

Tribhuvan University

A Disable's Self-Affirmation in *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by John Green

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

By

Diwash Khatiwada

Roll. No. : 21

Symbol No. : 280677

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-0040-0223-2015

Contact no. : 9861567600

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

March 2023

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English
Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Diwash Khatiwada has completed his thesis entitled A Disable's Self-Affirmation in *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by John Green under my supervision. He carried out his research from September 2022 to March 2023. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

Prof. Dr. Mr. Krishna Chandra Sharma

Supervisor

Date: _____

Letter of

Approval

This thesis entitled “A Disable’s Self-Affirmation in *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by John Green” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by DiwashKhatiwada has been approved by the undersigned members of the ResearchCommittee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:

Acknowledgement

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the completion of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, for his unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the entire research process. His constructive feedback and valuable insights have been instrumental in shaping this thesis.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the faculty members of Central Department of English at Tribhuvan University, for providing me with the necessary resources and intellectual stimulation to undertake this research. Their lectures, seminars, and workshops have broadened my knowledge and enriched my academic experience. I am grateful to my family and friends for their constant love, support, and understanding. Their encouragement and motivation have been the driving force behind my academic pursuits.

Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who took part in this research. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights has been invaluable in helping me achieve the objectives of this thesis.

Thank you all once again for your support and encouragement.

Diwash Khatiwada

A Disable's self-affirmation in *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by John Green

Abstract

This research paper aims to explore John Green's THE FAULT IN OUR STARS (2012) as a self-affirmation of differently able (disable) character. It explores the self-affirmation, struggle, pain, importance of family and friends thereby finding the cause behind it by taking theoretical insights from disability theory in general and in particular. It unravels the impossibility of getting life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for the disabled characters by analyzing their health and physical condition. The representative characters like Hazel Grace Lancaster, Augustus Gus Waters, Isaac, Patrick Dream's having the healthy and prosperous life in Indianapolis. In the novel, Hazel, the main character, transforms from an underestimated and pessimistic girl into an ideal person for everyone with various situations and the help of her friends. This research also tends to highlight the value of family and friends in helping people evolve and show how crucial it is to have supportive friends and family members.

Keywords: Self-affirmation, Disability, Optimism, Struggle, Diseases.

Introduction

The journey of the main character Hazel, who experiences several ups and downs in her life, is the most fascinating portion of *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*. Hazel Grace is cynical, clever, and thoughtful. Hazel is older than her age while being only sixteen; she gives death a lot of thought, only to come to the conclusion that death is unavoidable. To lessen the impact of the suffering that her death will unavoidably bring, Hazel prefers to keep her relationships with people to a minimum. Hazel is compassionate, considerate, and brave despite her withdrawal from life. Hazel knows that anything she does is insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe, so all she wants is to minimize the damage that her death will cause. Unlike many others with a terminal illness, Hazel prefers to leave no lasting mark on the planet. Although she is not afraid of dying, she is concerned for her parents' welfare after she passes away. Their existence revolves around her illness, and Hazel hates to think about what their daily lives will be reduced to when she is gone.

At the beginning of the novel, Hazel is someone who is guarded. She refrains from obtaining close relationships with those around her because she believes it will cause harm to those she cares for when she eventually passes due to her terminal illness. Hazel refers to herself as a "grenade" that is just waiting to go off and harm others around her. The metaphorical grenade represents the cancer that is eating away at her body and will finally kill her.

Although she is a college student, there are many things about her self-worth and value that she is unaware of once she meets Augustus. Hazel initially does not want to get involved, but she cannot help falling for Augustus, who wants to be loved

by everyone. As a result, her viewpoint starts to change as she gains a deeper understanding of who she is. For instance, during her first conversation with Augustus after the support group meeting, he immediately tells Hazel “you are beautiful. I enjoy looking at beautiful people, and I decided a while ago not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence” (16). Hazel’s reaction to denying her beauty shows how she lacks in her self-awareness and does not see herself in such a positive light. At this point in the novel, it is evident that Hazel’s self-image is tainted because she sees herself only as a cancer patient. Augustus at the beginning of the novel is a character who supports Hazel as she endures phases of serious illness, hospital visits and emotional pain. As the story goes on, Augustus gains more understanding as he struggles with cancer as well, which affects how he views himself and the worth of his life. As Augustus struggles with the mental and physical effects of the disease spreading through his body, Hazel, who first needs support, turns into a source of guidance and love for him. Augustus experiences a harsh awakening as a result of realizing that he should be content with the effects his life has had on those who are dear to him and accept the gifts life has given him. Augustus is reminded of this by Hazel, who tells him with encouragement, “You get to battle cancer” and adds, “That is your battle. And you’ll keep fighting”(216). As Augustus’s condition worsens and their journey together draws to a close, the pair is now at their breaking point. Augustus’ deteriorating health is a major factor in this. As he begins to realize that the disease has limited his ability to be independent, Augustus quickly loses hope, as seen by his statement that “I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this I disgust myself I hate it I hate it I hate it just let me fucking die” (245). This is told to Hazel not too long before Augustus’ eventual death as he is unable to fight any longer. After the death of Augustus everything changes in Hazel’s life. This research paper

attempts to study self-affirmation of differently able (disable) character in John Green's *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by taking theoretical insight taken from disability studies.

