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## Master Dissertation

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### Reconceptualizing the Concepts of Life and Death in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*

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**Dedication**

*To my parents, Ahmed and Saida who offered me trust and support, my brothers Ali, Oussama, Taha Yacine, Mohamed Iyad, and my sister Imane and her children Arwa, Aymen, Assil, and my sister Sara and her newborn baby Assia may Allah bless them.*

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## Abstract

This dissertation is an investigation of the Reconceptualizing Life and death concepts in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. The novel depicts the real meaning of death and life and how John Green, the young adult fiction American writer, uses this theme in a way of his own, making the reader think and ask about life and death and if it is a blessing full of joy that will have a painful ending or a painful journey that will be healed with a calm blessing called death. The research problem that is raised is how John Green succeeds in highlighting the theme of life and death by focusing on the main characters' psyche and how it shapes their perspectives on life and death. This study aims to show and identify the meaning of life and death in the novel and the writer's opinion. The study adopts an eclectic approach that draws on psychoanalytic literary criticism to better understand the morals and behavior of the main characters. The existentialism theory explains the meaning of existence and essence and the deconstruction theory explains the breaking of death and life meaning.

**Key words:** Life, Death, *The Fault in Our Stars*, Psychoanalysis, Existentialism, Deconstruction, Hazel, Augustus, John Green.

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## General introduction

As everything has a beginning, it will surely have an ending, and that is how life goes. It may differ from one to another, but it is all one ending, which is death, just as night follows day and winter follows autumn. Death always follows life, and this is the inevitable and undeniable fact that no one can escape. Living life and facing death is a part of everyone's journey, and since it is a part of our lives, the subject of life and death has always been an interesting topic to talk about. It is so natural that authors and poets write about it. Although every writer has a unique perspective and style when it comes to seeing and describing life and death, the majority of them use it as a plot in their works.

However, John Green, the young adult fiction American writer, uses this theme in a way of his own where he makes the reader think and ask about life and death and if it is a blessing full of joy that will have a painful ending, or a painful journey that will be healed with a calm blessing called death. This is what he did by shedding light on a small minority who lived their lives in their own ways and faced certain death that they could not avoid. These cancer patients are the minority. Green's novel *The Fault in Our Stars* attempts to make the reader feel, live, and see life through the eyes of a young girl and her boyfriend who are suffering from terminal stage cancer and trying to find the meaning of their lives and what comes after it.

In this research, I will analyze the work, *The Fault In Our Stars*, written by John Green, a popular American young adult fiction novelist. I will present an analysis of the theme of life and death, focusing on the main characters' psychology and how it shapes their perspectives on life and death, and shed light on the existential questions in the novel. This analysis will be supported by displaying textual examples from the novel.

This study answers the following main question

1. How does John Green deconstruct and reconceptualize the meaning of life and death through the novel's main characters?

The study also targets the following sub-questions:

1. How does the novel approach existentialist themes?
2. Does the novel criticize the social view toward cancer patients and Life and Death?
3. What is the author's attitude toward the cancer patients and their existential perspective according to the novel?

The aim of this study is to show and identify the meaning of life and death in the novel and the writer's opinion. The findings will provide important information about life and death, as well as a useful background on the author and the existentialism aspects and values he presented in his novel.

The purpose of this study is to identify how John Green portrayed Life and Death, based on an intensive analysis of his novel *The Fault In Our Stars*, and to expand the reader's knowledge about existentialism in general and the author's existential perspective. Although there is much to be stated, this dissertation will only generate and introduce important findings concerning this topic

The present thesis draws eclectically on a qualitative method combined with a number of approaches that are relevant to the present research work to study the mapping of life and death in John Green's *The Fault In Our Stars*. The analysis is significantly built on the examination of characters' representations and the ways the author constructs new meaning for life and death in the given socio-cultural conventions. Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction is thus used to analyze the new meanings of death and life that challenge the conventional meanings. Sartre's existentialist assumptions are also used to study death-life relationships and explore questions regarding human existence.

This study does not provide a comprehensive amount of analysis (given by critics, authors, and scholars) to support the theories because of the lack of sources and the difficulty of accessing them. Time is also a significant problem, since there is a lack of practice in the methodology sessions during the two previous years, which created a difficulty in applying the studied methods in our work. Thus, extra time would be specified to re-study these methods, which would consume the time provided for the research.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Background**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Literary Theory Criticism is a way of looking at literature and is a systematic study of the nature of literature and the methods for analyzing literature. It is all about perspective because, really, things look very different if we look at them from different angles and aspects. Literary criticism assists readers in understanding various texts by employing various theories in order to arrive at new conclusions and discuss numerous elements related to a specific work of art. Besides that, criticizing the work to discover what is behind it or as if we uncovered the real message of that work. It helps the reader to get enjoyment out of literature and enriches literature. This chapter examines the theoretical debate of the novel that will be used in understanding the literary theories that are going to be applied to analyze the novel, which are: Psychoanalysis examines the dynamic link between the mind, body, and social order and the defense mechanisms used by the main characters. Existentialism helps us better understand the meaning of existence and essence, which means that human beings exist first before developing. Also, the Deconstruction literary theory, which helps to answer the question of why would we construct something only to deconstruct it later on, or how it destroys all the meanings and breaks it apart.

### **1.1 Psychoanalytical Literary Criticism**

The goal of literary criticism is to arrive at an accurate assessment of literary works. Literary criticism strives to interact with a variety of theories and disciplines to arrive at different conclusions and judge the value of writing, one of which is psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis has used literature to illustrate its theories and concepts. Psychoanalysis was also used by critics to analyze and understand literature, which is what psychoanalytical literary

criticism is all about. This school has recently emerged as writers begin to pay attention to their characters' inner workings.

The term "psychoanalysis" refers to a theory that examines the dynamic link between the mind, body, and social order. It was first formed in Sigmund Freud's work, as he examined and wrote about a wide range of topics, including trauma, occultism, religion, and humor. He had a significant impact on the Western world. Freud's discoveries were completely unanticipated as a next step in the study of psychiatry. Freud was only dealing with a small percentage of the world's population. He had mostly Jewish, middle-class, and well-educated individuals as patients.

These cases also aided Freud in observing, discovering, and developing theories that altered how Westerners saw and understood themselves. Freud's ability to combine the significance of dreams, the importance of childhood for adult functioning, and the prevalence of transference reactions into one substantial discipline from which psychoanalysis was formed went beyond the domain of discovery (Bergmann 2-3).

Psychology, previously defined as the science of the soul in Greek philosophy (Colman 4), has progressed significantly in modern times to be defined as the science of behavior and mind by Merriam-Webster dictionary. The practice of psychoanalysis is linked to the scientific subject of psychology. By researching unconscious mental processes and the many defense mechanisms that humans use to repress them, Sigmund Freud founded psychoanalysis as a way of psychotherapy to treat mental diseases. (Colman 8) Other fields of study, including literature, were influenced by these psychoanalytic views. In fact, there is a close link between these two professions.

The remarkable link between literature and psychoanalysis is storytelling. The human mind was explored through talk therapy in psychoanalysis, and literature is constructed around tales. For his key insights, Freud drew on Greek mythology, specifically the narrative of

Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. Jung investigates folklore, fairy tales, western and eastern religions, and even alchemy. Not to mention Jacques Lacan, who argued that the unconscious is formed like a language and based his theories on Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson's structuralism. As a result, psychologists and authors share the goal of understanding the growth of their characters' subjects through the conflicts and issues they encounter in real life or fiction. Literary theories have been influenced by certain well-known psychoanalytic perspectives.

### **1.1.2 Fundamental Concepts**

The unconscious is undoubtedly one of the most important and defining concepts in psychoanalysis. According to Freud, only a small piece of the human mind is known through logical thought, while the majority of the mind exists outside of conscious consciousness. Dreams, slips of the tongue, the therapeutic method of "free association," and a variety of activities whose intentions are not evident and are often counter to conscious intent, are all ways in which the latter indicates its presence. The unconscious, in psychoanalytic terms, is the storehouse for repressed and generally unwanted events, thoughts, and feelings by the human mind (Bondi 3). People are no longer normal, according to Freud, if what is concealed manages to break through consciousness or behavior. The fact that Freud came to the conclusion that the same path that leads to abnormality also leads to cure was seen as a stroke of brilliance, as long as it happened under the observation of the analyst and within the confines of the analytic scenario. Psychoanalysis is also said to be a tool for discovering the unconscious inner reality by interpreting observable and often inconsequential evidence. According to Hans H. Strup, it is a theory of personality and human progress, a method for examining the unconscious and conscious driving factors that govern human behavior and a technique for treating people who suffer from neurotic disorders. Neurosis and some psychoses are both terrible outcomes of a person's developmental history, particularly adverse early childhood events. Personality deformity and neurotic conflicts originate from the infant's prolonged

helplessness and reliance on affection and support, combined with the child's intrinsic aggressive and sexual strivings. The neuroses that are buried in early childhood events and conflicts become mostly unconscious and, as a result, they are unable to be modified rationally. Painful emotional issues can be viewed as the source of conflicts, which provides fertile ground for anxiety, and attempts to expose them are met with various sorts of resistance, such as rejection, repression, and reaction construction, all of which fall under the defensive mechanism umbrella. Phobias, depression, and anxiety are common neurotic symptoms, and they can lead to personality traits, or rather issues, such as non-assertiveness and impulsivity. Such a character flaw can sometimes lead to aggressive conduct. (Kwizera 4-5).

On the other hand, psychosis is one of the most common mental disorders in which a person is unable to think clearly, respond emotionally appropriately, or manage the demands of daily life, as Harold Kaplan has pointed out. Regressive behavior, such as in schizophrenia, is characterized by decreased impulse control and abnormal mental and mood inappropriateness control, such as fear, hallucinations, illogical speech, delusions, and social withdrawal. In some circumstances, such as manic-depressive disorder, the victim or patient goes through repeated mood swings from high to low, ranging from elated and agitated to despondent and moribund (Kwezira 6).

