such as emotional stress, ambivalence, interpersonal loss, and the need for relational support (Coelho, 2020).

Additionally, assessing the validity of the anticipatory grief scale in the context of palliative care showed that anticipatory grief can be measured as a psychological construct that truly affects the quality of life of caregivers (Holm et al., 2019). Anticipatory grief is the emotional grief that occurs before an actual death or a significant loss. Before a real loss, anticipatory mourning was thought of as a type of "grief work" in which the bereaved individual would progressively distance themselves from the dying person (Holm et al., 2019).

Although there is extensive scientific research on the representation of trauma, the debate continues about how trauma should be understood over time. Some of the main debates revolve around the following: whether anticipatory grief is always pathological or can be an adaptive component; how anticipatory grief differs from traditional trauma that occurs after a loss; and whether anticipatory grief can be considered part of literary trauma rather than just psychological trauma.

For example, in a qualitative study investigating the relatives of terminally ill patients, it was found that they were in a "paradoxical waiting" position, being torn between supporting the patient and facing impending death, which caused emotional and moral tension (Paulsen et al., 2025).

Many studies discuss anticipatory grief in the context of medical and palliative care. There is literature research on death and identity, such as the study by Mahyuzar & Wulandari (2025) *The Portrayal of Mortality and Its Impact on Human Behaviour in 'They Both Die at The End' by Adam Silvera*, there has been no research that explicitly examines anticipatory trauma in fiction novels, particularly focusing on how characters know their death is coming and how this affects their psychological and emotional experiences. Their research is focused on mortality through human character's behavior (Mahyuzar & Wulandari, 2025).

In the literary studies the researcher studied, no one uses the term "trauma" for publicly known events like death (*Death-Cast* in the novel). In a similar study by Reformia et al. (2025), *Performativity of Homosexual Identity in Novel "They Both Die at The End": A Queer Theory Analysis of Literature*, they discussed the novel *They Both Die at the End* using Queer theory regarding the identity and sexual orientation of the characters Mateo and Rufus (Refomia et al., 2025).

According to recent multidisciplinary research, trauma may also manifest as a pre-traumatic condition, which is a psychological expectation of disaster that causes identity instability. Reading Silvera's book as a place where anticipation itself becomes

traumatic is justified by this theoretical development. The research from He (2024) discussed “pre-traumatic stress syndrome” in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Last September* and *The Heat of the Day*. The researcher said that anxiety and anticipation before the conflict might also cause psychological harm, similar to the actual conflict (He, 2024). Research conducted by Widhi (2025), “*Representasi Trauma Sejarah dalam Sastra Inggris Pasca-Perang Dunia II*”. The research analyzes how trauma is created by the environmental and post-event factors. *The Lord of the Flies* depicts how social trauma affects the children; they lose their norms and morality as a result of war, changing them into brutal people (Muhlisin & Widhi, 2025).

Similarly, Ullah’s (2020) study on *Earth and Ashes* emphasizes trauma as a condition characterized by memory, witnessing, and delayed psychological processing, using Caruth and LaCapra to describe how survivors oscillate between acting out and working through traumatic experiences (Ullah, 2020). Although Ullah focuses on post-event trauma caused by war and loss, his analysis lays a solid foundation: trauma is a psychological process shaped by temporal disruption and emotional anticipation, particularly when characters are burdened with the responsibility of confronting unavoidable loss or instilling devastating knowledge in others.

The research from Xuehui et al. (2025), *A Study of Trauma in The Magic Barrel*, explains how trauma manifests as a loss of identity and emotional disconnection. Their research focuses on recovery through reestablishing a connection with love and faith (Xuehui et al., 2025). Trauma theory is used in research by Satti et al. (2025).

Environmental Memory and Ecological Trauma: An Ecocritical Study of 'Memorial Keeper' by Masha Gessen. This study explores ecological trauma and environmental memory. A story based on Svetlana Alexievich's oral histories of the Chernobyl disaster. Their study examined environmental witnessing and ecological trauma in Masha Gessen's "*The Memory Keeper*" integrating ecocriticism and trauma theory to examine how ecological catastrophes produce long-lasting "radioactive memory." Their research demonstrates how trauma endures through context and story (Satti et al., 2025).

Similarly, Rosida & Hikam (2025) study *Analisis Psikoanalisis Sastra Terhadap Trauma dan Ingatan Kolektif dalam Novel Laut Bercerita Karya Leila S. Chudori.* This study represents psychological trauma and collective trauma using psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, and Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. In addition to being portrayed as an individual experience, trauma is also seen as a collective wound that affects families and communities and shows itself in symbolic acts like the Kamisan protest (Serli Rosida, 2025).

Namboodiripad's (2025) trauma analysis of *A Little Life* and *The Bell Jar* focuses on how trauma manifests as fragmented narrative structure, emotional repetition, and chronic psychological suffering rather than individual traumatic experiences. By using Caruth and LaCapra's theory, the study emphasizes that trauma can endure as an internalized condition, influencing identity, relationships, and self-perception throughout time. This concept is critical for evaluating *They Both Die at the*

End, when trauma results from a long-term awareness of death's inevitability rather than a single tragic event. Mateo's isolation and Rufus's unstable mood might thus be interpreted as trauma responses formed by anticipatory anxiety rather than retrospective memory, expanding trauma theory beyond post-event contexts. (Namboodiripad, 2025).

The study of trauma in literary works can also be examined through narrative form and structure. The trauma theme in fiction often showed chronology, motifs, and disrupted character as a representation of psychological distress. The reviews of trauma representation in post- 9/11 literature emphasize that trauma is not a present event, but also narrative strategies show reflect instability of identity and time (Rashid et al., 2025). Meanwhile, a study from Nisha and Kumar (2025) discussed the climate-induced trauma from Jessie Greengrass's novel *The High House*. In their study, climate-induced trauma can create a trauma response similar to anticipatory trauma through anticipation of catastrophe, such as natural disaster and environmental collapse. Research on climate fiction shows that characters who live in a world where disaster is inevitable feel constant worry, loss of control over time, and identity instability, even before the disaster happens (Nisha & Kumar, 2025).

The study conducted by He (2024) examines how trauma is portrayed in Elizabeth Bowen's modernist books by presenting Paul Saint-Amour's theory of pre-traumatic stress disorder. He (2024) explains that anxiety, fear, and anticipation can cause psychic damage that is similar to traumatic events (He, 2024).

One of the issues that emerged from the review of relevant research and journals is that there has been no literary research specifically focusing on anticipatory trauma as a category of trauma in fictional works. This is especially true for characters who are told when they will die and how the narrative shapes that experience. Trauma before the loss, which is clearly known by the characters, is different from post-loss trauma or historical trauma, which has been more widely used in previous literary research. This research aims to provide new insights into how literature captures the emotional reality of facing inevitable death through the lens of anticipatory trauma. This expands trauma theory beyond the impact of suffering to include psychological turmoil such as anticipation, fear, and existential paralysis.

The current studies that inspire the researcher to conduct this research include the escalation of geopolitical issues, especially the conflict in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war. Social media plays a significant role in overseeing the conflict and spreading the information to society. The news report on social media triggered public discussion about all possibilities of future war and its impact on their lives. These conditions make Generation Z and millennial are distress because they are huge consumers of news reports on social media; as a consequence of negative news consumption on social media, they feel unsafe and need to prepare themselves for possible future threats. Phipps (2022) explains that the children and adolescents in Ukraine are witnessing the news reports of escalating conflict between Russia and Ukraine from social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. They learn the threats of military conflict and affect to their psychological condition; they

feel that they will die when the conflict breaks out, or they will never see their parents because of migration to a safe zone or army recruitment (Phipps, 2022).

The same thing happened to the main characters of the novel *They Both Die at the End* when Mateo and Rufus received a call from Death-Cast saying they had only 24 hours to live. The trauma of uncertain death makes them spend the last moments of their life before death comes to them. In the current issue, this study of anticipatory trauma in literary studies connects to contemporary concerns, emphasizing that current events can be understood through literary works.

Filling this gap is important because it will enhance our understanding of trauma theory in literature, particularly how fiction handles psychological and emotional experiences. This research can contribute to the humanities literature by examining *They Both Die at the End* from a trauma-informed perspective, providing new insights into how pre-known death affects identity, relationships, and the meaning of life within narratives. Additionally, this research can contribute to the critical literature on trauma representation in popular genres and demonstrate how fictional texts can serve as a means of reflecting on trends. Ultimately, this research highlights the role of literature as a representation of human consciousness, illustrating that the psychological anticipation of death can be as profound as the experience of death itself.

B. Problems of the Study

1. How do the main characters represent anticipatory trauma after receiving a Death-Cast call in Adam Silvera's, *They Both Die at the End*?

2. What do the main characters, Mateo and Rufus, do to respond to their trauma of death in Adam Silvera's, *They Both Die at the End*?

C. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give practical and theoretical contributions. The study theoretically advances the application of trauma theory to the field of anticipatory trauma, a type of trauma that develops before a catastrophic incident. This study can enhance the theoretical discourse in trauma studies and deepen the understanding of complex human emotional experiences, as this approach is still infrequently considered in modern literary studies. In practice, this study should deepen our understanding of how characters interpret death, grief, and life through future-oriented trauma that happens nowadays, caused by information spread through social media and online forum discussions. This is relevant to modern living, which places strong emphasis on self-awareness and sympathy for others' predicaments. This study offers a novel interpretation of Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End* using a trauma perspective that remains relatively underexplored. Thus, literary scholars who are interested in examining trauma, emotions, and death in contemporary literary works may find this research useful as a reference.

D. Scope and Limitation

Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End* (2017) is the subject of this study. The study centers on Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio, the two main characters, and their last day after the *Death-Cast* call.

The focus of the investigation is on how anticipatory trauma shows up in the main character's interpersonal relationships and psychological reactions. To place pre-loss trauma within a literary framework, theoretical boundaries include trauma theory, which is bolstered by anticipatory traumatic reaction (Hopwood, Schutte, & Loi, 2019; Phipps, 2022). The usage of queer and identity perspectives is limited to how they relate to the characters' coping strategies and anticipatory emotions. This research draws on Dominick LaCapra's theory of *Acting Out and Working Through*. The researcher analyzes the reactions of two main characters, Mateo and Rufus, in the novel after they receive a call from Death Cast until their deaths.

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. Trauma

The emotional response to a distressing event that caused a mental disorder. According to Caruth (1996), an emotional and psychological reaction to an intense occurrence that surpasses the mind's capacity to completely comprehend or integrate the experience.

2. Anticipatory Trauma

Anticipatory trauma is a form of future-focused distress caused by anxiety and fear about potential future threats such as disasters (Hopwood, Schutte, & Loi 2019). According to Phipps (2022), Anticipatory trauma makes people think that their safety has decreased and they need to prepare for future threats.

3. Acting Out

Acting out is a condition in which the traumatic event in the present activates a person's emotional trauma without the effort to understand it. According to LaCapra (2014), acting out appears when the person is caught up in repetition, though that makes the person not fully understand their trauma.