Disability Studies is an academic discipline involving social sciences, studying the significance, the nature and the consequences of disability understood as a social construct. The discipline rejects viewing disability as a functional defect and concentrates on social, cultural, legal and political aspects of this phenomenon. (The Center of human policy, Law and Disability Studies www.disabilitystudies.syr.edu/what/whatis.aspx accessed on 31.03.2017). Disability Studies' is an academic discipline that examines the meaning, nature and consequences of disability. Initially, the field focuses on the division between impairment and disability, where impairment is an impairment of an individual's mind or body, while disability was considered a social construct (Hosking 2008). In the novel the characters themselves use words differently able (disable) to describe their experiences. Particularly Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac speak and are active agents in creating their own 'disable experience.' Isaac is friend of both Augustus Waters and Hazel Grace. After the surgery that results in his blindness, he wryly tells Hazel, "People keep saying my other senses will improve to compensate, but CLEARLY NOT YET. Come over here so I can examine your face with my hands and see deeper into your soul than a sighted person ever could" (74). Here, Isaac is critiquing a person with a disability who has so far overcome their disability that they have surpassed both temporarily-able-bodied and differently able (disable) folks by developing something extra special. This is an unfortunate and problematic figure, because many people with disabilities do not develop "extraordinary" abilities and are simply people with disabilities.

Similarly, Augustus says to Hazel that they should “team up and be this disabled vigilante duo roaring through the world, righting wrongs, defending the weak, protecting the endangered” (202). She indulges his fantasy, quipping, “Our fearlessness shall be our secret weapon” (202). Again, though Hazel and Augustus do not articulate it as such, they are calling upon time honored tropes of “disability as super-power” and turning it on its head by continuing, “When the robots recall the human absurdities of sacrifice and compassion, they will remember us” (202).

Disability phenomenon has been evolving in scientific sociological reflexion, starting from functionalist theories, through interactionist theories, to end up with theories of discrimination and social exclusion (Davis 1997, Barnes, Mercer 2008, Ostrowska 2010). Currently, the evolution of interpretations has reached its final in the form of research run in the trend of Disability Studies, still scarcely explored in Poland.

Critical approaches under this research include critical disability theory. Meekosha (2013) notices that research on disability in this perspective, emerging straight from social movements of people with disabilities, such as Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) or British Council of Organizations of Disabled People (BCODP), is a dynamically developing, interdisciplinary academic area within social sciences and humanities. Concept of disability accepted under this approach is strongly rooted in critical sociology, whereas Disability Studies as such are to a large extent based on the legacy of the critical theory formulated by J. Habermas (Meekosha 2013: 319).

The critical perspective of disability has been existing in classical American and Western European sociology of medicine for a long time, is an approach extremely rarely used in Polish intra sociological debate and socio-medical discourses. Some authors (Piatkowski, Nowakowska 2013) emphasize the importance

and usefulness of this trend in sociology, not only due to cognitive and explanatory values of the critical theory, but (perhaps primarily) because of the imperative of practical action and bringing about a real social change. Whereas other researchers of critical thought in sociology (Warczok, Zarycki 2014) ask whether one can even assume the existence of 'Polish critical sociology'. The authors point out that critical sociology, aimed at demystifying the existing power relations, is marginalized in the Polish sociological area and the practical service sociology, also understood as 'policy' most often focuses on legitimization and naturalization of current social order. According to the authors, social criticism, if occurring in Poland at all, is absolutely selective, and it only constitutes a hid justification for the prevailing status quo (Warczok, Zarycki 2014: 129-130).

Critical disability theory (CDT) is based on one of the versions of this model, assuming that disability is a social construct and not an inevitable consequence of a disease or dysfunction of the body, disability is a system of interrelationships between a dysfunction, an individual response to this dysfunction and the environment. Negative social effects experienced by people with disabilities are caused by the physical and institutional environment as well as by the attitudes in this environment towards people with disabilities who do not meet the social expectation of 'normality'. Hosking agrees that CDT model of disability is a 'biopsychosocial' one in WHO terms. Public policies must consider both aspects of disability the biomedical as well as the social one. Yet the author notices certain inner contradiction, a tension between the biomedical approach, in which the disabling function is expected to be overcome, and the social approach, in which disability is accepted and treated as a value with entitlement to equal participation in society. The critical disability theory explores this tension by questioning the idea of personal independence, asking about

the social construction of the concept of disability and the concept of normality, the fundamental value of human dignity and the right for respect in democratic societies; it deals with intersectionality the meeting point between disability and other socially constructed issues, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. (Hosking 2008).