### **1.1.3 Freudian Division of the Mind**

Psychoanalysis has been defined as a field of research that is primarily concerned with the human mind. The human soul, mind, or essence is what this last term refers to. Sigmund Freud, an Australian neurologist who developed the psychoanalysis hypothesis, split the mind into three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. This division isn't so much a division of the mind into functions as it is a division of the mind's facets. The three elements do work at separate levels of consciousness. According to Freud, the human mind is at odds with itself, and this struggle is the source of the human being's unhappiness and worry (Stevenson 1). As

a result of establishing such an umbrella to detect the requirements of humans in either their brightest or most difficult times, Sigmund Freud was a unique individual. As the poet W. H. Auden puts it: "Freud is not so much a person but rather a whole climate of opinion under whom we conduct our different lives" (qtd.in Lapsley&Stey 1)

### **1.1.3.1 The Id**

The id is a component of the mind that is dominated by innate intuitive controls and key activities. By the end of the incentive, the id generally has formed a memory of the realized goal. That is, the id can be temporarily satisfied, but the remaining wants must still be gratified. If a newborn is hungry, he will cry so that his mother can recognize his need and feed him through her breast. In reality, the infant will form the mental image that he can only fulfill his needs and hunger by eating from his mother's breast (Stevenson 1).

### **1.1.3.2The Ego**

Ego is a person's reality-driven sense of priorities and esteem. The ego is formed as a result of the desires and relationships with reality. Irrational and inappropriate desires are frequently suppressed by the ego. That is, it occasionally refers to defense systems in order to deal with mental restrictions. Simply said, the ego's construction aids the individual's development into a self rather than wants and needs (Stevenson 2).

### **1.1.3.3 The Superego**

The superego is the part of the psyche that functions as a conscience for self-improvement and strives to put what has been learned in life into practice in real-world situations. It employs self-blame as a means of reinforcing internal standards. The superego is split into two distinct components. The first is conscience, which determines what is right and bad in order to keep the id from acting on incorrect impulses. The next is the ego ideal, which attempts to lead the individual toward society's ideal aims and morals. The superego tends to

resist the id and the ego, creating reality according to society's ideal vision and relying on a societal categorization of events (Stevenson 2). Each of the three sections listed above has its own set of features. They may even mirror aspects of the human soul rather than just the mind. They do, however, generally interact in dynamic relationships with one another.

#### **1.1.4 Defense mechanisms**

According to Britannica Defense mechanisms are any of a collection of mental processes that allow the mind to come to compromise conclusions about problems that it is unable to resolve, according to psychoanalytic theory. The compromise frequently entails hiding from oneself inner urges or emotions that have the potential to undermine one's self-worth or cause distress. The idea is based on the psychoanalytic theory that there are forces at work in the mind that are antagonistic and at odds with one another. Sigmund Freud initially used the term in his article "The Neuro-Psychoses of Defense" (1894). And the major defense mechanisms that has been described by the psychoanalysts are repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression, sublimation, and rationalization. And Psychoanalysts stress that using a defense mechanism is a normal aspect of personality function and not a symptom of a psychiatric disease in and of itself. However, an excessive or strict employment of these defenses might be indicative of a number of psychological illnesses.

#### **1.2 Existentialism**

Over the last few centuries, existentialist thinkers have written some of the greatest masterpieces of literature and philosophy. Identifying what existentialism is, however, is a difficult task. To begin, it should be mentioned that existentialism encompasses a wide range of notions; as a result, only a handful of the most important ones will be examined.

Existentialism is one of those beliefs that everyone has heard of, although it is not mentioned in any of the famous existentialist texts. The phrase appears to have been coined by

French thinker Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) near the close of World War II as a title for the views of Soren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and Karl Jaspers (1883–1969). It's worth noting that the term "existentialism" was first created in 1925 and only began to be used in 1945. Existentialists include philosophers who lived before the term was coined or who refused to be labeled as such.

Europe saw two horrific wars during the 20th century, as well as the rise of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism. These past incidents rendered the man powerless and silent; they had such an impact on him that his faith in people and religion was shattered. The restrictive political climate and the outcomes of the wars had a significant impact on the people, whose need for covert resistance to the invading governmental force sparked a sense of personal responsibility and paved the way for existentialism's eventual growth.

Existential thinkers and philosophers such as Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), and Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) were all critical of religious institutions. They campaigned for a re-evaluation of life's meaning and a reawakening of man's awareness of his unique personality, pushing him not to be satisfied with current societal and religious constraints. They demanded that obsolete traditions and established ideas be abandoned in favor of the establishment of a more personal and subjective religion or approach to life. Existentialism was the name given to this new philosophy over time. Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher, is considered to have started the movement. However, some earlier novelists, such as Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), who challenged traditional ideas and disputed early conceptions, have been considered as forerunners of Existentialism in retrospect.

### **1.2.1 Existentialism as a philosophy**

It might be argued that all existentialist philosophy stems from René Descartes' belief that the only thing he could be certain of was his own existence, as expressed in his statement

"I think, therefore I am". Taking this assurance as "truth," subsequent theorists used it as a starting point for studying human nature and existence.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, existentialism is "a philosophy that emphasizes the uniqueness and isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe, regards human existence as unexplainable, and stresses freedom of choice and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions." He is fundamentally defined by the actions he chooses.

As a result, Existentialism, as a philosophical system, rejects the entire idea of the cosmos, putting any evidence about how mankind should live at risk. A fundamental understanding of this thought system may be found in Sartre's statement, "Existence before essence." This statement asserts that a person's identity, or essence, cannot be ascertained by observing what other people are like, but rather by examining what that individual has done. Sartre's theory suggests that humans exist first, and then construct their essence through their actions. To put it another way, they try to make something important out of their acts while not abusing the freedom they are fortunate to have.

Existentialism, it is believed, concentrates mostly on separate human lives and the stinging unavailability of lingering and decision over each distinct, as Sinari stated: "Existentialism postulates no scheme, no method, and no formula. It approaches human life as one continuous flow of consciousness, struggling, suffering, despairing, and tending towards death." (qtd.in Ziani 10). As a result, it reflects the philosophy of a person who is concerned with life and its challenges, and, as Kierkegaard asserts, existentialism is closely linked to human freedom. To exist, in his words, is to come to terms with oneself via self-devotion and freedom of choice. Furthermore, the term might be interpreted as a man's attempt to define his own identity and manage his place in society. As a result, existentialism is a man's attempt to relate himself to his own life and the lives of those around him (Ziani 10).

In general, this philosophy reflects a revolution against established concepts and institutions that limit man's ability to exercise his freedom and choice. One of the most important definitions of existentialism is that it is a literary movement that explains man as "an individual as a conscious being" that is more concerned with "how one lives one's life rather than a system" (Cline 58), and as the name implies, it primarily deals with human or individual existence. It also implies that a man is filled with anxiety and pain, and that his life has no purpose unless he makes a meaningful decision about his own future.

### **1.2.2 Existentialism and literature**

It was never easy to agree on the philosophy of existence as it developed throughout the times of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. But it wasn't just a one-off occurrence. With captivating ideas, existential philosophy was at its height. People's attention was completely consumed by the question of life's purpose. However, existentialism was the biggest phenomenon of the twentieth century during Sartre's lifetime. Existentialism not only established itself as a notable philosophical movement thanks to the creativity of some key people like Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Camus, but it also triumphed over all odds and imprinted its principles onto the pages of literature. It clarified how philosophy and literature are related. As a literary movement, existentialism was more individualized. Literature changed along with the world when it did. During the existentialist movement of the late 20th century, writers portrayed man as being estranged from and concerned with his existence even during his most tranquil moments. Man can decide at any time who or what he wants to be. Our existence comes before our essence, according to Sartre. We have free will, and we design our own essence (Triki 26-27).

According to Rickman, existentialism is a type of literary criticism that examines characters' struggles to determine identity and meaning in the face of isolation and alienation in literary works. According to Rickman, existentialists have expressed their views through

plays, novels, and short stories more than almost any other modern philosophical movement. He goes on to explain how literature and existentialism are linked for two reasons. To begin with, the philosophy is concerned with human life and its issues, and to continue, existentialism emphasizes the uniqueness of individuals (Ziani 10).

In other words, in the existential book, man is lost. He is not as well-versed in the current world as he should be. He is reclusive and closed off from everything and everyone. He is alone in a world that is unconcerned about his existence and where he does not feel at ease. He feels a need for a connection as a result of his bewilderment. This attitude pervades existentialist literature and is founded on fresh insights into the uniqueness of human existence. As a result, the existential protagonists' quest for connection and meaning in an absurd environment, and their desperate attempts to relate to it, are similar.

### **1.3 Deconstruction theory**

Deconstruction is a brilliant and remarkable philosophy produced by Jacques Derrida, the successor to structuralism. Derrida, the fundamental figure of poststructuralism, embarks on a thorough examination of structuralism, revealing several intrinsic flaws.

Derrida begins by posing questions about how structures are constructed. Structuralism claims that comprehending an art work requires a variety of references. Derrida, on the other hand, claims that such a reference does not exist since nothing is fixed, perfect, or finite in the real structuralist sense. Derrida transforms Saussure's "different" into "différence," which is a mixture of difference and deferral, according to Derrida. Meaning is continually postponed and deferred to anything within language (Chanambam 93,94).

Saussure establishes a contrast between speech and writing, favoring speech. Saussure believes that speech should be natural and not contrived. The identity of the speaker is implied

by speech, which is absolute. Writing, on the other hand, hides words and is employed when the speaker is not there. Derrida flips the hierarchy by stating that both writing and speaking are simply a game of differences, and he places the terms "writing" and "speech" under erasure (in French, *sous rature*), which indicates that both categories can exist but must be examined carefully (Chanambam 94).