4. Working Through

Working through is the process where the traumatized individual attempts to understand the trauma to escape from repeating trauma and gain consciousness. According to LaCapra (2014), Working Through includes the process of self-reflection and understanding of trauma to gain recovery.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher explains the relationship between psychology and literature, present the theory the researcher use in this study, and review previous studies related to this research.

A. Psychology of Literature

Psychology and literature have a strong interdisciplinary relationship because both focus on understanding human experiences, such as emotions, internal conflicts, memories, and the process of identity formation. Psychological techniques, such as psychoanalysis, developmental psychology, and trauma psychology, are frequently employed in contemporary literary studies to analyze how texts depict relational dynamics, self-defense strategies, and the healing processes that fictional characters go through. This approach makes literature function as a laboratory for psychological phenomena, as narrative allows subjective experiences to be expressed in a comprehensive and complex manner, enabling psychological concepts to be applied in their analysis (Sandbæk, 2021).

Therefore, the use of psychology theory in literary studies provides a systematic framework to help researcher interprets characters' behavior in the novel as an emotional response or a coping mechanism. The theoretical framework of trauma psychology aids researcher in comprehending not only the events encountered in

extreme situations like death or loss, but also their effects on character development, interpersonal connections, and inner structure (LaCapra, 2014).

Furthermore, psychological theory in literary studies is used to analyze character development and behavior in literature, which indicates that literature not only entertains but also reflects the character's condition as shaped by the narration and environment in the literature.

Trauma generally refers to an overwhelming experience that exceeds an individual's ability to cope or process emotionally. It includes an interruption that weakens one's sense of security, identity, and continuity of experience. Shortly, Trauma is not just the incident, but the psychological wound it leaves and the difficulty in integrating it into a coherent narrative of the self. In literary studies, trauma is understood not only as a psychological condition but as a narrative representational problem through the fictional characters. Literary study examines how traumatic events are experienced, recalled, and recounted by fictional characters as well as how the text itself reflects trauma through its structure. According to Caruth (1996), Trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.

The concept of Caruth's trauma is unassimilated, which means trauma cannot be fully known or articulated at the moment it occurs. It is not just an emotional wound, but the failure of an experience of fictional characters (Caruth, 2016). This theoretical

framework has gained widespread acceptance in literary criticism because it provides tools for understanding how characters navigate unresolved emotions, repressed memories, and psychological breakdown. Furthermore, Trauma theory provides a means of comprehending not only the experiences of characters but also how the narrative form depicts the aftereffects of emotional suffering and psychological shock.

While trauma studies expanded, LaCapra (2014) and Balaev (2018) introduced an interpretation that emphasizes the relational and contextual aspect of trauma. LaCapra (2014) argued that trauma shapes the narrative and cultural memory of fictional characters. LaCapra emphasizes the difference between acting out and working through, which sheds light on how people alternate between trying to digest their emotions gradually and compulsively repeating traumatic experiences (LaCapra, 2014). Trauma is encoded not only in the story but also in the structure of the text. The key ideas of this theory are useful for analyzing characters who repeat traumatic patterns and those who find a path to recovery.

Meanwhile, Balaev (2018) argues that trauma is not just a personal psychological wound that is shaped by interpersonal connections, social environment, and relationships. This method frequently depends more on the external stressor to demonstrate how trauma happens in particular bodies, eras, cultures, and locations, each of which influences how traumatic experiences are understood and portrayed (Balaev, 2018). In conclusion, the distinct but related viewpoints on trauma in literary studies are provided by Caruth, LaCapra, and Balaev. According to Caruth (1996),

trauma is an incomprehensible experience that interferes with language and time. LaCapra (2014) expands on this by highlighting the ethical and historical background of trauma and making a distinction between acting out and working through. Caruth's universalism is criticized by Balaev (2018), who promotes a pluralistic, context-specific worldview that prioritizes identity rebuilding. Taken as a whole, their views show how trauma studies have shifted from a universal idea to a culturally specific phenomenon with a variety of narrative options (Balaev, 2018; Caruth, 2016; LaCapra, 2014).

B. Anticipatory Trauma

Recent psychology research presents the idea of anticipatory trauma, a type of grief that manifests before an anticipated loss or death. In contrast, traditional trauma theory concentrates on events that follow a catastrophic experience. According to Phipps (2022), anticipatory trauma refers to distress caused by the large-scale threats of news reports and social discussion. Hopwood, Schutte, and Loi (2019) argue that individuals experiencing anticipatory trauma may feel unsafe and constantly imagine future threats that may happen. Phipps (2022) explains that anticipatory traumatic reaction is caused by not knowing what risks might happen in the future and can cause symptoms like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) before the actual traumatic event even happens. Some of these responses are anxiety, being too alert, trouble in sleeping, worries about safety, and catastrophic thinking.

The focus of anticipatory trauma is different from that of anticipatory grief, but both are focused on death in the future. Anticipatory grief refers to the sadness that a person experiences prior to experiencing death. It typically occurs when a person experiences a serious illness and realizes that they won't be able to live a longer life. According to Holm et al. (2019), anticipatory grief was defined as mourning work that takes place prior to death, in which people progressively start to grieve the anticipated loss of a loved one. The differences between anticipatory trauma and anticipatory grief from the primary focus while anticipatory grief focus on anticipate of loss of loves one, anticipatory trauma focus on anticipate threads or traumatic events that happen to individual.

Anticipatory trauma is a unique temporal style of suffering that results in increased emotional intensity and existential worry because the sufferer lives in a condition of suspension between life and anticipated loss. In this way, anticipatory trauma offers a clear framework for understanding *They Both Die at the End*, in which the protagonists' awareness of their own death serves as the main factor influencing their behavior, interpersonal interactions, and emotional growth.

C. Dominick LaCapra's Trauma Theory

In this section, the researcher explains the theory used in this proposal. The theories that the researcher uses in this thesis is Dominick LaCapra (2014), one of the most important frameworks in modern literary trauma studies is Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory. LaCapra focuses on how people react to trauma and how texts depict

those reactions, in contrast to Cathy Caruth, who highlights trauma as an overpowering occurrence that returns later. According to LaCapra (2014), trauma is an event that shows up as behavioral patterns, emotional recurrence, and attempts at recovery.

According to Becker and Sjöström (2024), trauma is a dynamic process rather than a static condition because it must be viewed as a relational and intersubjective experience formed via interactions with others rather than only as an internal mental wound (Becker & Sjöström, 2024). LaCapra's theory is particularly useful for literary studies, which frequently examine how characters deal with internal conflict and how texts dramatize psychological processes, because of this emphasis. His approach is based on the dichotomy between two ways of dealing with traumatic experiences: acting out and working through. Two approaches to dealing with trauma that reflect different levels of psychological involvement and narrative movement (LaCapra, 2014).

1. Acting Out

Acting out, according to LaCapra's (2014) concept, is a condition in which the traumatized person is still emotionally connected to the traumatic event. The trauma is not fully registered or understood by the subject, which can lead to behaviors motivated by unresolved dread, emotional paralysis, or compulsive repetition. Acting out is described as "possessed by the past" when a traumatic experience reappears uncontrollably, disrupting the flow of the present (LaCapra, 2014, p. 21).

In literary narratives, acting out is frequently depicted through characters who reenact harmful acts without recognizing their origins, through circular story structures, repetitive dialogue, and fragmented narration. The characteristic of acting out includes emotional paralysis, repetitive behavior, cycles of fear, and the inability to narrate or process trauma coherently (LaCapra, 2014, p. 21). Meanwhile, in literary texts, acting out often manifests as fragmented narrative and obsessive repetition of images or thoughts, and characters are consistently trapped in fear or destructive behavior.

2. Working Through

Working through, which LaCapra (2014) describes as a contemplative, self-aware process in which the traumatized subject starts to address and emotionally process the painful experience, is the opposite of acting out. Working through refers to an intentional effort to incorporate the trauma into a more comprehensive view of one's identity and life narrative rather than total recovery or amnesia. LaCapra claims that working through entails "repetitions with a difference," that is, returning to the trauma with heightened awareness and agency, allowing for incremental transformation (LaCapra, 2014, p. 22). The characteristics of working through include self-reflection through the character's action, how the character attempts to recover from the trauma, and accepting mortality or loss in the literary text.

There are various reasons why LaCapra's (2014) trauma theory has an impact on literary studies. First, it establishes a link between trauma and narrative form, explaining the use of temporal disjunction, repetition, or fragmentation in some stories.

Second, his theory emphasizes reactions to trauma rather than just the traumatic incident; this is important because literary writings frequently emphasize psychological effects over the actual occurrence.

Third, in order to analyze trauma without reducing characters to clinical categories, LaCapra (2014) provides a non-anthologizing method that approaches characters in an ethical and sympathetic manner. These advantages help to explain why LaCapra's theory is still frequently employed in literary studies that focus on trauma, particularly those that look at how people deal with fear, loss, memory, and identity. His theory is a useful tool for examining trauma in modern young adult literature, where interpersonal ties and emotional development are major themes, because it is compatible with relational, temporal, and narrative analysis.

LaCapra's theory has significant implications for comprehending anticipatory trauma, a psychological state resulting from the consciousness of impending loss or death, even though it was first established to investigate trauma related to past occurrences. Increased anxiety, temporal disruption, and emotional overload are characteristics of anticipatory trauma that are closely related to LaCapra's theory of acting out. Additionally, attempts at meaning-making, emotional expression, and interpersonal connection may be triggered by anticipatory trauma.

Working through occurs as people attempt to reinterpret the meaning of their remaining time, fix relationships, or create meaning in the face of impending loss, since anticipatory trauma entails facing the future rather than the past. Therefore, LaCapra's acting-out/working-through approach is particularly well-suited to examining how

characters in anticipatory trauma narratives alternate between fear-driven paralysis and emotionally transformational introspection.

In Adam Silvera's (2017) *They Both Die at the End*, the protagonists' behavior and development are greatly impacted by anticipated trauma. Rufus displays trauma through impulsivity and violence, while Mateo does it through avoidance and worst-case thinking. Both characters go from acting out to processing their experience as the narrative progresses. Mateo becomes more self-assured and develops a close bond with Rufus, who grows more reflective and accepting of his circumstances. This narrative change is consistent with LaCapra's theory, which frames anticipatory trauma as a psychological condition as well as a narrative structure that is essential to comprehending the characters' emotional growth and metamorphosis within the urgent, 24-hour timeframe of the novel.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains the points in the Research Method, including research design, data collection, and data analysis, which are presented by the researcher.

A. Research Design

This research is categorized as literary criticism because the researcher applies a literary theory to examine the literary work in this research. The researcher uses a psychoanalytic approach to this research. Therefore, the researcher analyzed the literary work using Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory. Furthermore, the researcher analyzes Mateo and Rufus' anticipatory trauma related to the concept of acting out and working through in Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End*. The research method that the researcher uses in this research is descriptive qualitative. A qualitative approach was used in this research to understand and interpret the representation of trauma in literary works.

B. Data Source

The researcher uses Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End* novel as a data source for this research. This novel was first published in 2017 by Harper Collins publisher in New York, United States of America. The novel used in the first edition has 4 chapters and 240 pages of soft file format. The data of this research took from

the sentences, paragraphs, and dialogues from the main characters, Mateo and Rufus. The novel consists of a story of Mateo and Rufus, who are total strangers and make a friend on their last day.