Similarly, Danial L. Preston also defines disability studies in two different models; medical and social. In broader term the 'medical model' focuses on a physical difference of the body; a broken or missing limb, blindness, or the inability to hear. The medical model seeks to normalize the population identified in its ranks whereas in contrast the social model which is developed in Great Britain seeks that disability is seen as arising at least partly from an environment that creates barriers for people with impairments. In other word, disability does not exist solely because people use wheelchairs, disability exists because people who use wheelchairs need more ramps.

Also, the famous Disability Studies scholar Tom Shakespeare has pointed out; no one model can completely encompasses the need for an interpretation of disability. Disability as the single concept, therefore, becomes just as difficult and complicated to define as the concepts we now identify as race, gender, sexual identity, and ethnicity. Additionally, Elisabeth L. Miller, an assistant professor of English-Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Nevada, Reno states in her collage English Journal said that; "I opened the book and started to read, I COULD NOT READ. It was like my eyes would not cooperate, Allthewordsrantgether. I was so scared that I said, 'Oh my God, I cannot read.' I must have said it louder than I thought because my waiting was over"(19).Similarly, Mary Duffy in her journal Disability, Difference, Identity has mentioned about the identical issue of disabled person where she states:

As a child, and later as a young woman my identity as a person with a disability had been systematically eroded. Because I could not or did not identify wholly with the majority culture I felt alienated from a world whose images most people could identify with. My physical reality was invalidated through these images. Why were there no positive images of people with disabilities in the media? Why were all charity images of disability of children? One could be forgiven for thinking that children with disabilities do not grow up ... we just disappear. (31)

We can observe the similar case with Hazel Grace Lancaster where she is not at all optimistic and confident about her looks and appearances. She assumes herself as one of the useless things in the world. She curses herself for being victim of cancer. “I wanted to make my parents happy. There is only one thing in this world shittier than biting it from cancer when you are sixteen, and that’s having a kid bites it from cancer” (8). In contrary, she also wants to show her ability despite of being cancer patient, she uses to carry her oxygen tank herself just to show her presence in the society.

I pretended to fiddle with my oxygen tank for a second just to kill time. “Do you want me to carry it in for you?” “No, its fine,” I said. The cylindrical green tank only weighed a few pounds, and I had this little steel cart to wheel it around behind me. It delivered two liters of oxygen to me each minute through a cannula, a transparent tube that split just beneath my neck, wrapped behind my ears, and then reunited in my nostrils. The contraption was necessary because my lungs sucked at being lungs.(8)

Similarly, Wendy Brown claims, thrives on “wounded attachments” (Brown 52 et seq.), and these affiliations, because linked to suffering, offer no alternative to

subordination: “What kinds of political recognition can identity-based claims seek that will not re subordinate a subject itself historically subordinated through identity?” (55). Pain apparently disables the ability of identity politics to form alliances based on self-affirmation, emancipation, and empowerment, producing instead a desire for recognition that “breeds a politics of paralysis and suffering” (55).

Although it is perplexing to discover the practice still prevalent in Butler, Brown, and other cultural critics, the use of disability identification as a prop to disparage minority politics has a long and evil history. The idea that the political claims made by people of color and women are illegitimate because their identities are disabled would be outrageous if it were not such a familiar and successful ploy. Douglas Baynton demonstrates how historical opponents of women's political and social equality emphasize their alleged physical, intellectual, and psychological flaws, emphasizing irrationality, excessive emotions, and physical weakness, while similar arguments for racial inequality and immigration restrictions involving specific races and ethnic groups emphasize their alleged propensity for disabilities like deafness, blindness, and other disabilities (Baynton 33). Furthermore, Baynton contends that despite the diminishing importance of other bases for discrimination, such as color, ethnicity, sex, and gender, disability is still a valid rationale for unfair treatment in the modern world. Although discrimination still occurs frequently, treating members of minorities as second-class citizens is no longer acceptable unless the inferiority is related to a disability. Regarding group affiliations, Erving Goffman introduces the phrase "politics of identity" and contends that the stigmatized individual is recognized "as a member of the wider group, which means he is a normal human being, but that he is also "different" in some respects, and that it would be foolish to deny this distinction" (123).