Deconstruction is a literary criticism approach that appeared in the late 1960s. It has been the source of debate in contemporary literary theory. Many learned scholars and critics criticize deconstruction for failing to provide valid solutions to the premises and concepts it raises. Deconstruction, on the other hand, challenges traditional reading concepts. Deconstruction is a literary technique for analyzing a specific literary text. Close examination of literary meanings in literary texts is used to carry out deconstructive tactics. However, the text contains some internal contradictions, and these contradictions reveal two or more possible meanings. As a result, readers may encounter complexities in interpretation (Chanambam 98).

### **1.3.1 Definition**

There are difficulties in defining deconstruction theory because its originator, Jacques Derrida, has never provided an authoritative definition. The problem, according to Jing Zhai, is that deconstruction actively criticizes the language required to explain it. Language structure is a target for deconstruction. This effectively eliminates the possibility of defining deconstruction through language. Deconstruction, on the other hand, refuses an essence because, according to Derrida, there is nothing essential to deconstruction in its differential relationships with other words. Deconstruction, also, must be understood in context and thus cannot be defined unilaterally (Sikirivwa 44).

The term "deconstruction" comes from the German philosopher Martin Heidegger's concept of destruction, which refers to a desire to loosen up the ancient Ontological tradition (the study of ultimate reality through the revelation of its underlying contradictions and

growth). All phrases of the form "deconstruction is X or deconstruction is not X, a priori, miss the point," writes Derrida in a letter to one of his Japanese friends. As a result, defining deconstruction in any particular phrase or sentence is misleading, because a definition is only given when something is definite. A definition is worthless since nothing is definite. Christopher Norris writes here, "Any attempt to define 'deconstruction' must soon run up against the many and varied obstacles that Derrida has shrewdly placed in its path...Deconstruction is not... a 'method', a 'technique', or a species of 'critique'."

And, according to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the translator of Jacques Derrida's work *Of Grammatology*, a text is an open-ended entity with no absolute final meaning in deconstruction. In her translator's introduction to the book, *Of Grammatology*, she captures the essence and process of deconstruction. She declares "Deconstruction seems to offer a way out of the closure of knowledge. By inaugurating the open-ended indefiniteness of textuality, thus placing it in the abyss... it shows us the allure of the abyss as freedom. The fall into the abyss of deconstruction inspires us with as much pleasure as fear. We are intoxicated with the prospect of never hitting bottom" (Chanambam100 ).

### **1.3.2 Theorists**

Derrida's method of analyzing and disassembling texts or, more commonly, portions of texts in order to disclose underlying discrepancies and inner contradictions is known as "deconstruction." The endeavor to destroy the cover-ups that texts use to establish the impression of stable interpretation: their attempt to build 'privileged' centers—implicit or explicit binary conflict—through a variety of rhetorical tactics, is at the heart of deconstruction. Because deconstruction assumes that language is unmanageable by definition, it seeks to find unjustified privileges in all writings. Whether a text is literary or not, it can always be deconstructed and shown to rely on rhetorical processes that conceal its origins in difference and the excess meaning that results from difference for internal stability. Deconstruction

attempts to show that texts' apparent either/or patterns conceal underlying both-and situations, revealing the texts' inherent undecidability. A text can never reach closure in literary terms, which literally implies that its case cannot be closed: there is no definitive meaning, and the text maintains a field of possibilities. As Jeremy Hawthorn stated in his apt formulation, "Thus for Derrida, the meaning of a text is always unfolding just ahead of the interpreter, unrolling in front of him or her like a never-ending carpet whose final edge never reveals itself" (Hawthorn 39).

Other deconstructionists thought its logical roots were in Derrida's critique of logocentrism. You might accept Derrida's starting point and pretty much agree that language is centered on difference and that it floats over the world without ever touching solid ground, but you might reject his conclusions: how would this immediately lead to an excess of meaning that has fatal consequences for the texts we produce? We have all experienced misunderstandings and misinterpretations, but there are also numerous examples of effective communication. So, assuming that a surplus of meaning exists, it's possible that it's not as harmful as deconstructionists would like us to believe. From this so-called pragmatic perspective, language appears to do its job quite effectively. There is no cause to be concerned if we pragmatically confine our reasoning concerning language to how it actually functions and ignore for a time the theoretical factors that led Derrida to perhaps the worst scenario. From this vantage point, one could even argue that the deconstructionist lack of belief in language is the result of unreasonable expectations of total certainty in the first place. Even for critics who tend to favor a pragmatic approach, deconstruction can be useful. For example, from an adjusted humanistic perspective, it is completely possible to address the sets of contrasts that deconstruction frequently finds. Such a limited humanism would argue that, while we are theoretically free and logical agents, we are in practice heavily influenced by factors such as our cultural surroundings. The revelation that the groups of opposites we can find in texts

always end up serving to repress the 'inferior' terms (the 'feminine' and the 'non-white', for example) can only be a move towards a better world in which every single human being's full humanity is respected and recognized as a humanist (Bertens 134-135).

Deconstruction and Poststructuralism Adaptations in general are especially important for feminists, African–American critics, and Marxist critics who aim to be politically successful. The never-ending game of difference has an impact not just on the texts Derrida and his disciples deconstruct but also on their own deconstructions. And everything we write about those deconstructions will be influenced by it. There is no way to avoid difference and an infinity of uncertainty. Uncertainty, on the other hand, is a terrible starting place for politically motivated criticism. If I wish to attain particular political goals, the idea that all the understandings and the principles which have inspired my political position are only the outcome of difference and lack a solid foundation is not very helpful. Deconstruction may appear to be deliberately evasive. These kinds of reasons frequently cause critics to take the middle ground that I have indicated. They will accept the force of deconstructionist arguments, but will read with a set of specific assumptions in mind, whether Marxist, liberal humanist, or otherwise, as Fredric Jameson did. The difference is that they now regard these assumptions as a "beginning point" and, since nothing is impervious to deconstruction, as an "issue" (Bertens 135).

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

As a conclusion, literary theory criticism helps us as readers and researchers to analyze different types of texts because the theories that I have mentioned in this chapter are going to give different results from specific angles on the characters of the novel. In other words, we cannot understand the behavior of the characters without using these theories. Psychoanalytic, existentialism, and deconstruction are going to detect most of the details and extract many meanings from this novel. As well as the understanding of breaking the meanings of death and

life in the selected novel, there is also the idea of essence and how the main characters have seen life and what's after life too.

## Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework: Young Adult Literature

### 2.0 Introduction

The second chapter of this dissertation is the theoretical framework. It is divided into two main parts. The first part of this chapter tends to define the literary genre of the selected novel. It starts by highlighting young adult literature's background and history. It also provides a brief definition to young adult literature and mentions its characteristics. At last, it highlights some critics about that genre and what it tackles. The second part of this chapter is concerned by the selected Young Adult author John Green and the selected novel "*The Fault in Our Stars*". The chapter introduces the author and provides his biography and life. It also mentions some of his works. The chapter later provides a brief summary to "*The Fault in Our Stars*" and the main themes that it contains.

### 2.1 Young adult literature Background:

The term "young adult literature" is inherently amorphous, for its constituent terms "young adult" and "literature" are dynamic, changing as culture and society provide their context change. When the term first found common usage in the late 1960s, it referred to realistic fiction that was set in the real (as opposed to imagined), contemporary world and addressed problems, issues, and life circumstances of interest to young readers aged approximately 12-18. Such titles were issued by the children's book divisions of American publishers and were marketed to institutions – libraries and schools – that served such populations. While some of this remains true today, much else has changed. In recent years, for example, the size of this population group has changed dramatically (Cart 1).

Michael Cart in his article "*The Value of Young Adult Literature*" argues that between 1990 and 2000 the number of persons between 12 and 19 soared to 32 million, a growth rate of seventeen percent that significantly outpaced the growth of the rest of the population. The

size of this population segment has also increased as the conventional definition of “young adult” has expanded to include those as young as ten and, since the late 1990s, as old as twenty-five. “Literature,” which traditionally meant fiction, has also expanded to include new forms of literary – or narrative — nonfiction and new forms of poetry, including novels and book-length works of nonfiction in verse. The increasing importance of visual communication has begun to expand this definition to include the pictorial, as well, especially when offered in combination with text as in the case of picture books, comics, graphic novels, and nonfiction (Cart 1).

Cart adds that as a result of these newly expansive terms, the number of books being published for this audience has similarly increased, perhaps by as much as 25 percent, based on the number of titles being reviewed by a leading journal. Similarly, industry analyst Albert Greco states that the sale of young adult books increased by 23 percent from 1999 to 2005. Though once dismissed as a genre consisting of little more than problem novels and romances, young adult literature has, since the mid-1990s, come of age as literature – literature that welcomes artistic innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking. Evidence of this is the establishment of the Michael L. Printz Award, which YALSA presents annually to the author of the best young adult book of the year, “best” being defined solely in terms of literary merit (Cart 2).

Further evidence is the extraordinary number of critically acclaimed adult authors who have begun writing for young adults – authors like Michael Chabon, Isabel Allende, Dale Peck, Julia Alvarez, T. C. Boyle, Joyce Carol Oates, Francine Prose, and a host of others. As a result of these and other innovations young adult literature has become one of the most dynamic, creatively exciting areas of publishing (Cart 2).