C. Data Collection

Data collection, in general, is defined as the systematic process of gathering and measuring information from the relevant sources to answer research questions. The researcher does several steps to collect the data. First, read the novel several times. Second, highlighting the several parts of the novel that related to anticipatory trauma through dialogue, narration, quotation, and action description. Then, the researcher categorizes the data based on trauma theory by Dominick LaCapra (2014).

D. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzes the data. In general, data analysis is a systematic process of transforming data into useful information. The researcher uses several steps to analyze the data collection. First, categorizing the collected data related to Mateo and Rufus' anticipatory trauma. Second, analyzing and describing the psychological reaction of Mateo and Rufus about their death and how they deal with their trauma using LaCapra's acting out and working through concept. Also, the researcher explains the result of the analysis of data collection using LaCapra's acting out and working through theory.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of the discussion and analysis of the data from Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End*. The narrations or the dialogues from the novel are used as data for this research. This analysis aims to address the problems posed by the study proposed in the first chapter.

A. Anticipatory Trauma in Adam Silvera's *They Both Die at the End*

Anticipatory trauma is a condition where a person experiences stress caused by excessive fear of potential threats that may occur in the future. The triggers are media coverage and uncertainty about future events. Based on Phipps (2022), common symptoms include sleep disturbances, nightmares, and fear of losing one's own and others' safety.

The researcher found several behaviors of the main characters in the novel, Mateo and Rufus, which demonstrate a representation of anticipatory trauma. More specifically, the trauma experienced by Mateo and Rufus is triggered by uncertain future events. When Mateo and Rufus receive news about the events they will experience in the future, they are immediately trapped in fear of the future and haunted by their past experiences that affect their present lives. According to LaCapra (2014), acting out is a condition in which a person's emotional trauma is activated and returned by the traumatic event they experienced. Both anticipatory trauma and acting out are

closely related because they both include a repetitive psychological interaction with a traumatic reality that overtakes the present. Acting out refers to the obsessive return to trauma that prevents crucial distance and emotional processing, whereas anticipatory trauma causes people to get obsessed on an anticipated catastrophic event and often imagine its effects.

1. Mateo's Anticipatory Trauma

In the story, character Mateo shows excessive fear and stress even before he receives the call from *Death-Cast*, which causes Mateo to think of hundreds of bad possibilities that could happen to him. Data showing the anxiety and stress experienced by Mateo when he learns that the call is from *Death-Cast*.

“Death-Cast is calling with the warning of a lifetime—I’m going to die today. Forget that, “warning” is too strong a word since warnings suggest something can be avoided, like a car honking at someone who’s crossing the street when it isn’t their light, giving them the chance to step back; this is more of a heads-up. The alert, a distinctive and endless gong, like a church bell one block away, is blasting from my phone on the other side of the room. I’m freaking out already, a hundred thoughts immediately drowning out everything around me.” (p. 3)

From the evidence above, it can be seen that Mateo feels threatened just by the warning given by *Death-Cast*, even before Mateo has answered the call from *Death-Cast*. Mateo also cannot think clearly, which causes him to experience anxiety about the impending death. This shows the chaos in his mind and triggers trauma within him when he learns he will die.

According to Phipps (2022), anticipatory trauma focuses on future-oriented concerns caused by news reports and social discussion of large-scale threats, making individuals feel not safe anymore. The same pattern is found when Mateo receives

news from *Death-Cast* that he will die within twenty-four hours, causing Mateo to feel insecure and negative thoughts to fill him, trapping him in his trauma of death. Mateo's condition demonstrates acting out, where someone is trapped in a traumatic experience and cannot comprehend it, as explained by LaCapra (2014). When he is trapped in the anticipatory trauma experience about death and he no longer feels safe.

"I'm going to . . . no . . . yes. Yes. My chest tightens. I'm dying today. I've always been afraid of dying. I don't know why I thought this would jinx it from actually happening. Not forever, obviously, but long enough so I could grow up. Dad has even been drilling it into my head that I should pretend I'm the main character of a story that nothing bad ever happens, most especially death, because the hero has to be around to save the day. But the noise in my head is quieting down, and there's a Death-Cast herald on the other end of the phone waiting to tell me I'm going to die today at eighteen years old." (p. 3)

The narration above shows Mateo trapped in present shock about how he is going to die, and he is afraid of dying and remembering his past with his dad affectionately. He is haunted by death, which comes to him immediately. Thus, Mateo experienced internalized acting out, which caused him to experience characterized fear and obsessive thinking of death. This is shown when Mateo tries to calm himself down from his fear; suddenly, the trauma of death comes back to him, which demonstrates one of the characteristics of acting out from LaCapra's (2014) theory, namely the repetition of the traumatic event, which in this quote is in the form of intrusive thoughts experienced by Mateo.

"I don't want to pick up the phone. I'd rather run into Dad's bedroom and curse into a pillow because he chose the wrong time to land himself in intensive care, or punch a wall because my mom marked me for an early death when she died giving birth to me. The phone rings for what's got to be the thirtieth time, and I can't avoid it any more than I can avoid what's going down sometime today."
"I slide my laptop off my crossed legs and get up from my bed, swaying to the side, feeling really faint. I'm like a zombie moving toward my desk, slow and walking-dead." (p. 4-5)

From the quotation above, Mateo's action of not wanting to answer the call from *Death-Cast* on his phone shows Mateo's effort to confront reality, making him repeatedly trapped in trauma. In his fear, Mateo thought that his mother had given him death just as she had died giving birth to Mateo. Furthermore, Mateo realizes that he cannot escape reality when his phone rings thirteen times, and he wonders what will happen to him in the future. The line *"feeling really faint"* indicates that the trauma Mateo experienced manifests physically as Mateo's body feeling weak and dizzy. This is further emphasized by a metaphor stating, *"I'm like a zombie moving toward my desk, slow and walking-dead."* Stating that Mateo feels the numbness that occurs when experiencing shock from a traumatic event. This shows emotional reenactment in acting out, which is unconsciously done by Mateo, where he is trapped in the trauma of the death he will experience.

"I always imagined my herald—their official name, not mine— would sound sympathetic and ease me into this news, maybe even harp on how it's especially tragic because I'm so young. To be honest, I would've been okay with her being chipper, telling me how I should have fun and make the most of the day, since I at least know what's going to happen. ... But this herald makes me feel like I should stop wasting her time because, unlike me, she has so much of it."
(p. 4)

From this quotation, Mateo finally received the call from *Death-Cast*, and he imagines his herald will be sympathetic to him on his last day. Still, the reality is that Mateo isn't comforted, and the herald informs him that he has only 24 hours to live. According to LaCapra (2014), Acting out happens when a traumatized person is become trapped in a traumatic event. The person keeps thinking about the event and is still overcome by fear, anxiety, or sadness. In this moment, Mateo compare the actual

event to an imagined version rather than accepting the reality of the call, showing his struggle to process the traumatic event and his thoughts circle around his imagination fulfill with fear of imminent death, emotional shock, and awareness of his time is limited. The next quotation explains Mateo's reaction after he knows he will die in twenty-four hours.

“Mateo, I regret to inform you that sometime in the next twenty-four hours, you’ll be meeting an untimely death. And while there isn’t anything we can do to suspend that, you still have a chance to live.” The herald goes on about how life isn’t always fair, then lists some events I could participate in today. I shouldn’t be mad at her, but it’s obvious she’s bored reciting these lines that have been burned into memory from telling hundreds, maybe thousands, about how they’ll soon be dead. She has no sympathy to offer me. She’s probably filing her nails or playing tic-tac-toe against herself as she talks to me.” (p. 9-10)

The narration shows Mateo’s disappointment with the herald when she informs Mateo about his death. It indicates that Mateo wishes that someone will sympathy to him, but in contrast, the herald had no sympathy for him. Mateo’s disappointment shows his acting out when he knows that he will die. He does not get sympathy from other people when he needs it. It brings back his trauma about future death, which leads Mateo to make scenarios of how he will die. Phipps (2022) and Hopwood, Schutte, and Loi (2019) explain that someone experiencing anticipatory trauma will try to seek information about the danger threatening them, and this is illustrated when Mateo receives a call from *Death-Cast* through a herald who contacts him, hoping Mateo can obtain more detailed information about the death he will experience. However, the herald who contacts him does not provide the answer he hopes for, causing Mateo to start thinking of various scenarios in his mind that will endanger him.

“Sorry about that, Mateo. I’m mortified. It’s been a long day, and these calls can be so stressful and—”

"I hang up, which is rude, I know. I know. But I can't listen to someone tell me what a stressful day she's been having when I might drop dead in the next hour, or even the next ten minutes: I could choke on a cough drop; I could leave my apartment to do something with myself and fall down the stairs and snap my neck before I even make it outside; someone could break in and murder me." (p. 5-6)

The following lines explain the stress and trauma of death, making Mateo imagine multiple scenarios of his death, including choking himself, falling from his apartment, and wishing someone would kill him. This reflects the anticipatory trauma reaction where Mateo is stuck in his mind that he will die and feeling unsafe, which constantly imagining future danger that might happen to him, and the trauma of death makes Mateo afraid of death, then trapped in the shock of the event rather than processing it. This moment depicts the effect of anticipatory trauma when Mateo knows that he will not escape from the large-scale threats that happen to him, he thinks of many scenarios of his death, and repeatedly envisions the possible dangers. Mateo's reaction represents acting out when trapped in his obsessive thinking of his death rather than understanding his trauma. This quotation also shows acting out from Mateo's inability to distinguish between the past when he received a *Death-Cast* call about his death and the present.

"I sink to the floor, on my knees. It's all ending today, and there is absolutely nothing I can do about it. I can't journey across dragon-infested lands to retrieve scepters that can halt death. I can't hop onto a flying carpet in search of a genie to grant my wish for a full and simple life. I could maybe find some mad scientist to cryogenically freeze me, but chances are I'd die in the middle of that wacky experiment." (p. 6).

The quotation above depicts Mateo's despair and the fact that there is nothing he can do to avoid his death. Then Mateo imagines himself finding a way to escape death, but it is all just a fantasy created in his mind. This reflects that Mateo is once

again trapped in obsessive thoughts about death repeatedly as an escapism from the reality he is facing. This shows the acting out experienced by Mateo, where he repeats actions and thoughts related to the traumatic event he experienced.

LaCapra (2014) argues that the individual who is overwhelmed by his trauma will be trapped within its emotional impact, the individual experiences helplessness and an inability to move beyond the traumatic reality. The quotation shows Mateo become immobilized by the traumatic event of his imminent death rather than taking action, symbolize Mateo's psychological collapse. Furthermore, Mateo cannot accept the reality of his situation, repeatedly making scenario to avoid his death showing acting out from Mateo's inability to integrate his trauma into one's understanding of world.

"It's 12:58 a.m. When it hits 1:00, I am forcing myself out of this apartment. It has been both my sanctuary and my prison and for once, I need to go breathe in the outside air instead of tearing through it to get from Point A to Point B. I have to count trees, maybe sing a favorite song while dipping my feet in the Hudson, and just do my best to be remembered as the young man who died too early.