In response, the individual regulates societal attitudes and expectations in connection to the group they are a part of as well as in reference to the larger society. Renée R. Anspach defines identity politics as an act of "forging an image or conception of self and propagating this self to attentive publics" (66), drawing on Goffman's research. Another claim made by Mary Bernstein is that identity politics should be understood in relation to "experience, culture, politics, and power" (48). Tobin Siebers states that "identity politics is no different from any other form of political representation, since it is defined by ideological, historical, geographic, or temporal borders" (Siebers42). In his view, the distinctive features of identity politics in comparison to other forms of political representation are, first, the goal of self-identification, second, the deduction of an identity 'from a singular subjectivity, and third, possibly highlighting oneself as distinctively and individually suffering. The last feature marks the focus of Siebers' critique, as identity politics centering on suffering runs the risk of provoking accusations of narcissism. These critics have argued various facets of identical issues of disabled persons. They involve the unspeakable pain, sufferings, injury and experiences of disabled person to make them speak able through transmitting the event and stories of the witnesses. The research undergoes with the analysis of disable theory in specific. Since the major objective of the study is to demonstrate the effect of physical disease and resistance over it. In addition to it, the text on the notion of disability and pain are taken as the tools in making the application of the novel. The extracts are taken to prove the hypothesis.

Although Hazel has survived her close death, she is aware that her life shall not last for too long. Due to her health condition, Hazel is obliged to take medications regularly and carry an oxygen tank with tubes tangled around her face in order to breathe properly. This medical equipment that accompanies her wherever she goes

makes her feel embarrassed and uncomfortable especially around strangers. After suffering from cancer at a young age, Hazel's life starts to mainly center around two main concepts: death and cancer. She starts isolating herself from people, preferring to stay at home and read books. In addition, Hazel begins to believe that the only way to prevent hurting the people she admires after death is by avoiding any emotional ties, romantic relationships, and friendships because her condition is incurable and her chances of dying are higher than those of other people. Her outlook on life begins to shift gradually towards one that is more negative. Hazel eventually comes to the conclusion that a dying person is unworthy of love, and this belief grows stronger with time.

The physiological component has a significant impact on the psychological component, which is typically in charge of human character, attitudes, moodiness, complexes, motivation, behaviors, or anger management, so when attempting to understand the causes of any human behavior, one should take a closer look at the motivations behind it. For instance, a person who has lost his legs would notice everybody's legs wherever he goes, while another person with two legs would not do the same and perhaps never appreciate such a privilege until losing it. The first person would be affected by his disability in a way that makes his view to the world radically different from the second person.

In *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* Hazel misses out on having a typical childhood in the past and currently on enjoying her teens because she spends the most of her days in hospitals or at home sick. In this excerpt, Hazel describes her condition and the difficulties she has breathing when she isn't using her oxygen tank and breathing tubes:

The cylindrical green tank only weighed a few pounds, and I had this little steel cart to wheel it around behind me. It delivered two liters of oxygen to me each minute through a cannula, a transparent tube that split just beneath my neck, wrapped behind my ears, and then reunited in my nostrils. The contraption was necessary because my lungs sucked at being lungs. (8)

As it can be observed from the foregoing, Hazel's health requires that she behave differently from other teenagers. She spends most of her time at home alone, reading books and avoiding social interaction with her old friends. When participating in any outdoor activities, especially when she was around her friends who had healthier bodies and easier lives, she felt uneasy because of her health difficulties. There is always something that makes her think of death and dying, even when she is out with her friend Kaitlyn in the mall:

Is it even possible to walk in these? I mean, I would die and then stopped short, looking at me as if to say I am sorry, as if it were a crime to mention death to the dying. "You should try them on," Kaitlyn continued, trying to paper over the awkwardness. "I would sooner die," I assured her. (44)

Hazel makes the decision to finally meet an old friend and break up her monotonous daily routine, but she is more confident than ever that she will never be normal again because of the discomfort that consistently halts the flow of her talks with her friends.

Hazel also feels embarrassed for carrying an oxygen tank and tubes everywhere she goes, especially when a little girl asks: "What's on your nose?" And I said, 'Um, it's called a cannula. These tubes give me oxygen and help me breathe'. Her mother swooped in and said, "Jakie," disapprovingly, but I said, "No no it's

okay” (46). Another similar incident happens when Hazel, Augustus and her mother are at the airplane:

That was the worst part about having cancer, sometimes: The physical evidence of disease separates you from other people. We were irreconcilably other, and never was it more obvious than when the three of us walked through the empty plane, the stewardess nodding sympathetically.(144)

Similarly, after her few attempts in socializing and meeting people again, Hazel has the firm belief that her illness and death thoughts shall be carry with her till the end.