### 2.1.1 Defining Young Adult Literature

Young Adult literature emerged as a distinct category in the 20th century and can be broadly defined as fiction written for young adults, by young adults, and about young adults. In his article “*What Is Young Adult Fiction? Definition, Characteristics, and Examples*”, Cole Salao defines young adult literature by saying that

Young adult fiction is generally described as books written for readers from 12 to 18 years of age. It’s meant to be the next level of reading material after middle-grade fiction and softens the transition to adult fiction. It offers readers’ stories that are, in general, more emotionally and thematically advanced. (Salao par.1)

He adds that young adult fiction or literature is not considered a genre; however, it is seen as a category directed to specific readers. Those readers are young adult teenagers from the age of 12 to 18 who are exposed to daily emotional struggles such as self-discovery, identity formation, family relationships, friendship, and love (Salao par.02)

Nilsen and Donelson add that a literary text does not need to fulfill all of these requirements in order to fall under the label of young adult, but these requirements broadly cover all the titles that fall under the young adult category. On the basis of this understanding, attempts have been made to define Young Adult Fiction. Some of these definitions are based on the audience and often focus on the age group of the audience. They also define young adult literature as anything that readers between the approximate ages of twelve and eighteen read. They add that Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) defines young adults as people between the age of eighteen and twenty-two, while the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) defines young adults as people between the age of twenty-one and twenty-five (Nilsen and Donelson 3).

### **2.1.2 Young Adult Literature Characteristics**

Salao also tends to characterize Young Adult literature by tracing a brief comparison between young adult and adults literature saying that sometimes it is hard to separate them because they share similar themes and structures (Salao sec.2). However, the differences between them can be traced through the characters and the audience that they address. They can be separated also due to the protagonists' ages and struggle in defining the self. Salao argues that the age of the young adult protagonist is always between 12 and 18; unlike, adults literature that are from 18 to 30 or older (Salao sec.2).

Moreover, Salao adds that young adults' themes focus more on the teenager's journey in discovering himself. The character also always seems to be at a time of building his personality. He is portrayed as a life student that is learning everything and experiencing every new emotion for the first time (Salao sec.2)

### **2.1.3 Young Adult literature Theorists**

Young Adult Literature often receives heavy criticism and censorship from parents, teachers, and librarians over the content of Young Adult books. Their criticism is based on two major reasons; that these books are not classics, and that they corrupt the young. (Crowe, 147)

The label of Young Adult or any other name for fiction written for teenagers exists mostly for marketing and is emphasized by publishers and librarians in order to better categorize books as per the label. According to Crutcher, teenagers want to be perceived and treated as adults, and the label of young adults establishes them as less than adults, and hence, repulsive to them. (Crowe 147)

Another criticism of the category is its association with a range of bad-quality books. While there is a range of books for young adults as far as quality is concerned, the availability

of trashy and pulp titles in the public domain makes the category itself unappealing. Moreover, the label itself is fairly new and has not been canonized. This argument is further used to criticize the apparent trend of choosing low-quality, easy-to-read Young Adult books over Classics by children and young adults. While certain classics within Young Adult Fiction can be identified, there are no Young Adult books that fit in the purview of classics in general. Many critics feel that exposure to non-canonized literature affects the readers in this case the youths' cultural literacy and their minds. (Crowe 148-149)

## **2.2 Green as a Young Adult author**

John Green is a well-known American novelist who was born on August 24, 1977 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Then he relocated to Orlando, Florida. He earned a double BA in English and religious studies from Kenyon College in Ohio. He is well-known for his YouTube channel 'Vlog brothers,' where he and his brother Hank Green create videos on various topics. He spent several years writing magazine reviews in Chicago and New York. Green mostly examines books and their key themes. John Green's social media presence is robust, and his renown has expanded over Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. He has a thriving career as an author, critic, and YouTuber. He now resides in Indianapolis with his wife and two children, Henry and Alice.

John and his family relocated to Orlando, Florida as a youngster from Indianapolis, where he had spent his youth. He left Orlando to attend Indiana Spring School, a broadening school outside Birmingham, Alabama, for his high school education. When John initially considered becoming a novelist, he worked as a chaplain at Children's Hospital in Chicago after graduating from college. When he began writing his first novel, *Looking for Alaska*, which was published in 2005, he opted to work for Booklist magazine. And His experience with children suffering from incurable diseases inspired John to write one of his most famous novels '*The Fault in Our Stars*.'

He later relocated from Chicago to New York before returning to Indianapolis with his family and living booklist. Even in the start of his profession, Green has been quite successful. In 2006 and 2007, he received the Michael L. Printz Award for *Looking for Alaska* and was nominated for *An Abundance of Katherines*. *Paper Towns* also earned him the Edgar Allan Poe Award for outstanding young fiction in 2009. He received the Indian Author Award and the National Author Award in 2012. Finally, in 2013, he won teen novel of the year at the Children's Choice Book Awards for *The Fault in Our Stars*, which would later become a very successful movie with the same title.

## **2.2.1 His famous works**

### **2.2.1.1 Looking For Alaska**

*Looking for Alaska* is John Green's debut novel, and it was released in 2005. Miles Halter, the main character, is a youngster who goes from his homeland of Florida to attend Culver Creek High School in Alabama. Miles is incredibly bright; he tells his parents that he is going to look for a 'Great Perhaps,' which are the last words of the author François Rabelais that have lingered with him, since he can remember people's last words, yet he is also an uncomfortable and unsocial guy (Walker, Lanier).

Then he meets Chip Martin 'The Colonel,' his roommate; he plays an important part in the narrative since he gives Miles with support and stability. Pudge meets Alaska Young, Takumi, and Lara Buterskay, the Colonel's other buddies. He was impressed by Alaska, who is an emotional, smart, wild, and mysterious character in the novel; she does not feel pity toward anybody since she has been through a lot of difficulties in her life, and she blames herself for her mother's death when she was younger. Takumi is the group's jokester; a Japanese youngster with a strange past, he plays a minor role in the plot. Lara, the final character, is classified as a minor character. Throughout the novel, she is Alaska's best friend and a Russian

exchange student who has lately arrived at this expanding institution. Alaska makes many attempts to set her and Miles together. However, it does not stay long (Walker, Lanier).

There is a blend of romance, mystery, and adventure in the novel, which is depicted by how the characters live this wild exciting journey. Pudge and his buddies plot pranks and have fun together. Miles and Alaska kissed one intoxicated evening despite the fact that both of them are seeing someone else, but something occurred to Alaska at the same moment. She bursts out laughing as she receives a phone call from one of their pals offering to help her get out of school. She drives away and is subsequently discovered dead. Alaska's friends went out to investigate if her death was deliberate or unintentional. They later discovered that Alaska had forgotten her mother's anniversary death day and was on her way to visit her grave on that day, but she was killed in a vehicle accident (Walker, Lanier).

Finally, Pudge writes an article in which he concludes that Alaska's mother's anniversary death day is what caused her to be concerned and rash, and that the labyrinth was a person's suffering from which humans must struggle to find their way out (Walker, Lanier).

### **2.2.1.2 An Abundances of Katherines**

*An Abundance of Katherines* was released in 2006 and was a Michael L. Printz Honor book as well as a nominee for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. Booklists, Horn Book, and Kirkus all ranked it one of the best books of the year. The story is about a lad named Colin who dated 19 girls named Katherine and all of them dumped him. He was depressed because he had been dumped by Catherine number 19 (Saladin, Erin).

Hassan, Colin's best buddy, decided to take him on a road trip, and they ended up in the small hamlet of Gutshot, Tennessee. They met Lindsey Lee Wells and her family while exploring the town. The three major characters' relationships develop during the novel, and they become close and good friends. Lindsey's mother finds them work; her mother owns a

small factory that manufactures tampon strings. They were tasked with interviewing all present Gutshot inhabitants and compiling an oral history (Saladin, Erin).

Hassan meets Katrina, Lindsey's best friend, but Hassan and Colin catch her cheating with Toc. So Hassan ends things with her, and Lindsey ends things with Toc as well. Eventually, Hollis has been keeping a big secret; she is working double shifts to keep the factory open because no one is buying from the tampon string factory, and everyone has been shocked by the news, which really inspires many of her surroundings, especially Hassan, for the hard work she has done. Colin was attempting to prove a mathematical theory that would predict the outcome of a relationship between two people. He works on the theorem of emphasizing Katherine predictability every night (Saladin, Erin).

Finally, he overcomes the problem because he believed that his life was predicated on being dumped. Colin and Lindsey confess their love for one another throughout the novel. Because everything was going so well, Colin decides to put his idea to the test once more to see if their love can endure. It turns out that it will only last four days. Lindsey leaves him a note under his door saying she can't be his girlfriend because she loves Hassan, but she says she's joking. Colin finally recognizes that his forecasts were incorrect and that he cannot predict the future (Saladin, Erin).

### **2.2.1.3 Paper Towns**

*Paper Towns* came out in 2008. It debuted at number 5 on the New York Times bestseller list for children's novels, won the 2009 Edgar Award for best young adult, and was adapted into a film on July 24, 2015. Quentin Jakobsen is the protagonist of the novel. He is 18 years old and lives in the Florida suburb of Orland. He is known as 'Jefferson Park,' and he is incredibly smart and bold. Quentin would go to any length for anyone. Especially for Margo

Roth Spiegelman, who is regarded the novel's second main character and an enemy in the plot; she is the most popular girl in school, mysterious and daring, unlike Quetin (Jensen, Carlee).

Radar and Ben are Quetin's greatest pals, while Lacey is Margo's best friend, throughout the narrative. When Margo went missing, everyone pitched in to help Quetin find her. Margo decides to exact her revenge one night, just a month before their High School graduation. She plots to exact vengeance on a group of people who wronged her in high school, and she enlists Quetinto's assistance in carrying out her plan. They return to their homes around dawn when the plan is completed (Jensen, Carlee).