It's 1:00 a.m. I can't believe I'm never returning to my bedroom.

I unlock the front door, turn the knob, and pull the door open.

I shake my head and slam the door shut.

I'm not walking out into a world that will kill me before my time."

(p. 9)

In this narration, it is shown that after experiencing trauma from the realization that he will die within twenty-four hours, he forces himself to leave his apartment to take a breath outside and calm himself from the trauma he experienced. However, when Mateo wants to leave his apartment, he cancels his intention and closes the apartment door again because he is afraid of what will happen to him outside the apartment, as something outside might kill Mateo before his time. This is clarified by the sentence in the narrative that states, *"I'm not walking out into a world that will kill me before my*

time." Mateo's action represents a form of acting out to avoid the threat that would endanger his life, as he is trapped in a repetition of his death trauma, showing the compulsive repetition of his death trauma as one of the characteristic of acting out.

"I'm back in my bedroom—so much for never returning here again— and I immediately feel better, like I just got an extra life in a video game where the final boss was kicking my ass. I'm not naive about dying. I know it's going to happen. But I don't have to rush into it. I'm buying myself more time. A longer life is all I've ever wanted, and I have the power to not shoot that dream in the foot by walking out that front door, especially this late at night. I jump into bed with the kind of relief you only find when you're waking up for school and realize it's Saturday." (p. 17)

This quotation shows what happened to Mateo after he decided not to leave his apartment. He isolated himself in his room as a form of self-protection so that he could avoid external threats that would endanger his life. Mateo returned to his bed to temporarily ease his mind and forget about his death by imagining himself going about his daily activities without anything bad happening. This moment shows Mateo's trauma regarding death re-emerging as one of the characteristics of acting out, according to LaCapra (2014). The trauma reappears and haunts Mateo's mind, causing him to fail to understand his trauma.

"I'm back in front of my laptop, faced with a greater challenge: the inscription for my headstone in no more than eight words. How do I sum up my life in eight words? He Lived Where He Died: In His Bedroom. What a Waste of a Life. Children Take More Risks Than Him." (p. 28)

In this quotation, Mateo summarized his life in no more than eight words. To be inscribed on his gravestone when he dies. Meanwhile, Mateo thinks of various words that describe his life on his last day. This shows Mateo's reflection on death and how he reconsiders the meaning of his life as part of his trauma with death after

receiving the call from *Death-Cast*. Phipps (2022) and Hopwood, Schutte, and Loi. (2019), describing this condition as catastrophic thinking where someone imagines the worst-case scenario they will experience.

“Different nerves hit me all at once: What if it’s not Rufus, even though no one else should be knocking at my door this late at night? What if it is Rufus and he’s got a gang of thieves with him or something? What if it’s Dad, who didn’t tell me he woke up so that he could surprise me—the sort of End Day miracle they make Lifetime movies about?”
“I approach the door slowly, nudge up the peephole’s cover, and squint at Rufus, who’s looking right at me, even though I know he can’t actually make me out” (p. 58)

From this quotation above, Rufus came to Mateo's apartment after getting to know each other through The Last Friend App, an application that allows *Deckers* to communicate with each other. At the same time, Mateo, knowing that Rufus would come to his apartment, felt nervous and began to think about the possibilities of what would happen if someone other than Rufus came to his apartment. This shows a pattern of repetitive reactions similar to what Mateo experienced when he first learned that he would die after receiving the Death Cast call. The quotation indicates that anticipatory trauma causes someone to repeatedly think about the worst possible outcomes they will face, which affects their actions.

“I hope it’s only him out there as I slide the chain free from its track. I pull the door open, finding a very three-dimensional Rufus in front of me, not someone I’m looking at through video chat or a peephole. He’s in a dark gray fleece and is wearing blue basketball shorts over these Adidas gym tights. He nods at me. There’s no smile or anything, but it’s friendly all the same. I lean forward, my heart pounding, and peek out into the hallway to see if he has some friends hiding against the walls, ready to jump me for the little I have. But the hallway is empty and now Rufus is smiling.”(p. 58)

From this quotation above, after meeting Rufus, it seemed that Mateo still didn't fully trust him. Mateo believes that Rufus came with a friend who is hiding and could

attack him at any moment. However, when he checked the hallway, he only found Rufus alone and greeted him. Mateo's suspicion shows his compulsive behavior as a result of his anticipatory trauma and acting out regarding the impending death that will come to him, believing that Rufus or someone else will harm him. Mateo's suspicion of Rufus indicates his protective behavior as part of his trauma of death to save himself from future dangers.

"I approach the elevator and peek over my shoulder at Rufus, this stranger who's following me. I don't feel uneasy, but I am guarded. He talks like we've been friends for a while, but I'm still suspicious. Which is fair, since the only things I know about him are that his name is Rufus, he rides a bike, he survived a tragedy, and he wants to be the Mario to my Luigi. And that he's also dying today.

"Whoa, we're not taking the elevator," Rufus says. "Two Deckers riding an elevator on their End Day is either a death wish or the start to a bad joke." (p. 59)

Through this quotation, it seems that Mateo still suspects Rufus of being a stranger who is following him. At the same time, Mateo is cautious with Rufus because he still suspects Rufus. This is a form of his defense mechanism against strangers whom Mateo has just met. On the other hand, Rufus also does not want to descend from Mateo's apartment using the elevator because he believes that taking the elevator will kill them both on their last day. Rufus's belief shows avoidance of the traumatic scenario they would experience when taking the elevator, which would lead to their death. This quotation shows acting out from the repetition of traumatic experience happen to Mateo, believing that danger will come to him.

"Good point," I say. The elevator is risky. Best-case scenario? We get stuck. Worst-case scenario? Obvious. Thankfully, I have Rufus here to be calculating for me; I guess Last Friends double as life coaches that way. "Let's take the stairs," I say, as if there's some other option to get outside, like a rope hanging from the hallway window or one of those aircraft emergency slides. I go down the four flights like a child being trusted with stairs for the first

time, its parents a couple steps ahead—except no one is here to catch me should I fall, or should Rufus trip and tumble into me.” (p. 59)

Mateo's anxiety about taking the elevator to leave his apartment made him choose to go down the stairs to avoid a bad scenario he might experience. This is an acting out through avoidance that Mateo does as a result of his trauma about death in the future. This shows that anticipatory trauma can affect a person through his avoidance behavior, making him paranoid in his activity.

“I’m sorry. I just . . .” A panic attack is coming on; my chest is tightening, my face is burning up, my skin and scalp are itchy. “I can’t wrap my head around the fact that I’m living a day where I might need a bucket list.” I scratch my head and take a deep breath. “This isn’t going to work. It’s going to backfire on us. Hanging out together is a bad idea because it’ll only double our chances of dying sooner. Like a Decker hot zone. What if we’re walking down the block and I trip and bang my head against a fire hydrant and—” I shut up, cringing from the phantom pain you get when you think about falling face-first onto spiked fences or having your teeth punched out of your mouth.” (p. 60)

According to this quotation, Mateo is experiencing panic and losing control. This is evident in his physical symptoms, as clarified in the sentence *"my chest is tightening, my face is burning up, my skin and scalp are itchy. “I can’t wrap my head around the fact that I’m living a day where I might need a bucket list.”* In his panic, Mateo unconsciously loses his rational thinking, believing that if he goes outside, it will increase his chances of dying sooner. At the same time, Mateo repeats the worst-case scenario he would experience if he left his apartment. This shows Mateo's acting out, manifested through panic attacks, overthinking, and imagined death scenarios.

*“Not that easy. We’re not dying from natural causes. How can we try to live knowing some truck might run us down when we’re crossing the street?
 “We’ll look both ways, like we’ve been trained to do since we were kids.”
 “And if someone pulls out a gun?”
 “We’ll stay out of bad neighborhoods.”
 “And if a train kills us?”
 “If we’re on train tracks on our End Day, we’re asking for it.”
 “What if—” (p. 60)*

Through this quotation, showing more clearly Mateo's panic in his mind, thinking that he will die soon due to an accident, not a natural cause. This is a form of compulsive repetition caused by trauma, in this context, the trauma of future death, which indicates Mateo's acting out. This moment also shows one of the reactions that occurs from the individual who has anticipatory trauma. According to Phipps (2022), the reaction is a safety concern for self and other just like happen to Mateo when he worried about what would happen to him and Rufus when they go outside

"I follow Rufus up the stairs, and it's only the second floor but I'm already out of breath. Really, maybe there's something physically wrong with me and maybe I'll die here on these steps before I can reach Dad or Lidia or Future Mateo. Rufus gets impatient and sprints up, sometimes even skipping two steps at a time." (p. 71)

Through this quotation, Mateo followed Rufus as they both visited the hospital where Mateo's father was being treated for a coma. As they climbed the stairs, Mateo felt something was wrong with his physical body, interpreted as a sign of danger. Instantly, the worst-case scenario replayed in his mind, making Mateo believe that he was going to die. His anticipatory trauma causes him to misinterpret the physical fatigue he experiences as a fatal condition and to consider his condition as an early sign of his death. This shows that the awareness of the death trauma overshadowing Mateo disrupts his ability to distinguish between ordinary experiences and the threats in his mind.

I get up from the floor and crack open the door to the room. Mateo is holding his father's hand and singing some song I've never heard before. I knock on the door and Mateo jumps, straight startled.
"Sorry, man. You good?" (p. 76)

According to the quotation above, Rufus waited for Mateo, who was visiting his father, who was in a coma. Then Rufus decided to approach Mateo, who was sitting beside his father while singing to him. Knowing that Rufus had entered his father's room, who was in a coma, Mateo was startled. This shows that Mateo's trauma regarding death through the *Death-Cast* call manifests when he is startled because Rufus enters his father's room as a physical shock, indicating that the trauma is repeated when he is unconscious. Showing his acting out through the reaction when Rufus came to him.

"I stop at the corner of the hospital."

"It's not too late to run back to Dad's room and just live out my day there. But that's not fair, to put others in the hospital at risk of me, the ticking time bomb. I can't believe I'm back outside in a world that will kill me, accompanied by a Last Friend whose fate is screwed too. There's no way this courage will hold." (p. 78)

Through this quotation, Mateo left the hospital where his father was being treated for a coma after saying goodbye to him to continue his final journey with Rufus. At the same time, Mateo does not believe that he will return to the outside world, which could kill him at any moment, showing a recurring fear that arises from the trauma of future death. At this moment, Mateo views the outside world as a traumatic repetition of death that could come at any time, indicating that Mateo is trapped in a cycle of avoidance as his response to manage his emotional distress. This moment shows a repetition of a traumatic event as one of the characteristics of acting out, explained by LaCapra (2014), showing Mateo is reliving his trauma when he gets out of the apartment that might kill him.

I'm Last Friend-less, but maybe dying alone is an okay End Day for someone who lived his life pretty alone.

I don't know what Rufus was involved in that led to his friends being arrested. Maybe he was hoping to use me as some alibi. But now I'm gone.