The other thing about Kaitlyn, I guess, was that it could never again feel natural to talk to her. Any attempts to feign normal social interactions were just depressing because it was so glaringly obvious that everyone I spoke to for the rest of my life would feel awkward and self-conscious around me. (33)

In this textual evidence, Hazel acknowledges that her physiological condition is influencing her thoughts by leading her to believe that she will never again belong to a normal people. This belief awakens simultaneously with the sense of oddity she experiences when she observes how people are treating her differently as a result of her illness.

She is obstinately persuaded that she has nothing to live for and that the only thing left for her to do is to isolate herself from people as much as she can, despite her parents' repeated attempts to cheer her up and make her feel better.

I am like. Like. I am like a grenade, Mom. I am a grenade and at some point I am going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?” I am a grenade, I said again. “I just want to stay away from people and read books

and think and be with you guys because there is nothing I can do about hurting you; you are too invested, so just please let me do that, okay? (99)

Hazel makes the decision to isolate herself from other people, and the only people from whom she is unable to do so are her parents. However, due to her feeling of guilt she constantly demanding that they need to obtain a life which is not simply dependent on taking care of her. “I want you guys to have a life,” I said. “I worry that you won’t have a life, that you will sit around here all day with no me to look after and stare at the walls and want to off yourselves” (297). Hazel is worried about the day when she passes away leaving a huge gap in her parent’s life especially since she is the center of their attention, also because they devote most of their time to her. The given statement and explanations allows one to see how Hazel begins to embrace the idea that she will never go back to her former normal life. Consequently, she starts convincing herself that she likes her new life and how she is needless of anyone by constantly saying: “Anyway, I really did like being alone” (33). According to this quote it is evident that her incurable illness has made her change her view to life and accepts to live in isolation from the world.

In the novel, Hazel explicitly tells her mother that she has no motives to love or to be in an emotional relationship with anyone by saying: “I am not going on dates, I said. I do not want to go on dates with anyone. It is a terrible idea and a huge waste of time and “Honey,” my mom said. “What’s wrong?” “I am like. Like. I’m like a grenade, Mom. I am a grenade and at some point I am going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?” (99). from this statement, it is clear that Hazel is distancing herself from everyone since she is aware of her hopeless condition.

As she met with the Augustus her life began to change. Augustus portrays a powerful, self-assured, endearing young man. He constantly idolizes his own

ostentation. He believes that having a heroic life, leaving a noble legacy, and significantly influencing humanity are the most important aspects of living. While giving introduction to the members of support group Augustus said that,

My name is Augustus Waters, “I am seventeen. I had a little touch of osteosarcoma a year and a half ago, but I am just here today at Isaac’s request.” When he was asked how was he feeling? By Patrick, he said that “oh, I am grand.” Augustus Waters smiled with a corner of his mouth. “I am on a roller coaster that only goes up, my friend.(11)

This shows that the main character Augustus is more optimistic than the other characters in the novel. He wants to do something great and want to achieve something more in his life. He wants to be remembered as a special person after his death. Here, Augustus water wants to establish his own identity by being optimistic and wants Hazel to live the life in same way. After meeting with Augustus, Hazel became a source of motivation and love to everyone just like Augustus. Augustus used to flirt with her, love her, motivate her and spend time with her. He used to express his love and feeling toward her. He used to motivate her for her well being.

I am in love with you, and I am not in the business of denying myself the simple pleasure of saying true things. I am in love with you, and I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we are all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we will ever have, and I am in love with you. (153)

From the above quote we can observe that Augustus is expressive in nature. Augustus is convinced that the importance of life lies in being heroic and achieves something important so he will be remembered even after his death. He believes that

someone can be immortal by being remembered and he always discusses this topic with Hazel and of his fear of being forgotten and that he still could not do something worthy. It can be seen over his speech a caring person to ensure that people will remember him as someone who is kind, caring, outstanding and worthy to be kept as a friend or a person who needs to be memorable (Bougherara et al. 53). This is quite clear by his explanation about oblivion to Hazel Grace in later part of the novel:

Sure, I fear earthly oblivion. But, I mean, not to sound like my parents, but I believe humans have souls, and I believe in the conversation of souls. The oblivion is something else, fear that I would not be able to give anything in exchange for my life. If you do not live a life in service of a greater good, you have got at least die a death in service of a greater good, you know? And I fear that I would not get either a life or a death that means anything. (168)

The main reason of him wanting to have that kind of life is because he wanted to face death with the memory that he had served a greater good for the people around him. The last sentence of the statement above shows that Augustus Waters is afraid of having a life or facing a death that is not meaningful for him, consequently serving a greater good for the others is the way to make his life meaningful. Another side of Augustus' perspective on life that he displays on the novel is that he has a direct personality. In other words, he is a straightforward person. We can see this through his conversation that took place between him and Hazel.