The following day, Quetin realizes that Margo has vanished with no trace of her. But he feels she did leave some hints, and he is struggling to locate all of Margo's clues. Then Quentin discovers Margo's hiding place on the day of her graduation. She was in an abandoned structure in the false city, which was made by Agloe map markers in New York. But she turned out to be someone else, not the 'Paper Girl' she used to be. She seeks a new life in order to discover who she truly wants to be (Jensen, Carlee).

#### **2.2.1.4 The Fault in Our Stars**

*The Fault in Our Stars* is a fantastic work of realistic fiction that was published in 2012. The plot revolves around two humorous teens who overcome problems with the support of others while learning to embrace themselves and what is going on around them.

Hazel Grace Lancaster, age 17, hesitantly goes to a support group for cancer sufferers at her mother's insistence. She utilizes a portable oxygen tank to breathe properly due to her disease. She notices a teenage kid in one of the sessions, and she learns the boy's name is Augustus Waters as the conference progresses. He is there to stand by Isaac, a friend of theirs. Isaac had a tumor removed from one of his eyes, and now he now needs to have the other eye removed. Augustus approaches Hazel after the conference is over and remarks that she

resembles Natalie Portman from *V for Vendetta*. While hanging out, the two talk about their experiences with cancer. He invites Hazel to his place to watch the movie (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Hazel admits that she has lung cancer that has progressed from her thyroid. After having his leg removed, Augustus, who had osteosarcoma, is now cancer-free. They decide to read one other's favorite books before Augustus takes Hazel home. Hazel is given *The Price of Dawn* by Augustus, and she suggests *An Imperial Affliction* (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Hazel expresses the beauty of *An Imperial Affliction*: It's a novel about a girl named Anna who has cancer, and it's the only narrative of life with illness that she's read that matches her own. She notes how the novel abruptly stops in the middle of a sentence, denying the reader closure on the destiny of the story's characters. She speculates about the novel's enigmatic author, Peter Van Houten, who went to Amsterdam following its publication and hasn't been heard from since (Ehiosun,Joshua).

A week after Hazel and Augustus debate the literary significance of *An Imperial Affliction*, Augustus magically discloses that he found located Van Houten's secretary, Lidewij, and has begun an email connection with the reclusive author through her. He discusses Van Houten's letter with Hazel, and she creates a list of questions to email Van Houten in the hopes of clarifying the novel's enigmatic ending. Hazel is most concerned about Anna's mother's fate. She reasoned that if Anna's mother survived the loss of her daughter, then her own parents will be OK once Hazel dies. Van Houten ultimately responds, stating that he could only respond to Hazel's inquiries in person. He asks her to see him if she ever visits Amsterdam (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Augustus then asks Hazel to a picnic. He's organized an extravagant Dutch-themed picnic, during which he announces that a benevolent organization that gives wishes to children with cancer has agreed to grant his: he's taking the two of them to Amsterdam to meet Van

Houten. She is overjoyed, yet she is reluctant when he touches her face for some reason. She finds she likes him a lot over time, but she knows she'll harm him when she dies. She likens herself to a grenade (Ehiosun,Joshua).

During her battle with what to do with Augustus, Hazel has a major episode in which her lungs fill with fluid and she is admitted to the ICU. When she is finally discharged, she discovers that Augustus never left the hospital's waiting area. He brings Hazel another letter from Van Houten, this one more intimate and mysterious than the previous one. Hazel is more motivated than ever to visit Amsterdam after reading the letter. However, her parents and her medical staff do not believe Hazel is strong enough to go. The situation appears bleak until Dr. Maria, one of the doctors most experienced with her condition, persuades Hazel's parents that Hazel must go because she has to live her life . (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Augustus, Hazel, and Hazel's mother make arrangements to travel to Amsterdam, but when Hazel and Augustus meet Van Houten, they discover that, rather than a creative genius, he is a mean-spirited alcoholic who claims he cannot answer any of Hazel's inquiries. They leave Van Houten's in dismay, and visit Anne Frank's house with Lidewij, who is outraged by Van Houten's actions. Augustus and Hazel enjoy a love kiss near the close of the tour, to the delight of the audience. They return to the hotel, where they have their first and only kiss (Ehiosun,Joshua).

The next day, Augustus admits that while Hazel was in the ICU, he underwent a body scan that indicated his cancer had returned and spread throughout his body. When they return to Indianapolis, Hazel learns Augustus has transformed into the grenade. As his illness worsens, he loses his usual charm and confidence. He feels vulnerable and terrified, but Hazel remembers him as a lovely youngster. As time passes, she stops calling him Augustus and instead refers to him like Gus, as his parents do. Hazel realizes she still loves him as much as

she did before. Augustus' health rapidly deteriorates. Augustus plans a prefuneral for himself in his dying days, and Isaac and Hazel deliver eulogies. Hazel plagiarizes Van Houten's phrase about greater and smaller infinities. She expresses her love for Augustus and states that she would not swap their little time together for anything in the world (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Augustus passes away eight days later. Hazel is taken aback when she discovers Van Houten at the funeral. Van Houten claims that he and Gus kept in touch, and that Augustus insisted Van Houten make up for wrecking the trip to Amsterdam by attending his burial and seeing Hazel. Van Houten relates the fate of Anna's mother in an abstract manner, but Hazel seems uninterested. A few days later, Isaac informs Hazel that Augustus is working on a project for her. He had hinted about creating a sequel to *An Imperial Affliction* for her, and while Hazel searches for the pages, she runs across Van Houten again. He discloses, drunkenly, that Anna was the name of his daughter. She died of cancer when she was eight years old, and *An Imperial Affliction* was his creative attempt to come to terms with her passing. Hazel advises Van Houten to become clean and write another book (Ehiosun,Joshua).

Hazel eventually discovers that Augustus gave the papers to Van Houten so that Van Houten could write a well-written eulogy for Hazel. Lidewij makes Van Houten read the pages and then delivers them to Hazel. Hazel reads Augustus' comments at the end of the novel. He claims that while being harmed in this life is unavoidable, we do have the ability to select who we allow to hurt us, and he is content with his decision. He hopes she loves her selection as well. The novel's concluding lines come from Hazel, who says she does (Ehiosun,Joshua).

## **2.2.2 The Selected Novel Main Themes**

### **2.2.2.1 Coming of Age Theme**

*The Fault in Our Stars* features all of the expected aspects of a coming-of-age story. The novel covers the experiences of two teenage protagonists, Hazel and Augustus, as they

grow from childhood to adulthood. As is customary in coming-of-age stories, Hazel and Augustus begin to encounter the adult world in all of its complexities, they begin to feel their bodies and sexualities in new ways, and they struggle against and come to grips with society, family, rules, and religion.

Both Hazel and Augustus' cancer coincides with their transition into maturity, and the plot unfolds as they battle with coming of age in the wake of their diagnosis. Three months after her first period, Hazel's diagnosis is determined, and Augustus gets his diagnosis and loses his limb just as he starts thinking existentially about basketball, understanding his boyhood passion of the sport is fading. Their diseases compound each of the tough transitions into adulthood, as they are fraught with meaning and complexities that healthy teenagers are never compelled to address. For example, they do not have romantic or other relationships in the same way that typical teenagers do because their futures are uncertain; they do not get to experiment with alcohol and substances in the same way that typical teenagers do because their cancers have forced them to become acquainted with powerful pain pills from a young age; and, most notably, their relationship with their sick bodies makes this passage particularly hard.

Adulthood demands new interactions with one's body and sexuality, but the protagonists in the novel are coming of age with a typical bodies. Augustus is missing a leg, Hazel needs oxygen tanks and has bad lungs, and Isaac is blind. Hazel and Augustus, on the other hand, find common ground in their cancer experiences and develop a profound passion for one another (Powers, Jacob).

#### **2.2.2.2 Life and Death Theme**

On a daily basis, the teenagers in *The Fault in Our Stars* face the topic of death. Despite their efforts to live by their support group's mantra, "Living our best lives today," every action, relationship, and experience is cast in the shadow of their inevitable deaths. Through Hazel's

relationship with Augustus, the theme of life and death emerges. It's no coincidence that Hazel and Augustus first connect at their support group over a discussion about death and nothingness. When it comes to their own deaths, both Hazel and Augustus are exceptionally sensitive. They are forced to face questions that most teenagers do not have to confront, but their concerns center on common existential quandaries, such as how to seek meaning in life and death. What is the best way to leave a legacy? What impact does a person's death have on others? Is there an afterlife? If not, what is it? The investigation of these questions leads to their character development.

Their own fears about dying evolve in distinct ways. Augustus is scared of falling into obscurity after death, that his existence will be pointless and that no one would remember him. After discussing her concern at the support group, Hazel answers by rationalizing her impermanence. She claims that everything will perish, that there was a period before consciousness and a time after it. Despite her intellectualization, she remains terribly torn about her own impending mortality. Unlike Augustus, who fears fading into obscurity, Hazel sees her impending death as an event that would badly harm everyone around her—as if she were a grenade ready to explode. She is most concerned about shielding everyone around her from the agony of her dying. This worry causes her to withdraw from her peers and family, limiting her willingness to do the activities that typical teenagers do. She is most concerned about shielding everyone around her from the agony of her dying. This worry causes her to withdraw from her peers and family, limiting her willingness to do the activities that typical teenager does (Powers, Jacob).

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The second chapter of this study was devoted to define the literary genre of Young Adult Literature and provides its characteristics. Young Adult Literature is defined to be the literary texts or category that addresses the teenagers from the age of 12 to 18. It is characterized

by highlighting the journey of its teenagers' protagonist in discovering themselves and building their identity. Second, the chapter provided a brief bibliography of the young adult author John Green and his most popular works as *The Fault in Our Stars*. The novel is about two teenagers who suffer from cancer. Hazel and Augustus create a great bond of love that helped them in fighting against life sadness and depression.