I stop to catch my breath. I sit on the stop of this daycare and press my palm against my aching rib cage.

Maybe I should go back home and play some video games. Write more letters. I even wish I was still in high school and attending one of Mr. Kalampoukas's classes because he always made me feel seen. Though sharing a chemistry lab with kids who were always texting while mixing chemicals was terrifying, even last fall when it wasn't my End Day." (p. 108)

Through this quotation, Mateo tries to run away from Rufus after he learns that a Decker he knows through the Last Friend Apps and has tried to befriend was involved in a case that led to his friend's detention by the authorities. This brings up Mateo's trauma regarding future death, considering he initially suspected Rufus as a stranger. At the same time, Mateo also wants to return to his apartment, spending the rest of his life playing video games and writing a few letters. Mateo's fear also made him wish he were still in high school to avoid the trauma he experienced due to the *Death-Cast* call about his death.

LaCapra (2014) argues that acting out occurs when trauma causes individual to relive a painful experience making individual trapped between past and present. This condition happens when Mateo imagines the scenario when he undergoes his daily activity without being feared by his trauma of death. His fixation on options that are out of reach suggests that he is stuck emotionally between the past and the present instead of adjusting to the present. According to LaCapra (2014), acting out entails a breakdown of temporal boundaries in which the subject is unable to fully live the present and is nevertheless plagued by memories from the past. Mateo exhibits this propensity through his nostalgia for his chemistry classes and his old routine. The thought of death

makes it hard for him to envision a future, so he psychologically withdraws into memories.

2. Rufus's Anticipatory Trauma

"Death-Cast is hitting me up as I'm beating my ex-girlfriend's new boyfriend to death. I'm still on top of this dude, pinning his shoulders down with my knees, and the only reason I'm not clocking him in the eye again is because of the ringing coming from my pocket, that loud Death-Cast ringtone everyone knows too damn well either from personal experience, the news, or every shitty show using the alert for that dun-dun-dun effect." (p. 10)

Based on the narration above, the story's perspective shifts to the novel's second main character, Rufus Emeterio. When he receives the *Death-Cast* call, Rufus acts out aggressively by beating Peck Gavin, his ex-girlfriend's boyfriend. Rufus's actions reflect the internal turmoil he feels from the *Death-Cast* call. Unlike Mateo, who becomes paranoid after receiving the call, Rufus resorts to violence as a way of expressing his denial of the reality of his impending death. Showing his inability to process his trauma as one of the characteristics of acting out, which LaCapra (2014) defines acting out as a condition where individual compulsively repeats of traumatic scene that caused tense implode. This is represented in Rufus's action of violence towards Peck Gavin.

Rufus's violent attack on Aimee's new lover illustrates his incapacity to deal with feelings of loss and rejection through LaCapra's (2014) concept of acting out. Rather than engaging in critical thought, he repeatedly resorts to violence to express his rage. Anticipatory trauma begins when the *Death-Cast* ringtone abruptly ends, forcing Rufus to face the certainty of his impending demise. The quotation serves as

the narrative point that starts Rufus's anticipated trauma, even if it mainly depicts acting out in relation to emotional distress.

“Let’s pretend I got a future for a second, entertain me—in no universe am I ever waking up and saying, “I think I’ll get a twelve-to-three shift where I do nothing but tell people their lives are over.” But Victor and others did. I don’t wanna hear none of that don’t-kill-the-messenger business either, especially when the messenger is calling to tell me I’ll be straight wrecked by day’s end.” (p. 12)

In this quotation, Rufus answers the call from *Death-Cast* with his herald, Victor. The sentence *“Let’s pretend I got a future for a second”* in the narrative shows that Rufus is aware he has lost his future while, at the same time, temporarily reconstructing it. When answering the call from *Death-Cast*, Rufus realizes that he has lost hope for his future, which keeps repeating. This is a form of compulsive repetition as one of the characteristics of acting out. This shows how the certainty of death causes a collapse of time, where the future is erased and continuously replayed in the present.

“Rufus, I regret to inform you that sometime in the next twenty-three hours you’ll be meeting an untimely death. While there isn’t anything I can do to suspend that, I’m calling to inform you of your options for the day. First of all, how are you doing? It took a while for you to answer. Is everything okay?”
He wants to know how I’m doing, yeah right. I can hear it in the stunted way he asked me, he doesn’t actually care about me any more than he does the other Deckers he’s gotta call tonight. These calls are probably monitored and he’s not trying to lose his job by speeding through this “I don’t know how I’m doing.” I squeeze my phone so I don’t throw it against the wall painted with little white and brown kids holding hands underneath a rainbow...” (p. 12)

In the narration above, Victor, as the herald, informs Rufus about his death. At this point, Rufus is angry because he feels that Victor and the *Death-Cast* do not care at all about his fate or that of the *Deckers*, who only have twenty-four hours to live. This reflects Rufus's anger as an inability to reflect his trauma regarding the impending death. In the sentence *“I don’t know how I’m doing,”* Rufus feels uncertain about what to do next, considering that his future is meaningless because he will die. At this

moment, Rufus is experiencing emotional confusion, which is a form of acting out. This is reinforced when the urge to act aggressively by throwing his phone as an expression of his frustration arises, but he tries to hold it back so as not to destroy himself further.

“Victor tells me the forecast for the day (supposed to rain before noon and later on as well if I make it that long), special festivals I have zero interest in attending (especially not a yoga class on the High Line, rain or no rain), formal funeral arrangements, and restaurants with the best Decker discounts if I use today’s code. I zone out on everything else ’cause I’m anxious on how the rest of my End Day is gonna play out.” (p. 12)

According to the narration above, Rufus is shown losing focus on the present due to his fear of death. Rufus's thoughts are focused on the impending death. This reflects a form of acting out in the form of intrusive anticipation, where, in the context of this story, Rufus experiences distress about the coming death. According to Hopwood, Schutte, and Loi. (2019), anticipatory trauma is shown by three subfactors. One of the factors is disruption to daily activities because of concern about future threats. The narration shows Rufus when receive call from *Death-Cast*, he is disrupted by his trauma of death, making him not think clearly and ignore the activities that he can do before dead.

“Yo, Victor, be a person for one minute. I don’t know if you know, but I’m seventeen. Three weeks from my eighteenth birthday. Doesn’t it piss you off that I’ll never go to college? Get married? Have kids? Travel? Doubt it. You’re just chilling on your little throne in your little office because you know you got another few decades ahead of you, right?” (p.13)

In this quotation, Rufus became angry again after he challenged Victor, his herald. Rufus confronted Victor, whom he believed enjoyed his job without caring about the feelings of the *Deckers*, who had received the *Death-Cast* call. Rufus also

challenged Victor to feel the misery experienced by the *Deckers*, as shown through the phrase "be a person for one minute." This reflects a trauma of trust toward the institution or system that has been governing someone's life and death. The confrontation shows Rufus's recurring compulsive habits as a result of the trauma of the death he is about to face as one of LaCapra's (2014) acting out when Rufus expressing his anger toward his herald.

I can't tell you who hangs up first, but it doesn't matter. The damage is done—will be done. Today is my End Day, a straight-up Rufus Armageddon. I don't know how this is gonna go down. I'm praying I don't drown like my parents and sis. The only person I've done dirty is Peck, for real, so I'm counting on not getting shot, but who knows, misfires happen too. The how doesn't matter as much as what I do before it goes down, but not knowing is still freaking shaking me; you only die once, after all."(p. 12)

In this narration, after receiving a call from *Death-Cast*, Rufus finally accepted the harsh reality that he would soon die and realized that there was no meaningful future for him other than death. Rufus even describes his final day as his inevitable destruction. His fear of death evokes past trauma when he saw his parents and sister die, and he hopes Rufus does not die in the same way as they did. Rufus's trauma regarding death makes him think of the scenario where he does not want to die by being shot, even though it is just his perception.

"I walk back over to the three of them, fast. I pick Peck up by the back of his collar and then slam him against the brick wall. Blood slides from an open wound on his forehead, and I can't believe this dude threw me over the edge like this. He should've never run his mouth about all the reasons Aimee didn't want me anymore. If that'd never gotten back to me, my hand wouldn't be around his throat right now, getting him even more scared than I am." (p. 14)

Through this quotation, to vent his frustration and trauma over the death, Rufus again resorts to violence against Peck by slamming him against a wall, causing a wound

on Peck's forehead. The violence Rufus inflicts on Peck shows that trauma can repeat habits that trap a person in a cycle of repetitive actions and can lead to self-destruction. With trauma expressed through action rather than dialogue, the absence of internal narration and the sudden shift from cognition to action indicate the collapse of critical distance. Because of its connection to anticipatory trauma, this moment is further intensified because the violence committed by Rufus is not a response to death itself, but rather a response to the certainty of what will happen in the future. Rufus transforms existential fear into physical action because he is unable to confront the abstract uncertainty of death. Thus, the scene illustrates how anticipatory trauma can occur by taking action, removing deadlines, so that future events can be faced with the relevance of the current crisis.

“This is bullshit. They didn’t do anything!” I raise my fist to punch in this car window, but that’s not me, I swear it’s not, I don’t go around hitting things and hitting people. I slipped up with Peck, that’s that. “And what’s good with Peck?” (p. 37)

Through this quotation, Rufus received news from Aimee, one of Rufus’s friends and a member of The Pluto (foster family), that his two friends, Malcom and Tagoe, were arrested by the police. Rufus panicked upon hearing this news, remembering that he was the one who beat Peck, yet it was his friends who ended up being arrested by the police. Rufus’s panic is a reflection of acting out through panic and his habit of committing violence. His denial, as shown in the phrase *“that’s not me,”* reveals emotional disarray and fragmentation between his self-perception and his actions. The re-emergence of the Peck incident indicates that unresolved past trauma is being repeated in the present; this suggests that the anticipatory trauma he

experienced increases his tendency toward reactive aggression rather than reflective processing.

“If Death-Cast hit me up one week ago, I wouldn’t have been up late reading all the notes Aimee wrote me when we were still a thing. If Death-Cast called two weeks ago, they would’ve interrupted that argument I was having with Malcolm and Tagoe about how Marvel heroes are better than DC heroes (and maybe I would’ve asked the herald to weigh in). If Death-Cast called one month ago, they would’ve killed the dead silence that came with me not wanting to talk with anyone after Aimee left.” (p. 44)

In this quotation, it appears that Rufus imagines if he had received the *Death-Cast* call long before he got the call today. This shows Rufus's acting out where he cannot face the reality that he will die and repeats scenarios from the past, including the actions Rufus would take before he dies, as seen in the sentence *"if Death-Cast called two weeks ago..."* Rufus's anxiety about not facing death and replaying past events in his mind is a manifestation of the anticipatory trauma he is experiencing as temporal dislocation where he cannot distinguish between past, present, and future affected his emotion and full of regret and avoidance to his destiny, proving the inability of Rufus to distinguish clearly between past and present as the one of the characteristic of acting out.