What? I asked.

Nothing he said.

Why are you looking at me like that? Augustus half smiled. "Because you are beautiful." I enjoy looking at beautiful people, and I decided a while ago not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence. (16)

Another occasion where this perspective and characteristic of Augustus Waters is shown can also be seen through his discussion with Hazel where they talked about how the relationships in teenagers are filled with awkwardness without sugar-coating the reality. His statement shows the way he directly stated his opinion about youngsters' relationship to Hazel. An evident of that behavior is put on view through the way he criticized Hazel for "killing his vibe" (19) in observing the loving scene between Isaac and his girlfriend. Similarly, while it is true that Augustus Waters is a straightforward person that does not at all mean he is mean or unkind to others. Quite contrary to that, Gus is a very caring person, and he wants to leave his mark on everything and everyone that he crosses his path along during his life. As a result, he continues making efforts to do anything for his and other people's life. This can be seen through his speech. There were five others before they got to him. He smiled a little when his turn came. His voice was low, smoky, and dead sexy. "My name is Augustus Waters," he said. "I am seventeen. I had a little touch of osteosarcoma a year and a half ago, but I am just here today at Isaac's request" (11).

With the inspiration, motivation and friendship with Augustus, Hazel's life has also been changed. She began to go out of her house, meet her old friends and even went to Netherland to meet her favorite author Peter Van Houten of her favorite book *An Imperial Affliction*. She thanks Augustus for his efforts to make her life easy and convenient. "I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. I would not trade it for the world. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and I am grateful" (260). Fortunately, Hazel and Augustus discover that they are genuinely in love whereas Monica is a complete loser and did not really care about Isaac, which can be seen in the given statement, Isaac shot me a look. Right, of course. But you keep the promise anyway. That's what love is. Love is keeping the promise anyway.

Don't you believe in true love? (61). Above statement shows how much Hazel adores Augustus, while saying this statement they both were looking in their eyes which shows the trust between them.

The matter of self affirmation can be observed when one of the Hazel's and Augustus's friend was cursing his ex-girlfriend and Hazel was supporting his thoughts. "But I believe in true love, you know? I do not believe that everybody gets to keep their eyes or not get sick or whatever, but everybody should have true love, and it should last at least as long as your life does" (75). Here, Hazel was supporting Isaac's statement, Hazel, who used to love being alone and enjoys the isolation is now talking and supporting for the true love. Similarly, after the death of Augustus waters when Peter Van Houten came to see Hazel, she had conversation with him and was expressing her grief on the loss of her beloved Augustus. "The marks humans leave are too often scars" (311). Hazel reads these words from Augustus to Van Houten in the letter that Lidewij sends to her at the end of the novel. It was Augustus's desire to be remembered after his death. Where he says he left his "scar" on Hazel, and the word suggests something permanent that will not disappear with his death. It's not the mark he wanted to leave, he always dreamed of doing something heroic but it nonetheless satisfies his desire to have made an impact that will survive him.

Hazel realizes that there cannot be pain without joy. Notably, Hazel undermines the concept, she endorses it in her real eulogy for Augustus, explaining that funerals are for the living and that this concept can be very comforting to his family and others. Whether she actually believes it by the end is unclear, but perhaps her relationship with Gus and realizations about her parents' feelings for her complicate her beliefs about the intermingling of pain and joy.

Without pain, how could we know joy? This is an old argument in the field of thinking about suffering and its stupidity and lack of sophistication could be plumbed for centuries but suffice it to say that the existence of broccoli does not, in any way, affect the taste of chocolate. (35)

Augustus is a caring and optimistic person; he has a high drive to perform his activities even though he suffers from cancer. He still cherishes his life and tries to do everything in order to leave some marks after his death. One of the main drives of his is to make his girlfriend Hazel feel happy and comfortable because he feels deep love to her. This is evident in Gus' statement "I will fight it for you. Don't you worry about me, Hazel Grace. I am okay. I will find a way to hang around and annoy you for a long time" (216). This shows that Augustus' source of motivation is Hazel. He wants to fight it all because of her. He also does not care if he has his illness. He just thinks about Hazel and always wants to be with her, because he has found her as a blessing in his life. Since Augustus loves Hazel, he feels that they belong to each other. Much like Hazel, being aware of their limited time on earth, they both want to share their feeling of love and belonging to each other. As a result, Gus continuously pushes beyond his pain and suffering to make sure that his loving soul mate is comfortable and contented of his existence and fulfills her need of love and sense of belonging.