## **Chapter Three: Psychoanalytic Reading, Existentialism, and Deconstruction of Concepts in “The Fault in Our Stars”**

### **3.0 Introduction**

The third chapter of this dissertation is the analysis of John Green’s novel “*The Fault in Our Stars*”. It first tackles the main characters of the novel by looking deeper into their personalities and identities. On the other hand, it explains the three friends' defense mechanisms to fight against their illness. Second, it goes deeper into the two main characters Hazel and Augustus. It demonstrates their journey to know their identities as sick teenagers by questioning their life and their future. It focuses on Hazel’s question of existence and Augustus’s relationship with life. Third, it sheds light on the motives of using deconstruction in language to explain the real meaning of life and death in the novel. Finally, the third chapter analyses how John Green defamiliarize the concepts of life, death, and love in his novel, and how he defines them by using other meanings and senses.

### **3.1 Psychoanalytic Reading of the Novel’s Main Characters**

#### **3.1.1 Main Characters**

Hazel Grace Lancaster: the female protagonist of the novel. She is 16 years old and suffers from lung cancer that prevents her to breathe well. Hazel is characterized by her acceptance of her illness and her death. She believes that someday she will die and be forgotten like everyone else. Her ideas make her isolate herself from other people and she becomes obsessed with reading her open ending favorite novel over and over to find out the destiny of other characters after the protagonist's death. She joins the Support Group after her mother's insistence where she meets Augustus and Isaac whose friendship and love changed Hazel's view of life.

Augustus Waters: the male protagonist, is older than Hazel by one year, he is 17. Augustus suffers from bone cancer the reason why he lost one of his legs. Unlike Hazel, Augustus is widely popular and has friends. His ex-girlfriend died due to cancer as well. Augustus believes that oblivion is worse than death. He is afraid to die without leaving a mark on people's lives, the thing that makes him always helpful and supportive to his family and his friends. Augustus in the end dies and leaves a great impact and mark on the people around him. His love for Hazel becomes memorable and creates a special love story.

Isaac: a 17 years old boy who suffers from eye cancer. He at first appears by having one eye of glass, but later he completely lost his sight. His girlfriend Monica left him after this and he feels so sad because she breaks her promise of always being with him. With the support of Hazel and Augustus, Isaac lives a happy life even with blind eyes.

Hazel's parents Mr. and Mrs. Lancaster: are very supportive and loving. They care a lot about Hazel's sensitive age as a teenager and encourage her to seize her time in making good friends. They are thankful to Augustus because he helps their sick child to break her isolation, and to live her dream of meeting her favorite author.

Augustus's parents Mr. and Mrs. Waters: are characterized by their encouraging words all around the house. They welcome Augustus's friends in their house and support them. They care about Augustus's choices and health.

Van Houten: the author of "An Imperial Affliction", Hazel's favorite novel. He is an American and lives in Amsterdam. He wrote just this novel and later becomes addicted to alcohol and isolated from his fans. He didn't respond to Hazel's letters because he never read fan mail. When Hazel and Augustus visit him he accuses Hazel of being stuck in fictional work and that she is supposed to get a life instead.

### 3.1.2 Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac's Defense Mechanisms

The three friends use defense mechanisms to live their short life with joy. Hazel to fight against her illness uses different defense mechanisms such as rationalization and denial and identification. Augustus uses mechanisms such as denial and reaction formation. Isaac uses the mechanism of acting out and Identification with the Aggressor.

Starting with the defense mechanisms of Hazel; the first is rationalization and denial. According to Saul McLeod, in his essay "*Defense Mechanisms*", 2019 is the ability to face and accept life conditions and to live with them (McLeod 5). Green in the novel portrays Hazel's satisfaction with her destiny. She accepts her sickness and faces it every day. She accepts that someday will be dead due to her lung cancer; Green says: "*Cancer is also a side effect of dying. Almost everything is, really*" (09). Hazel also connects everything that happens to her with death. She believes that someday she will be dead and forgotten just like everybody else on Patrick's list of dead people which she says is a long list. Green says "*The world contains a lot of dead people... imagining the day when my name would find its way onto that list, all the way at the end when everyone had stopped listening*" (Green, 14)

She also believes that she is already dead at the moment of diagnosis with cancer at the age of 13. When Augustus asks her about her illness story she tells him how she suffers and how her parents suffer too during her early age. Green here shows that Hazel accepts her pain and shares it with others. However, she at the same time thinks in her mind that it was the most painful news that she got especially because she becomes a woman. Green says "*(I didn't tell him that the diagnosis came three months after I got my first period. Like: Congratulations! You're a woman. Now die.) It was, we were told, incurable*" (Green, 19).

Despite her acceptance, denial appears when Hazel acts that everything in her life is good in front of her parents and the people around her. When she first introduces herself in the Support Group, she shows both realization and denial mechanisms at the same time. Green

says *"I'm Hazel, I'd say when they'd get to me. Sixteen. Thyroid originally but with an impressive and long-settled satellite colony in my lungs. And I'm doing okay"* (Green 05) Hazel here needs to believe and to make others make sure that she is doing great in life and coping with her lungs cancer.

She has also shown on the other hand her realization that her parents won't suffer after her death because she believes that she will be forgotten like everyone else. Green says

*"There will come a time," I said, "when all of us are dead. All of us. There will come a time when there are no human beings remaining to remember that anyone ever existed or that our species ever did anything. There will be no one left to remember Aristotle or Cleopatra, let alone you. Everything that we did and built and wrote and thought and discovered will be forgotten and all of this"—I gestured encompassingly—"will have been for naught. Maybe that time is coming soon and maybe it is millions of years away, but even if we survive the collapse of our sun, we will not survive forever. There was time before organisms experienced consciousness, and there will be time after. And if the inevitability of human oblivion worries you, I encourage you to ignore it. God knows that's what everyone else does."*

(Green, 13)

Her words demonstrate that she is ready to die and she is thankful because no one will remember her and remember the sadness they faced for her. At the same time, fears that her death will hurt her parents emotionally and makes them suffer. Augustus smiled after Hazel's words because he maybe shares the same feelings. That leads her to question the end of her favorite novel over and over because she relates herself with the female protagonist. She questions its end to make sure that other people in the story will live happy even after her death. Augustus here directly knew that this young girl deserves a better life. At the end of the story

when Augustus died; Hazel does the same. She faces his death and accepts it. She even learns the real meaning of death and of losing someone she loves. She also understands how her parents will continue their life after her death because she never stops living after Augustus.

A second defense mechanism that Hazel adapts is Identification. It is to be influenced by others' actions, behaviors, and life (McLeod 4). Hazel at first accepts her illness and death, the reason why she isolates herself from everything including her school friends. Her mother insists on Hazel have friends because she is young to act like a dead person. She sends her to the Support Group and tells her that many times. Green says "*Hazel, you're a teenager. You're not a little kid anymore. You need to make friends, get out of the house, and live your life.*" (10). Hazel joins the group and it helped her in building a strong bond with Augustus and Isaac. She later becomes influenced by Augustus's lifestyle. She becomes more open to knowing friends and talking with people. She was surprised when she went with him to his house and watched the movie he recommended. She shows her affection for Augustus since then and she says that she likes him green says "*I nodded. I liked Augustus Waters. I really, really, really liked him. I liked the way his story ended with someone else*" (22). Hazel keeps thinking about her action, and she was surprised because she notices that she did something, not like her. Green says: "*that anyone as disheveled and awkward and stunted as me could even briefly win the affections of a boy*" (28). She also decides to travel abroad for the first time in her life with Augustus to visit her favorite writer.

She uses those defense mechanisms to feel comfortable in her life. However, she cannot deny that she is not afraid of death, yet she is facing it and accepting it. Her relationship with Augustus influences her choices in life.

Augustus on the other hand is the opposite of Hazel. He adopted the defense mechanisms of denial and reaction formation. Denial according to McLeod is a "refusal to accept reality, thus blocking external events from awareness" (05). This defense mechanism is used when someone

could not handle a situation and it is just too much for his abilities. McLeod adds "the person may respond by refusing to perceive it or by denying that it exists" (McLeod 05). Augustus acts like he is not sick- he likes enjoying life and driving the car like a mad person. He never cares about his bone cancer. He travels with Hazel to meet her favorite author despite his health conditions. He counts on his sense of humor to forget his illness.

Augustus also uses the defense mechanism of the Reaction formation. According to McLeod, reaction formation is when the person behaves the opposite way he thinks or feels (McLeod 6). It is obvious that Augustus's actions and sense of humor hide a lot of fear inside his mind. Thus, he never shows his fear of cancer or death. It is somehow similar to denial because they both demonstrate how Augustus runs away from the pain by laughing and enjoying each day of his short life.

Unlike Hazel who believes that she is dead, Augustus has always believed that he should live the day and seize every moment. He promises himself to look for beautiful things. In their first meeting in the Support Group, Augustus kept looking at Hazel with a smile on his face. Hazel asks him why he is staring at her all the time; he says that he likes to see beautiful things. Green says:

*"Augustus half smiled. "Because you're beautiful. I enjoy looking at beautiful people, and I decided a while ago not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence." A brief awkward silence ensued. Augustus plowed through: "I mean, particularly given that, as you so deliciously pointed out, all of this will end in oblivion and everything." (Green, 15)*

Green here reflects Augustus's belief that life is worthy to live; he decides to enjoy his short life by looking at everything beautiful he sees. His words to Hazel show that he would seize every moment in his life just to avoid the meaning of death and sadness. He also devoted

his short life to making Hazel feels happy. He introduces her to his favorite movie, book, place, and games.

However, after his death; his letter reveals that he was always afraid of death unlike he acts. He says: *“a desert blessing, an ocean curse”* (170). He shows that he believed that everything has two sides. Augustus shows finally his fear of death and his obsession to leave a mark on the world. Green finishes his story with Augustus's letter that encourages Hazel to love her choices and her life. He says that he loved her and that she is the most beautiful incident that happens during his last days.