“We get to the MetroCard vending machine. “Nope. Not fair. I don’t think it matters who you’re with when you die—someone’s company isn’t gonna keep you alive once Death-Cast hits you up.” This has gotta be taboo for a Last Friend to say, but I’m not wrong. Still feel a little bad when it shuts Mateo up.” (p. 65)

This quotation shows Rufus’s defensive distance and fatalistic thinking. He tries to underestimate the emotional importance of human connection by claiming that friendship has no bearing on mortality. His instant sensation of guilt, however, exposes

an unresolved internal struggle, suggesting that he is managing his impending trauma through emotional separation and denial rather than processing it.

“Nah, dude. We’re not sitting around in your bestie’s lobby because you don’t wanna burden her. It’s five o’clock, let’s eat. Potential Last Supper.” Rufus leads the way. “My favorite diner is open twenty-four hours.” (p. 84)

Through this quotation, the time showed 5 o’clock, with only a few hours left to live, Rufus invited Mateo to eat before they continued their journey. This is Rufus’s response to the trauma he experienced by taking action instead of panicking. Rufus uttered a phrase that the act of inviting Mateo to dinner would be the last meal of his life, reflected in the phrase *“Potential Last Supper.”* By saying this, Rufus acknowledges that he will die. At the same time, he ignores the emotional burden he is experiencing with action and irony. What Rufus did was a form of avoidance of the trauma he experienced instead of reflecting on it.

“I don’t think a minute is enough—until I give in, crying harder than I have in weeks, and I hammer at the railing with the bottom of my fist. I keep going and going, hitting the railing because my family is dead, hitting it because my best friends are locked up, hitting it because my ex-girlfriend did us dirty, hitting it because I made a new dope friend and we don’t even have a full day together. I stop, out of breath, like I just won a fight against ten dudes. I don’t even want a picture of the Hudson, so I turn around and keep it behind, walking toward Mateo, who’s wheeling my bike in pointless circles” (p. 149)

According to this quotation, after sharing the moments that Mateo and Rufus have gone through, starting from Rufus’s beginning to tell Mateo about his past to reconcile with him, to visiting Mateo’s mother’s grave. In this moment, Rufus feels sadness due to the various events he has experienced throughout his life. This demonstrates that unresolved traumas are shattered in an instant in a moment where he cannot distinguish between his past trauma regarding his deceased biological family

and the present trauma he faces, which is the future death shown in the sentence “I keep going and going, hitting the railing because my family is dead, hitting it because my best friends are locked up, hitting it because my ex-girlfriend did us dirty, hitting it because I made a new dope friend and we don’t even have a full day together.” Instead of processing the experiences he had gone through, Rufus took compulsive actions, showing that anticipatory trauma caused the emotional instability Rufus experienced.

“Yo. A little over twelve hours ago that Death-Cast dude hit me up telling me I’m a goner today. I’m sitting on a street curb, hugging my knees like I did in the back of the ambulance when my family died, straight shaken now over that explosion, the kind you only see in summer blockbusters. Police and ambulance sirens are blasting, and the firefighters are handling business on the burning gym, but it’s too late for mad people. Deckers need to start wearing special collars or jackets, something that’ll clue us in on not flocking in one place. That could’ve been me and Mateo if we were a minute or two slower. Maybe, maybe not. But I know this: a little over twelve hours ago, I got a phone call telling me I’m gonna die today, and I thought I made my peace with that, but I’ve never been more scared in my life of what’s gonna go down later.” (p. 156)

Through this quotation, after surviving an explosion that destroyed a gym while Mateo and Rufus were walking past it, Rufus sat on the sidewalk hugging his knees. The explosion that almost killed Rufus and Mateo reminded Rufus of his past trauma when his family died in an accident, and he was the only one who survived. Based on the incident experienced by Rufus, he feels a repetition of the traumatic event from the past that is recurring in the present. Rufus’s trauma regarding future deaths and the explosion incident that almost killed him causes Rufus to experience the same physical shock he felt when he suffered the traumatic loss of his family members. This quotation shows acting out when the memory of traumatic event from the past back to the present. This moment triggering Rufus trauma of his future death.

“For all the mouth I ran about being brave, I’m not sure about this jump. I haven’t set foot onto a beach or gone inside a community pool since my family died. The closest I’ve come to big bodies of water like this before today was when Aimee was fishing in the East River, and that led to a nightmare of me fishing for my family’s car in the Hudson River, reeling up their skeletons in the clothes they died in, reminding me how I abandoned them.” (p. 186)

Through this quotation, it is evident that Rufus’s trauma from his past resurfaces when he and Mateo visit the World Travel Arena, a simulation place that allows *Deckers* like Rufus and Mateo to experience vacations and life experiences before they die. When they pass through the simulated artificial rainforest that requires them to jump off a cliff, Rufus suddenly recalls his past trauma when his family died in an accident on the Hudson River, and he was the only one who survived. At the same time, Rufus blames himself for having left his family to die. At this moment, Rufus experiences a temporal collapse when he hesitates to jump, which reminds him of his family’s death, causing him to be unable to distinguish between the past and the present. Trauma Rufus of water triggered by his fear of death and the past event when his family die at the car accident, making Rufus feels unsafe and vulnerable

Man, it actually hurts how much I mean this ... If I didn’t have common sense, if I hadn’t fought so hard to be who I am, I would do some dumb shit again and punch something because I’m so pissed. “The world is mad cruel. I started my End Day beating up someone because he’s dating my ex-girlfriend and now I’m in bed with an awesome dude I haven’t known for twenty-four hours. . . . This sucks. Do you think . . . ?” (p. 224)

Through this quotation, Rufus and Mateo then returned to Mateo’s apartment after spending about twenty-four hours creating moments together before they died. At this moment, Rufus reflects on the things he did over the past twenty-four hours, and he realizes that what he did only harmed himself. The fact that he acknowledges that he might “hit something again” indicates that the trauma-induced repetitive behavior

is still present. However, his self-awareness and decision to avoid these impulses bring a critical level of distance, indicating that, despite remaining in the acting dynamic, he is beginning to control his responses. This tension indicates a transitional phase where anticipatory trauma continues to cause affective instability, although it is beginning to stabilize somewhat.

"I snap awake from the nightmare. Nightmare-Mateo was completely ablaze, blaming me for his death, telling me he would've never died if he hadn't met me. It sears into my mind, but I shake it off as nothing but a nightmare because Mateo would never blame anyone for anything." (p. 230)

Through this quotation, Rufus has a nightmare about Mateo blaming Rufus for his death. This happens after Rufus survives the fire that engulfs Mateo's apartment and causes his death. This quotation reflects Rufus's recurring guilt due to the trauma of the future death that will occur. This quotation reflects one of the characteristics of anticipatory trauma that occur from the nightmare, also showing that the trauma of death has repeatedly returned to Rufus. Through LaCapra's (2014) theory, in this moment Rufus relives the trauma of his death through the nightmare, which indicates the past overwhelmed the present and not fully integrated into memory.

*"The hourglass is almost out of sand. It's getting creepy. I'm picturing Death stalking me, hiding behind cars and bushes, ready to swing his damn scythe."
"I'm mad tired, not just physically, but straight emotionally drained. This is how I felt after losing my family. Full-force grief I have no chance pulling myself out of without time, which we know I don't have." (p. 239)*

Through this quotation, Rufus is traumatized after what he has experienced and after losing his closest friend, Mateo, whom he had known for the past twenty-four hours. In this quote, Rufus feels extremely exhausted, both physically and mentally.

What he is doing now is just waiting for his time of death to arrive. His trauma from the past, when he lost his family, is repeated when he loses Mateo. Rufus's trauma is depicted through the metaphor spoken by Rufus, "*The hourglass is almost out of sand*," indicating that his life will not last much longer. This quotation indicates anticipatory trauma when Rufus imagines death, triggering his catastrophic thinking of death and experiencing disruption due to fear of future events.

B. The Response of Mateo and Rufus to Their Trauma of Death on the Final Day

In this sub-chapter, the researcher presents Mateo and Rufus's responses to the news of their deaths and their rethinking of the decisions they made on their last day, showcasing data from the novel *They Both Die at the End*.

Mateo and Rufus, after receiving a call from Death-Cast informing them of their impending death, are always trapped in their traumatic experiences about the death that is to come. However, as the story progresses, Mateo and Rufus strive to reflect on their trauma through the actions they take to separate the past from the present to prevent the traumatic events they experienced from recurring in their minds. According to LaCapra (2014), this is called working through, a process where the traumatized individual attempts to understand the trauma to escape from repeating trauma and gain consciousness. Through the theory of working through, the researcher can analyze the changes in Mateo and Rufus's characters after receiving the Death-Cast call, who initially avoided death and always denied their fate due to the trauma of their future death, becoming accepting of their death fate. The two main characters, Mateo and

Rufus, will take action as the story progresses, and from their actions, they find meaning in the rest of their lives, transforming the anticipatory trauma of both characters from the foreknowledge of their death into an opportunity to change their behavior and perspective on death.

1. Mateo's Working Through of Anticipatory Trauma

"Death is inevitable for everyone and it's absolute for me today." (p. 6)

Through the quotation above, Mateo, who was previously very worried about the death that would come to him. However, at the same time, he also acknowledges that death is something that everyone will experience, including himself. This shows Mateo's acknowledgment and acceptance of his fate to die within twenty-four hours. Mateo chooses to accept the reality that what he is experiencing cannot be avoided, even though he is still contemplating the possibility of death that he will face. This quotation marks the beginning of Mateo's understanding and overcoming his fear of the future death trauma he experienced.

"I've got to get out into the world, though, trick myself into thinking it is any other day. I've got to see Dad at the hospital and hold his hand for the first time since I was a kid and for what will be the last . . . wow, the last time ever." (p. 7)

Through this quotation above, Mateo tries to escape the situation that has trapped him in his trauma-induced fear by visiting his father in the hospital. At this point, Mateo begins to acknowledge that he cannot avoid his own death and decides to take meaningful action, starting with visiting his father as seen in the sentence *"I've got to see Dad at the hospital and hold his hand for the first time since I was a kid and for*

what will be the last" to create precious moments with his loved one on his last day. According to LaCapra (2014), one of the characteristics of working through is the individual regaining his ability to live and imagine a future. Mateo reflects on his trauma to get a reason to live and get out of his apartment to see his father at the hospital.

*"I have to do better. Everyone wanted so much more out of me, myself included. I have to honor this. It's my last day to do so.
Here Lies Mateo: He Lived for Everyone.
I hit Submit.
There's no going back. Yeah, I can edit, but that's not how promises work, and living for everyone is a promise to the world.
I know it's early in the day, but my chest squeezes because it's also getting late, for a Decker, at least. I can't do this alone, the leaving part."* (p. 28)

Through this quotation, Mateo wrote an inscription on his headstone that read, *"Here Lies Mateo: He Lived for Everyone."* In this sentence, Mateo began to form his new identity and decided to spend the rest of his life being alive for others and leaving a good impression on them. The trauma of future death indirectly makes Mateo reinterpret the meaning of his life, not just getting trapped in his fear of death, but also valuing the remaining time he has to do something meaningful for himself and others. On the other hand, Mateo also fears death, but he needs to move forward to connect with others. This is shown in the sentence *"I can't do this alone, the leaving part."* From this quotation, it can be seen that Mateo cannot face his trauma alone and needs someone else to accompany him for the rest of his life. This quotation shows that Mateo's action developed the meaning of the trauma of future death into something meaningful for his life and others he knows. This means Mateo began his working through his trauma.