Hazel has had to deal with more than the typical adolescent's fair share of pain and tears, and through her hardships she has developed the ability to protect and distance herself from sadness and, if that fails, she attempts to hide her feelings so as not to hurt others. Seeing Gus go through these same motions, Hazel feels true empathy for him, just at the moment the plot turns itself upside down and Gus takes on the role of the sick "grenade."

Much of my life had been devoted to trying not to cry in front of people who loved me, so I knew what Augustus was doing. You clench your teeth. You look up. You tell yourself that if they see you cry, it will hurt them, and you will be nothing but a Sadness in their lives, and you must not become a mere sadness, so you will not cry, and you say all of this to yourself while looking up at the ceiling, and then you swallow even though your throat does not want to close and you look at the person who loves you and smile.(213)

Van Houten said that, "Easy enough to say when you are a Roman nobleman, but there is no shortage of fault to be found amid our stars." Though Cassius seems to say that the problem is not fate but within oneself, Van Houten argues that it is easy to say when one is privileged but is manifestly untrue when one lives through true adversity. "But it is the nature of stars to cross, and never was Shakespeare more wrong than when he has Cassius note, 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves'" (111). Hazel's illness is terminal, as she has thyroid cancer that has now spread to her lungs. At the end of the story, Augustus' cancer returns and spreads quickly throughout his body. He dies only eight days after telling Hazel about his setback. "The only person I really wanted to talk to about Augustus Water's death with was Augustus Waters" (262). Hazel was really worried and was always in the memory of Augustus Gus, she wanted to talk to him even about his death with him. Augustus worries that his life will be meaningless after he passes away, that no one will remember him, and that he would fade into obscurity. But he was succeed to leave a mark to his beloved, friends and his family. More than others his beloved Hazel used to remember him.

Numerous critics have received their different perspective about the novel *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*. Among them Richard Beach and Jeffery Wilhelm

states, “Being an enlightened witness, possessing multiple ways of seeing means understanding the nature of ideology. Green’s work is full of serious and prevalent issues involving the coming age as a teenager with cancer” (153). In Alison Heron-Hruby, Brandie Trent, Amantha Haas, Achary Cole Allen view “Young adults act and look in novels wherein they confront particularly challenging situations”. For the small number of students who were not reading science fiction, they would benefit by considering whether young adult characters in realistic situations still confronted extraordinary challenges. These students were reading *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*(54-60).

According to Pauline Skowron Schmidt, Ashley Corbett and Finch *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* is beautiful and tragic. Having already been appropriately compared to *Elea nor* and *Park*, this novel adds another dimension: mental illness. The Impossible K.NI PP. Of MEMORY f Laurie Halse Anderson Told in chapters with alternating narrators, the novel presents Finch's sections as particularly (92-93).

Green presents various characters in the text as a victim of psychological trauma. Mostly, Hazel and Augustus who are teenagers in the novel suffered internal and external pressure. They are spending their frustrated life in the physical diseased. Another critic, JM Ledgard views, “weird facts, astonishing sentences, deeply unfamiliar characters and big ideas about time and space and science and love” (33). We can also see the novel *THEFAULT IN OUR STARS* as a tragic novel in which the main character Augustus die at the last. Glasgrow Herald views; Green’s novel is elegantly plotted and as sad in places as one might expected a book about adolescent cancer to be. But it is also brimming with joy. Hazel and Augustus have zeal for living and for each other that, cancer or not, is rare and it’s a delight to see their plans unfold and relationship flourish even as they both face death (67).

In conclusion, this research paper attempts to show ‘A Disable’s Self-Affirmation’ in the novel *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS* by John Green. It also deals with the significance of positivity and its effect on the individuals themselves or society as a whole, just like how the main characters supported each other through their illness. Moreover, the research gives a lesson to readers to stand on their ground and be grateful to their sufferings to live a meaningful life and make it clear that there is always hope even when odds are against you. In addition to that, it is clear that the main characters, Hazel and Augustus, faced many hardships in their life such as Augustus loses his leg, their friend Isaac loses his sight and Hazel struggles with her breathing, but they stood firm with the support of each other and they have optimistic attitude.

As Hazel struggles with her mortality, she and Augustus build a relationship that helps them both process their impermanence. Augustus learns how to make meaning of his life, becoming a “hero” by using his Make-A-Wish wish for Hazel and himself. Hazel, meanwhile, stops isolating herself and begins to live as a teenager, not just as someone with cancer. She experiences losing Augustus to cancer and surviving the loss. As a result, Hazel decides that death helps humans better understand the importance of living life to the fullest. Hazel discovers that the sharing of love and fostering of relationships may make life worthwhile despite passing away during her time with Augustus and her time grieving Augustus. Living a meaningful life does not require doing anything impossible or famous, as she once believed or Augustus once believed, to attain it. Every person and their way of life have their own smaller, quieter, and more distinctive version of it.