Isaac uses the defense mechanism of acting out. Acting out strategy encourages the person to find an appropriate position between their situations past and present. He also needs to live through the transition experiences that affected them in the first place (Schick, 06). The novel starts with Isaac having one glass eye. He says to the Support group that he will be completely blind because his other eye is damaged by cancer; Green says

*“And his eyes were the problem. He had some fantastically improbable eye cancer...From what I could gather on the rare occasions when Isaac shared with the group, a recurrence had placed his remaining eye in mortal peril”* (Green 10).

Green uses such a mechanism with Isaac to show his acceptance of his condition of being completely blind. He even makes jokes about himself when Hazel visits him in the hospital after his surgery. He asked her to lean over to touch her face just like blind people do. Green says *“Oh,” he said. “Yeah, people keep saying my other senses will improve to compensate, but CLEARLY NOT YET. Hi, Support Group Hazel. Come over here so I can examine your face with my hands and see deeper into your soul than a sighted person ever could.”* (45). Here, it seems like Isaac is trying to find a place where he can live with his blind eyes, he depends on his sense of humor to feel revealed and comfortable.

The second defense mechanism that Isaac adopts is the Identification with the Aggressor. It is the condition of adopting the behaviors of the person aggressor who hurts the one's feelings. The person who uses this mechanism hopes to avoid the feelings of sadness that the aggressor caused (McLeod, 02) Isaac when his girlfriend left him felt so sad. When Hazel visits him at Augustus's house she sees how his face was. Hazel describes his face and his flowing tears; Green says "*Tears streamed down his reddened cheeks in a continual flow, his face a taut mask of pain. He stared at the screen, not even glancing at me, and howled, all the while pounding away at his controller*" (36).

Isaac uses this mechanism because he was destroyed. Because he lost his sight; Monica left him. He was surprised how she could do so after all the promises she makes to always be with him. Isaac here decides to remove his pain by acting cruelly just like she did. He at first removes his anger by breaking Augustus's trophies Green says "*Isaac reached for a basketball trophy from the shelf above the bed and then held it over his head as if waiting for permission. "Yes," Augustus said. "Yes!" The trophy smashed against the floor*" (39) And later, he, Hazel, and Augustus decide to take revenge on her by throwing eggs at her car. Monica's mother walks to know what is happening out there, yet Augustus answers her by saying that her daughter deserves this because she treated our friend this way, Green says "*Ma'am," Augustus said, nodding toward her, "your daughter's car has just been deservedly egged by a blind man. Please close the door and go back inside or we'll be forced to call the police."* (Green 124)

To summarize, Hazel, Isaac, and Augustus three teenage fighters; did their best to overcome their illness's pain. They adopt various defense mechanisms to have a normal life just like everyone else around them. Their bond, friendship, and love are the main reasons why they lived their last days in peace and happiness.

### 3.2 Existentialism

Touhami Ibtissam in her research paper “*The Theme of Existentialism in The Fault in Our Stars*” argues that when teenagers become exposed to love for the first time; they start to build other meanings of life and question the old beliefs. She also argues that “Existentialism philosophy is that life of the individual is what constitutes their “true essence” and existence precedes essence, which means that the individual is conscious and has the free will to act independently” (Touhami 02). In the novel, Green demonstrates his character’s actions which revealed their struggle to identify themselves, their alienation, and sadness.

In ‘*The Fault in Our Stars*,’ Hazel and Augustus tried to live their sufferance and their painful life as cancer kids. However, this does not prevent them to discover their feelings for each other and the people around them. Augustus throughout the novel was depicted as a person whose main concern is leaving a mark in life. Unlike Hazel who states in the Support Group that oblivion is a necessity because it will help other people to carry on their life without scars.

#### 3.2.1 Hazel’s Existence Questions

Facticity is a key concept of the theory of existentialism. It is defined as the limitation and the condition of freedom. It is the one's ability to decide how life will go on by understanding its real meaning (Touhami 02). In “*The Fault in Our Stars*”, facticity can be seen through Hazel's and Augustus's perception and reaction to cancer which is totally the opposite (Touhami 03). Hazel sees that cancer represents death. This fact creates passivity in her life including her depression and need for isolation.

Touhami adds that Hazel “sees her existence as a cancer perk” (03). Her isolation is seen when her parents asked her to meet new people and to know new friends because she deserves a life at this age. Hazel argues that she cannot be friends with people because she doesn't want anyone to suffer from the pain of losing her after death. Hazel also describes herself as a grenade (a bomb that is easy to explode at any moment). Green says “*I’m a grenade*

*and at some point I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties....I'm a grenade...*" (Green, 58) She describes herself that way because she knows that after her death, her parents will be very sad; so that she wants to increase the number of sad people.

Hazel's favorite novel "*An Imperial Affliction*," tells the story of Anna; a girl who has cancer, like Hazel, and dies at the end of the story. Hazel sees herself and her end the same as the protagonist, she believes that someday her lung cancer will put an end to her life. However, Hazel questions what happened to the other characters in the book; she wonders how they complete their lives and how they will end. She becomes obsessed to know how Anna's mother and her Boyfriend ended up. Green says about the significance of the book to Hazel that "*It portrays death truthfully. You die in the middle of your life, in the middle of a sentence. But I do—God, I do really want to know what happens to everyone else*" (Green, 41). In fact, this shows that Hazel cares about her parents and friends, she wonders how they will leave after her real death. She even tries to write to the author of the book about the remaining characters to show that she understands that life is not centered only on her. Especially in the beginning when she said that no one will remember a dead person.

Green here portrays Hazel as an existentialist person who believes that her life is suffering not more; however, she also cares about the people around her. The thing that leads her to question their fate and their life, and makes her worry about them. In fact, Hazel's desire to find what will happen to the other characters in "*An Imperial Affliction*" symbolizes her personal quest for the meaning of her own life and after her death. This is demonstrated by Green when he says "*An Imperial Affliction was my book, in the way my body was my body and my thoughts were my thoughts*" (23).

Furthermore, through her relationship with Augustus and their love story, her perception of life starts to change. She starts to remove her passive beliefs about being a cancer patient and a grenade. Augustus influenced her life through his love and his attempts to make her

smile. Hazel starts to realize the importance of life and her existence. She understands Augustus's fear of oblivion and his attempts to leave a mark on others' lives. In the end, Hazel understands Augustus's attempts to make her happy. She respects how Augustus uses his wish of the Genies Foundation to take her to Amsterdam to meet the novel's author, Peter Van Houten. Hazel is so excited and happy about their trip. She was so hopeful because she will finally know what is the end of the novel. Green says *"I can't believe he's going to tell us tomorrow," I said. "Peter Van Houten is going to tell us the famously unwritten end of the best book ever."* (Green 93) She has also kept imagining how their meeting will go and how would he be considerate and caring. Green adds *"My heart pounded. One closed door away from the answers I'd dreamed of ever since I first read that last unfinished page"* (Green 98)

However, when she and Augustus went to Amsterdam to meet the author, Hazel's felt disappointed because she sees his situation; especially when he told her that the garbage behind the sofa is fun mail and that he never read her letters. Anna was so sad when he refuses to share the answer with her assuming that they are not real characters, they are just fiction and imagination. Green says

*"Perhaps, but I was under the misguided impression that you were incapable of transatlantic travel. I was trying . . . to provide you some comfort, I suppose, which I should know better than to attempt. But to be perfectly frank, this childish idea that the author of a novel has some special insight into the characters in the novel . . . it's ridiculous. That novel was composed of scratches on a page, dear. The characters inhabiting it have no life outside of those scratches. What happened to them? They all ceased to exist the moment the novel ended."* (Green 103)

Hazel here feels so sad and disappointed by his answers. Not only that, but Houten reminds them of their sickness and makes fun of them. He also accuses them of being stuck at the age they became sick in the first place. Green says

*“Sick children inevitably become arrested: You are fated to live out your days as the child you were when diagnosed, the child who believes there is life after a novel ends. And we, as adults, we pity this, so we pay for your treatments, for your oxygen machines. We give you food and water though you are unlikely to live long enough—”* (Green 104)

All in all, Hazel's questions about the end of her favorite novel can be seen as her quest to discover the relationship between her and the protagonist Anna. She relates her life with her, and she confronts herself with the idea of knowing what happens to her family and friends. Hazel's existence is seen in the novel itself due to her belief in being Anna. She thinks that by knowing the end of fictional characters, she will know the destiny of her parents. However, Van Houten disappointed her with his words on one hand. But on the other hand, she understands that she is not Anna and that life will surprise her each time she faces it. After her meeting with Van Houten, Hazel carries her life with Augustus's positivity, love, and care.

### **3.2.2 Augustus's Relationship with Life**

Augustus is the opposite of Hazel. If she is seen as a passive girl, he would be seen as the most positive character in the novel. Augustus from the first appearance in the novel seems to be a very nice teenager. He keeps looking at Hazel with a smile on his face that indicates his joy to see her face. Green says *“I walked into the circle and sat down next to Isaac, two seats away from the boy. I glanced again. He was still watching me... After a while the boy smiled, and then finally his blue eyes glanced away”* (11-12).

When the time comes for Augustus to introduce himself to the Group, he says that he fears being forgotten. His ideas lead Hazel to share her thoughts about how oblivion is a

positive thing not as he thinks. She claims that to be forgotten is a blessing because remembering you after your death is just like seeing a painful scar. After her words, Augustus looks at her and smiles again and immediately realizes that Hazel is not an ordinary girl. Green says

*“After I finished, there was quite a long period of silence as I watched a smile spread all the way across Augustus’s face—not the little crooked smile of the boy trying to be sexy while he stared at me, but his real smile, too big for his face. “Goddamn,” Augustus said quietly. “Aren’t you something else”*

(Green 13)

Augustus understands that his existence is connected to being remembered. For that reason, Augustus devoted his life to people around him just to leave a little mark on them after his death. He believes that he will always be existed even after going. He also sees that Hazel deserves to be remembered because she is something special. He tends to change her isolation and the fear that appears during her interaction with the group.