"I download the Last Friend app on my phone. It's the fastest download ever, like it's some sentient being who understands the whole point of its existence is that time is running out for someone. The app has a blue interface with an animation of a gray clock as two silhouettes approach each other and high five. LAST FRIEND zooms into the center and a menu drops down." (p. 29)

Through this quotation, in his effort to find friends, Mateo downloaded the *Last Friend App*, an application that can bring *deckers* together in a forum to share the last moments of their lives. This shows Mateo's working through as he tries not to get trapped in his trauma about his future death and accepts his fate by meeting someone who shares the same fate as him.

LaCapra (2014) argues that working through is not complete recovery or forgetting the trauma. The quotation shows Mateo reflecting on his trauma and finding someone who shares the same fate with him through *Last App Friend*, and trying to understand the trauma through the experiences of other people.

"I'm healthy, yeah. I'm terrified of how it's going to happen, but I'm nervous I'll somehow disappoint myself if I don't get out there. I definitely don't want to stink up the apartment by dying in here." (p. 36)

Through this quotation, Mateo, who opened the Last Friend app, sent a message to one of the *deckers* on the *Last Friend* app named Philly. In the conversation between Mateo and Philly, Mateo admitted that he was afraid of what would happen to him. This shows that Mateo did not hold back his feelings. Furthermore, Mateo said that he would feel disappointed if he didn't leave his apartment and didn't do anything for the rest of his life. Mateo's statement shows his intention to overcome the trauma in his mind. The quotation shows that Mateo's trauma of future death has not complete

healing or forgetting only by discuss with other *deckers*, but Mateo trying to confront his trauma in order to acknowledge and reflects upon his traumatic experiences.

Rufus is right. I know he's right. No more arguing. "It's going to take me some time to get where you are with this. I don't become fearless just because I know my options are do something and die versus do nothing and still die." He doesn't remind me that we don't have a whole lot of time. "I have to say goodbye to my dad and my best friend." I walk toward the 110th Street subway station. (p. 61)

Through this quotation, Mateo, who previously always thought about death scenarios when he first met Rufus and left the apartment, now, after speaking with Rufus directly, he is starting to accept his emotional limits. In this moment, Mateo reflects on himself and acknowledges that understanding the trauma he has experienced requires a gradual process. This is shown in the sentence *"It's going to take me some time to get where you are with this."* At the same time, Mateo also realizes that he cannot avoid death in any scenario, and he starts doing something before he dies. Mateo tries not to deny the fact that he will die. As a first step to overcome Mateo's death trauma, Mateo wants to meet and say goodbye to his father and his friend, Lidia. This shows that his death in the future affects the decisions Mateo makes in the present.

*"I release Dad's hand, grab a pen that's on his bedside chest of drawers, pull out our photo, and write on the back of it with an unsteady hand:
Thank you for everything, Dad.
I'll be brave, and I'll be okay.
I love you from here to there.
Mateo"
(p. 73)*

Through this quotation, Mateo met his father, who was in a coma, in a hospital. In that brief moment, Mateo met his father for the last time. Before leaving his father, Mateo told him that he would be okay even though he knew he was going to die. This

shows that Mateo had accepted that he was going to die and did not deny or try to avoid death. This is a form of working through for Mateo, as he begins to let go of his compulsive fears and strives to create a meaningful response to his trauma so that he can be remembered by his loved ones, as shown through his expression of gratitude to his father before leaving him.

“Even as I grab the trash bag out of the bin, I know I won’t be able to return. I step out into the hallway and throw the bag down the chute. If I go back in, I’ll never leave. And if I don’t leave, I’ll die in that apartment, possibly in front of Penny, and that’s not how I want to be remembered—Rufus’s approach is really smart and thoughtful.” (p. 98)

Through this quotation, Mateo visits his friend's apartment, Lidia, who has a child named Penny. Mateo wants to use the rest of his life to meet his friend one last time without telling her that he is going to die. At the same time, he also realized that he couldn't return to his closest friends, as Mateo had previously avoided the trauma of his death by intending not to leave his apartment. However, after Mateo met Rufus and his dying father, he began to break free from the isolation caused by his fear of death. Mateo realizes that if he returns to Lidia's apartment, he will die there, and he does not want to be remembered in that way, showing that the trauma of his future death changes him to take more meaningful actions rather than just waiting for death to come to him without doing anything, meaning Mateo begin to acknowledges his trauma of future death and imagining a future where Mateo don't want to remember how he will die.

“There aren’t that many reviews online,” I say. When your service is exclusive for Deckers, not many reviews are to be expected. I mean, I can’t imagine any Decker who would spend precious time praising or bad-mouthing the foundation. “And I really am sorry. Not because we wasted money, but because we wasted time.” (p. 119)

Through this quotation, Mateo and Rufus head to the Make-A-Moment station, where *deckers* try valuable experiences through virtual reality simulations before they die. Here, Mateo feels regret not because they wasted money trying the simulations at the Make-A-Moment station, but because they wasted their remaining time. This shows Mateo's change from initially taking his time for granted by spending it in his apartment until he died. Now he considers time as something valuable. This shows how trauma reshapes Mateo's main priorities to create a more meaningful life in the remainder of his days. In this moment, Mateo wants to develop a narrative understanding by experiencing the moment in present as a part to reflecting on his trauma.

"I want to go to the cemetery and visit my mom. I only know her through my dad's stories and I'd like to spend some time with her," I say. "That phone booth graveyard did a number on me, I guess." My dad normally visited my mom alone because I was too nervous to make the trip. "Unless there's something else you want to do." (p. 130)

Through this quotation, Mateo plans to visit his mother's grave, who passed away giving birth to him. This shows a change in Mateo, who previously avoided death, now choosing to confront it symbolically. Mateo also expressed that he wanted to spare some time to visit his mother. This is a reflection of Mateo's loss of someone he loved. Mateo's trauma from death makes him reflect on past losses he has experienced and try to connect with his mother emotionally. According to LaCapra (2014), the individual who engages trauma to reflective rather than overwhelming to it. Working through requires recognizing trauma effect and not trying to denying it. This moment shows Mateo has build a self-awareness toward his trauma of future death and articulate the

emotional impact of confronting death as one of the characteristics of working through to understanding his trauma.

“Please look after me today, Mom, one last time, because I know I’m not already dead like Rufus thinks we are, and I would like to have my life-changing day. See you later.” (p. 142)

Through this quotation, Mateo spends time in front of his mother's grave, saying he will be okay. He also says goodbye to his mother because he now has a goal to change his life for the better. This shows that the trauma of death he experienced led him to reinterpret his life. Mateo no longer considers his death trauma something to be avoided, which had trapped him in a death scenario that burdened his mind. He now considers the time he has left valuable and plans to use the rest of his life to create precious memories for himself, showing that Mateo regaining the ability of live in the present to making a new purpose on his life rather than reliving and become trapped in traumatic experience.

“Twelve hours ago I received the phone call telling me I’m going to die today. In my own Mateo way, I’ve said tons of goodbyes already, to my dad, best friend, and goddaughter, but the most important goodbye is the one I said to Past Mateo, who I left behind at home when my Last Friend accompanied me into a world that has it out for us. Rufus has done so much for me and I’m here to help him confront any demons following him—except we can’t whip out any flaming swords or crosses that double as throwing stars like in fantasy books. His company has helped me and maybe mine will help him through any heartache too.”
“Twelve hours ago I received the phone call telling me I’m going to die today, and I’m more alive now than I was then.” (p. 146)

Through this quotation, Mateo remembers the events of twelve hours ago and what he has been through all this time. Mateo feels more alive than when he first received the Death-Cast call. This shows that Mateo has moved on from his trauma and left behind his bad habits to make his remaining life more meaningful. This is evident

in the metaphor in the quote that he has said goodbye to Mateo's past. At this moment, Mateo has completely detached himself from his recurring trauma through the actions he has taken, leading him to find meaning in his life all this time.

This moment shows that Mateo has reflected on his trauma regarding death and is beginning to demonstrate self-awareness that influences others. LaCapra (2014) argues that someone who undergoes working thru does not directly heal or eliminate the trauma they have experienced. The trauma still exists in their minds, but they are not trapped and haunted by the fear of the trauma they experienced. This happened to Mateo when he was fully aware that he would die since he received the Death-Cast call, but he did not feel afraid or relive the trauma he experienced as a threat, showing that Mateo has achieving self-awareness and emotional control of his trauma.

“My friends stand behind me as I pull open the door and walk into a world where I immediately regret not having spent every minute possible. There are strobe lights, flashing blues, yellows, and grays. The graffiti on the walls was marked by Deckers and their friends, sometimes the last piece of themselves the Deckers have left behind, something that immortalizes them. No matter when it happens, we all have our endings. No one goes on, but what we leave behind keeps us alive for someone else. And I look at this crowded room of people, Deckers and friends, and they are all living.”(p. 197)

Through this quotation, Mateo and Rufus entered *Clint's Graveyard*, where the *Deckers* spent the rest of their lives throwing parties and singing. As they joined the party, Mateo realized how precious the remaining time he had was, so everything he did in the present changed Mateo's perspective on facing his trauma. Mateo, who previously saw death as something to be avoided, now his trauma about death makes him understand the meaning of his life and strives to love himself and others. This is

evident in the quote, *"No matter when it happens, we all have our endings."* Indicating that Mateo has accepted his death after everything he has gone through.

"Onstage there's a teenager on crutches singing 'Can't Fight This Feeling' and, as Rufus would say, he's absolutely killing it. There are a couple people dancing behind him—friends, strangers, who knows, who cares—and this energy elevates me. I guess I could call this energy freedom. No one will be around to judge me tomorrow. No one will send messages to friends about the lame kid who had no rhythm. And in this moment, how stupid it was to care hits me like a punch to the face."(p. 197)

Through this quotation, Mateo seemed to enjoy the party at *Clint's Graveyard* as if it were the last party he would ever attend in his life. Mateo felt very excited, as if in this moment he felt free without being haunted by the trauma of his death. This shows the transformation of his fear into the freedom he has experienced since receiving the call from *Death-Cast*, as well as a form of working through for Mateo because he is no longer burdened by his trauma and worries about the death that will come to him.

"I like the Last Friend app," I say. I get his sentiment, but I wouldn't change how I met Rufus. "There I was, looking for some company, and I found you and you found me, and we chose to meet up because of gut instinct. What would've been the alternative? I can't guarantee I would've ever left here, or that our paths would've crossed. Not with one day left. It would make for a great story, yeah, but I think the app puts you out there more than anything else. For me, it meant admitting I was lonely and wanted to connect with someone. I just wasn't counting on what I have with you." (p. 222)

Through this quotation, Mateo, who returned from Clint's graveyard, went back to his apartment with Rufus, and there they spent the rest of their lives singing together. At this moment, Mateo is grateful to have met Rufus and to have formed a friendship with him from the beginning, when they didn't know each other. Mateo also eventually accepts the reality that he will die and does not try to avoid it, which is a form of working through for Mateo as he accepts his current condition without the fear of the

trauma of death. His meeting with Rufus has reflected the meaning of life that he has been searching for and has led Mateo to acknowledge his true feelings that he has been lonely and needs someone to pull him out of the isolation he has imposed on himself due to the trauma of future death. Throughout this moment, Mateo shows his self-awareness by admitting his weakness, which he is lonely all this time and want to connect with someone in his remaining life. This indicates Mateo achieves greater self-awareness after he confront his trauma by leaving his apartment, acknowledge it by meeting his father and visiting his mom's cemetery, and reflecting by make relation with Rufus as a friend in his last day.