In *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*, the young people are always worried about dying. On one hand, they make an effort to adhere to the motto of their cancer support

group, "living our best lives today." On the other side, each character's experience is shaped by the danger of impending death. Hazel and Augustus, two teenagers who both have cancer, have an easy time getting along because they both have to deal with mortality. Hazel and Augustus spend a significant portion of the book attempting to understand life after death, legacy, the meaning of life, and how death affects loved ones. Cancer has interrupted the usual progression from childhood to adulthood for the teenage protagonists, Augustus and Hazel.

Augustus and Hazel's respective illnesses cause physical issues that limit their independence. Regular coming of age events and milestones such as exploring sexuality and rebelling against society are hindered, since doctors and parents are always supervising Hazel and Augustus. Even as both characters fight to live as teenagers verging on young adults, they depend on the adults in their lives to stay alive. As a result, Hazel and Augustus each have to balance autonomy and dependence as they build their relationship and their larger lives. Both main characters are losing their youth as they grow older. Their adulthood is threatened by cancer, making growing up difficult, too. The threat of a shortened lifespan ultimately helps to push Hazel and Augustus to transition into adulthood, as they want to make sure they experience as much as possible. The tension between wanting adult independence and hanging on to the innocence of youth and health is intensified for Augustus and Hazel.

Hazel resists growing attached to other people, to limit the amount of damage her inevitable death will do. But throughout the novel, she learns that love and relationships make life worth living, whether cancer shortens it or not. Even before meeting Augustus, Hazel distances herself from the friends she had before she was diagnosed with cancer. Kaitlyn is the only friend who remains. Hazel also realizes

that Augustus will have to relive losing a girlfriend when Hazel dies, and this causes her to hold back from a relationship with him. But, during their trip to Amsterdam, Hazel realizes she wants to be close to Augustus in the time she has with him, even if their relationship will end in grief. Cancer has an impact on the patient as well as their loved ones. For instance, Hazel's parents cling to childhood games and half-birthday parties, which are often associated with much younger kids. They are trying to protect better times by clinging to the past. Hazel's parents are occasionally intrusive in their efforts to look out for and assist her, but they also want her to enjoy a typical adolescent experience.

Motivations of the characters play an important role in their life to be alive. Both characters had similar determinants that kept them going forward and made their life easier to reach their goal. Besides that, the effect of family and friends is apparent in the novel. Thus, characters rely on each other's strengths, family and friend's support. This research can be helpful for those who are having tough times in their lives. Also, it indicates a message and points that no matter what it is that one is going through in their lives, it is never a solution to give in to their agony and misery just as Augustus kept his optimistic behavior to inspire others. Green investigates how those who lived through the events are unable to reconcile their identity, he insists on the meaningful life even in the time of great pain. In this novel Green presents the concept of self-affirmation and the concept of pain within the context of disability.

Works cited

- Ash, Gwynne Ellen. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 56, no. 3, [Wiley, International Reading Association], 2012, pp. 243–44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23367744>.
- Duffy, Mary. “Disability, Differentness, Identity.” *Circa*, no. 34, 1987, pp. 30–31. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25557202>.
- Dunn, Patricia A., and Amber Moore. “Disabling Assumptions: The Fault in Our Oversights: Employing a Disabilities Studies Lens with ‘The Fault in Our Stars.’” *The English Journal*, vol. 106, no. 4, National Council of Teachers of English, 2017, pp. 79–81, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26359470>.
- Green, John. *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS*. Penguin books, 2012.
- Heron-Hruby, Alison, et al. “Using a Youth Lens to Facilitate Literary Interpretation for ‘Struggling’ Readers.” *The English Journal*, vol. 104, no. 3, National Council of Teachers of English, 2015, pp. 54–60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484457>.
- Letcher, Mark. “Off the Shelves: Keeping YA Lit Off the Shelves and in Young Readers’ Hands.” *The English Journal*, vol. 102, no. 6, National Council of Teachers of English, 2013, pp. 91–93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24484133>.
- Preston, Daniel L. “Finding Difference: Nemo and Friends Opening the Door to Disability Theory.” *The English Journal*, vol. 100, no. 2, 2010, pp. 56–60. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25790036>.
- Schmidt, Pauline Skowron, and Ashley Corbett. “Carpe Librum: Seize the (YA) Book: We’re Not Crazy: Overcoming the Mental Health Stigma in YA Literature.” *The English Journal*, vol. 105, no. 6, National Council of Teachers of English, 2016, pp. 92–93, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26359266>.

Siebers, Tobin. *Disability Theory*. University of Michigan Press, 2008. *JSTOR*,

<https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.309723>.