2. Rufus's Working Through of Anticipatory Trauma

"I hope she's gonna be able to forgive me for everything, tonight included. I'll get to her before Peck can, and I'll tell my side. I'm sure Peck is gonna go home, clean himself up, and call Aimee off his brother's phone to tell her what a monster I am. He better not call the cops though, or I'll be spending my End Day behind bars, or maybe find myself on the wrong end of some officer's club. I don't wanna think about any of that, I just wanna get to Aimee and say goodbye to the Plutos as the friend they know I am, not the monster I was tonight.

"Meet me at home. Just . . . get to me. Bye, Aimee."

I hang up before she can protest. I get my bike, climbing on it as she calls nonstop.

"What's the plan?" Malcolm asks.

"We're going back to Pluto," I tell them. "You guys are gonna throw me a funeral." (p. 21)

Through this quotation, after Rufus received the *Death-Cast* call that made him stop beating Peck, who is his ex-girlfriend's boyfriend, Rufus was faced with the reality that he would die within twenty-four hours. In the midst of his panic, Rufus Malcom and Tagoe, who are members of *Pluto*, the foster family that took Rufus in when his family died, and his ex-girlfriend, Aimee, ensure that he is not alone. Rufus told his foster siblings that he wanted to spend the rest of his life organizing his own funeral. By telling his brothers, *"You guys are gonna throw me a funeral."* Showing Rufus

working through where he integrates his trauma into a funeral ritual as a farewell to someone he considers family. This moment shows Rufus confronting his trauma as an early stage of working through rather than he denying and trapped in his traumatic experience of death.

"I pick myself up and walk over to the wall with the graffiti and some oil-stained poster for something called Make-A-Moment. I stare at the Last Friend silhouettes on the wall. Ever since my family died, I would've bet anything I was gonna die alone. Maybe I will, but just because I was left behind doesn't mean I shouldn't have a Last Friend. I know there's a good Rufus in me, the Rufus I used to be, and maybe a Last Friend can drag him out of me." (p. 45)

After failing to say goodbye to his foster family, Pluto, because Peck came and disrupted it. Rufus was forced to flee from the police who were chasing him because he had previously beaten Peck. When Rufus discovered the *Last Friend app*, he realized that he needed a last friend in his life to overcome his trauma about death. At the same time, Rufus remembers the trauma from the past that refers to his parents' death. Rufus feels that he has long been dead in solitude. However, that doesn't mean he didn't have friends in his final moments. At least before he died, he wanted to have friends. He believed that there was still a good side within him, reflecting Rufus's self-awareness, and he believed that Rufus would meet someone who could awaken him from his bad habits. Someone who can give meaning to his life and help him overcome the trauma of death, even though Rufus already knows that he will die. At the last moment. Rufus, at least before he died, wanted to have a friend. He believes that there is still a good side within him, which shows Rufus's acknowledgement of his trauma and looking someone who understands and makes him a better person.

“Can you? There’s the whole you-not-leaving-your-house problem. Last Friend or not, I’m not spending the rest of my life holed up in someone’s apartment—and I don’t want you to either, but you gotta meet me halfway, Mateo,” Rufus says. (p. 50)

Through this quotation, Rufus talks to Mateo through the *Last Friend App*. This is the first time Rufus and Mateo are talking to each other. In the conversation, Rufus learns about Mateo's habit of always avoiding the trauma he has experienced. However, unlike Mateo, Rufus refuses to avoid it and does not want to spend the rest of his life just in the apartment. In this moment, Rufus shows that he is trying to overcome his trauma and knows how to respond to his traumatic feelings instead of being controlled by them. Rufus also invites Mateo to leave his apartment and spend the rest of their lives doing something meaningful before they die. This moment shows that Rufus's trauma from death pushes him to build interactions with others he has never met refers to Rufus’s process of his self-reflection on his trauma as part of working through.

“I’m biking toward that Mateo kid’s house. He better not be a serial killer or so help me . . . Nah, he’s chill. It’s obvious he spends way too much time in his head and is probably too antisocial for his own damn good. I mean, check this: I’m legit gonna pick him up from his house, like he’s some prince stuck in a high tower in need of rescuing. I think once the awkwardness is out of the way he’ll make for a solid partner-in-crime. If not, we can always part ways. It’ll suck ‘cause that’s a waste of time we don’t have, but it is what it is. If nothing else, having a Last Friend should make my friends feel a little better about me running wild around the city. It makes me feel a little better, at least.” (p. 51)

Through this quotation, after getting to know each other through the *Last Friend App*, Rufus headed to Mateo's apartment. On the way, Rufus joked about Mateo, saying he better not become a serial killer just because he was too antisocial and locked himself in his apartment. This is a form of working through for Rufus because he is taking direct action in response to the death that will happen to him. The joke made by

Rufus is showing that he is confronting his trauma to endure and not be stressed by the death-cast call stating that he will die.

In addition, Rufus accepts the uncertainty in his life that he will die and does not try to avoid or panic over the trauma of the future death he faces. This shows that Rufus can control his emotions in response to the uncertainty of his life without succumbing to excessive anxiety. Rufus also realizes that Mateo wants to have a Last Friend before he dies. Therefore, Rufus wants to make Mateo feel better by taking him around the city, as shown in the sentence: *"If nothing else, having a Last Friend should make my friends feel a little better about me running wild around the city."* This shows Rufus's awareness that his time is limited and leads him to make the decision to create precious moments before he and Mateo pass away.

"I know I helped Mateo live his life, but he helped me get mine back in shape. I wanna be remembered as who I am right now, not for that dumbass mistake I made. I turn and Mateo and Lidia are standing shoulder to shoulder. I pull him over by his elbow" (p. 206)

Through this quotation, Rufus realizes that Mateo has helped him change his life, just as he did with Mateo's life, who was confined to his apartment. This shows that Rufus acknowledges the changes within himself since he received the *Death-Cast* call until he met Mateo and all the moments they created together. Rufus has also formed his identity in the present and wants to leave a different impression on the rest of his life. This is shown through the sentence *"I wanna be remembered as who I am right now, not for that dumbass mistake I made."* Showing that Rufus does not want to

repeat the trauma or get trapped in his past mistakes. Showing his working through and regaining Rufus's ability to live in the present.

*"And I stopped being someone I don't like," I say. "You wouldn't have liked me."
He's tearing up and smiling. "And you wouldn't have waited for me to be brave. Maybe it's better to have gotten it right and been happy for one day instead of living a lifetime of wrongs."
He's right about everything. (p. 225)*

Through this quotation, Rufus shows a change in himself and acknowledges his past mistakes, refusing to admit that he will die after receiving the Death-Cast call by beating up his ex-girlfriend's boyfriend. On the other hand, Mateo makes Rufus realize that having a happy life and doing something right, even if it's just for one day, is better than living a lifetime doing something bad. This shows that the trauma of the future makes both Mateo and Rufus rethink the meaning of their lives and accept their fate of death.

*"I need Mateo's dad to know about what his son was up to. I dig into my pocket and there's my drawing of the world from when Mateo and I first sat down this morning at my favorite diner. It's beat up and a little wet, but it'll do. I grab a pen from inside the chest drawer and write around the world."
"Mr. Torrez,
I'm Rufus Emeterio. I was Mateo's Last Friend. He was mad brave on his End Day. I took photos all day on Instagram. You gotta see how he lived. My username is @RufusonPluto. I'm really happy your son reached out to me on what could've been the worst day ever. Sorry for your loss, Rufus (9/5/17)" (p. 239)*

According to this quotation, this incident occurred when Mateo died in a fire at his apartment, while Rufus survived. Overcome with grief, Rufus wrote a message to Mateo's father, who was in a coma, saying that he was Mateo's last friend and that Mateo had managed to get through his worst day without any regrets at the end of his life. Rufus prioritizes the feelings of others, showing care and responsibility for his actions. The actions taken by Rufus are a form of working through when accepting

Mateo's death and showing empathy toward Mateo's father instead of being afraid of Mateo's death. This moment shows Rufus has reached self-awareness by accepting Mateo's death rather than denying his death. Rufus is still frightened by the trauma of his death, but he is no longer possessed by his trauma of future death after he write a letter for Mateo's father and tell that Mateo was brave on his last day as LaCapra (2014) argues that trauma remains painful, but individual is no longer trapped by it.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

In this last chapter, the researcher divides the chapter into two parts. First, the researcher summarizes the research conclusions based on the research problems and data analysis in the previous chapter. Second, the researcher provides suggestions and recommendations for further research.

A. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of anticipatory trauma in Adam Silvera's *They Both Die in the End* through Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory, acting out and working through. This study analyzes anticipatory trauma, a trauma triggered by information from the future that causes someone to experience psychological disturbances, from the characters Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio as the main protagonists. This study focuses on the psychological condition of both characters after receiving news from *Death-Cast* that they will die within twenty-four hours.

In this study, the researcher used Dominick LaCapra's trauma theory to examine the trauma responses experienced by Mateo and Rufus toward the impending death, through their characteristics such as repetitive fears, avoidance of the fact that they die, unstable emotions, and imagination of death scenarios they experience through the concept of acting out. The anticipatory trauma experienced by Mateo is manifested in his behavior, which shows anxiety and repetitive thoughts, causing Mateo to constantly

think about death scenarios that lead him to withdraw from the outside world. Meanwhile, Rufus expresses anticipatory trauma through violent actions and impulsive behavior as an inability to process his feelings for his collapsed future. Although the ways they express their trauma are different, both Mateo and Rufus are trapped in repetitive behaviors and their inability to understand the situations they are experiencing.

As the story progresses, both Mateo and Rufus can emerge from their recurring trauma by demonstrating self-awareness, reflecting on their feelings and emotions, and finding meaning in every action and moment that leads them to accept the trauma of death so that they can die peacefully without regret. This shows the working through they undergo, transforming their anticipatory trauma into an opportunity to change their lives and create meaning from every action they take in the remainder of their lives.

B. Suggestion

In this study, the researcher only focuses on the anticipatory trauma experienced by Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio, the main characters in Adam Silvera's novel *They Both Die at the End*. The researcher hopes that this study helps readers understand anticipatory trauma through the acting out and working through approaches of Dominick LaCapra, as depicted in Mateo and Rufus, by reading the research and the novel. The researcher provides suggestions for further researcher interested in studying Adam Silvera's novel *They Both Die at the End* using different

theories or other interesting aspects to explore, especially the research on trauma theory in literary works.

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