Augustus in their first meeting invites Hazel to his house. He asks her to watch a movie with him immediately. In fact, this action shows that Augustus has no time to lose. He likes enjoying his ideas and translates them into actions the moment that they came to his mind.

Green says

*“So, see you next time, maybe?” I asked.*

*“You should see it,” he said. “V for Vendetta, I mean.”*

*“Okay,” I said. “I’ll look it up.”*

*“No. With me. At my house,” he said. “Now.”*(Green 15)

His relationship with life is demonstrated through his existentialism I ideas. Such as his invitation to Hazel; he wants to leave his mark on her by showing her the movie. He also tends

to exchange with her his favorite books just to make himself comfortable and sure to be memorable.

Augustus at the same time, to prove his existence tends to play heroic roles. He loves to help his friends whenever he sees them in need. He helps Isaac in getting revenge on Monica by throwing eggs on her car. He also uses his only wish to take Hazel to Amsterdam and meets Peter Van Houten. Green shows that Augustus feels like he is responsible to make something of himself before his death. He believes that the purpose of life is to be good, a savior, helper, and a hero to people around him. Green says *"If you don't live a life in service of a greater good, you've gotta at least die a death in service of a greater good, you know? And I fear that I won't get either a life or a death that means anything."* (Green 92)

After Augustus's death, Green shows that he left a huge impact on his friends' life. Augustus's sake of leaving a mark is granted because his friends always remembered him. During his funeral, all of them talk about how such a great person he was. Even Van Houten attends Augustus's funeral and this is great evidence that he leaves a trace and an impact on him. Green says *"Peter Van Houten wore a white linen suit, tailored to account for his rotundity, a powder-blue dress shirt, and a green tie. He looked like he was dressed for a colonial occupation of Panama, not a funeral"* (Green 148).

### **3.3 Deconstruction in the Novel**

John Green depicts life as a rollercoaster. It is a fast-moving ride that goes up and down while answering the characters' existentialism questions: will I leave a mark in the world by Augustus? Will the pain ever go away after my death by Hazel? Will love last forever by Isaac? Green in order to do so and answers these questions, depends on deconstructing the language and creating dichotomies and oppositions to give the real meaning of concepts. He also tends to defamiliarize the concepts of life, death, and love in the novel by explaining their meaning through each character's eyes and perception of them.

### 3.3.1 Dichotomies and Oppositions

Green uses the deconstruction style to show that the real meaning of concepts is unstable. In "*The Fault in Our Stars*", Green depends on binary oppositions and dichotomies to explain that these concepts can always refer to something else totally different from its meaning. He stresses on life/death, health/illness, and oblivion/memorable concepts to give other meanings perceived by the novel's main characters.

#### 3.3.1.1 Life/ Death

Life in its general meaning refers to the state of being alive, breathing, and producing. It also refers to the period between the moments of birth and the death of a creature. On the other hand, death as a binary opposition refers to the end of life. The two concepts are used in the novel from the first chapter.

Hazel's first lines are her confession that she spends her time thinking about death. Green says "*devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death*" (Green 9). She has also mentioned many times that she is ready to die because dying will make her so happy. Green says "*At that moment, I would have been very, very happy to die*" (Green 61). Life on the other hand is demonstrated by Augustus. Augustus from the beginning of the novel appears as a boy who loves life. He believes that life is valuable to enjoy it. He sees that fighting to live is a great privilege that a cancer kid can do. He considers Max Mayhem the protagonist of the fictitious novel, *The Price of Dawn* as a hero because he keeps on fighting and killing bad men to save the weak. Augustus also values how he would give his life to his country. Green says "*Max Mayhem was regretting that he had but one life to give for his country*" (Green 30)

Death is deconstructed by Green as the polar opposite of life. He divides his characters into two worlds. The statement that the world contains a large number of deceased individuals implies that the world is divided into two parts: those who are alive and those who are dead.

However, green did not mean the real dead and living people. Through his character's beliefs and ideas, it is seen that life and death to them has other meanings

### **3.3.1.2 Health/Illness**

The novel's sick characters include three young people: Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac. Hazel suffered thyroid cancer, Isaac had eye cancer, and Augustus is in remission after losing his right leg to osteosarcoma. Green portrays these kids as survivors who had to face and challenge their illnesses every day. They are seen as stuck in their illness in a way that they cannot experience other feelings rather than being sick and tired. This was strongly contradicted by Augustus stating that not because he was sick he would be unable to feel love, gain respect and do art. However, the characters did not accept that disability, Augustus and Hazel experienced love even though they both have cancer. The adult characters on the other hand, as their parents and their doctors, are portrayed as healthy people who take care of the kids because they were healthy. Green was able to demonstrate how they are able to work and do several activities, unlike their kids.

Healthy and Illness are deconstructed as opposite meanings. Green states in the novel that being healthy enables one to be in better circumstances. Thus, being a cancer survivor means being victorious in the struggle against cancer.

### **3.3.1.3 Oblivion / Memorable**

Being forgotten or memorable in the novel is a huge debate between Hazel and Augustus. Oblivion according to Augustus is the greatest fear. Augustus is afraid to die and be forgotten with time. He feels that oblivion represents death itself; yet being memorable is a blessing. This is shown through his character's love to help people and leave an impact on them. However, Hazel has the opposite thinking. She believes that oblivion is a blessing, and memorable is a curse. She assumes that because she cares about her parents and prefers they can forget her after her death. She refuses the idea of leaving an impact or a mark on others' life because she considers it a scar.

Green demonstrates those ideas in the first chapter during their first meeting in the Support Group (Green 13). The deconstruction of those two opposite concepts allows readers to deeply understand the real meanings behind them by showing their impact on his characters.

Furthermore, using the deconstruction of the concepts confirms that language might hold vague meanings. John Green does not leave those concepts to the readers' imagination. However, he tends to defamiliarize and reconceptualize them and give other meanings to them through the beliefs of the novel's characters.

### **3.3.2 Reconceptualizing the Concepts**

#### **3.3.2.1 Reconceptualizing Life**

Life is as explained above the ability to produce and to be alive. However, for Hazel life holds other meanings. Hazel considers life as the pre-death period where she should be isolated from others. Hazel at the beginning of the novel refuses her mother's advice to have friends because she deserves a real life. She refuses to join the Support Group and meet new cancer kids because she wonders how this will give her a life. Green says "*although I failed to see how attendance at Support Group met the definition of life.*" (Green 12) But after she insists on her, Hazel finally joins where she meets her two new friends Augustus and Isaac.

Hazel sees life as a pre-death period, the thing that influences her to be passive and never try to enjoy it. She believes that every attempt to enjoy life is going to make her more miserable. For instance; she sees that knowing new people will just expose them to pain when she dies. She wants to live her pre-period death in isolation focusing only on the fiction book she is reading. She believes that life is that book's ending because she connects herself with the protagonist and her family too. However, when she meets Peter Van Houten he redefines life for her by mocking her illness and her attachment with Anna, and her obsession to the novel's end.

Unlike Hazel's view of life; Augustus sees life as when people remember him. His act of heroism by sacrificing his wish from "The Genie Foundation" to take Hazel to Amsterdam is

life to him. When Hazel told him that she is sorry for losing his only wish for Van Houten's nonsense, he answers her by saying that he gave his wish for them not for Houten because they enjoy this trip together. Green says

*"I spent your Wish on that doucheface," I said into his chest.*

*"Hazel Grace. No. I will grant you that you did spend my one and only Wish, but you did not spend it on him. You spent it on us." (Green 105)*

Augustus also sees life as the ability to challenge and control death. When Hazel sees him putting a cigarette in his mouth, she immediately becomes angry because she suffers from lung cancer. She was angry because cigarettes represent her disability to breathe. However, Augustus surprises her by saying that he is controlling death. He claims that enjoying cigarettes will not affect his health because it is not lightened. Green says *"They don't kill you unless you light them," he said as Mom arrived at the curb. "And I've never lit one. It's a metaphor, see: You put the killing thing right between your teeth, but you don't give it the power to do its killing."*(Green, 17)

Here Green deconstructs the meaning of death by Augustus's ability to control it. He says that he should experience things metaphorically even if they will hurt him; yet, he at the same time doesn't do them. On the plane also to Amsterdam; he did the same thing when the flight attendant told him that cigarettes are not allowed. Hazel answers *"It's a metaphor," I explained. "He puts the killing thing in his mouth but doesn't give it the power to kill him."* (Green 82)

### **3.3.2.2 Reconceptualizing Death**

Death is also reconceptualized by John Green. The two characters see death in a different ways. For Hazel, death is her cancer. She sees that she is already dead because she is sick. From the first moment of diagnosis at the age of 13 when she says that congratulation you are a woman and now die. Augustus describes Hazel by saying that she is *"One of those people*

*who become their disease.*" (Green 22) when he asks her about her hobbies and interests; she immediately starts her cancer story; i.e. her death story.

For Hazel, death is suffering and pain. It is shown when her friend feels sorry to mention the word die in front of her. Hazel here describes herself by saying the word "the dying". Green says *"I mean, I would just die—" and then stopped short, looking at me as if to say I'm sorry, as if it were a crime to mention death to the dying*" (29). It confirms that Hazel considers her life as being dead. Green defamiliarizes the word dying with the sense of life in the eyes of Hazel. Hazel tells her friend that she will die soon; she accepts her death and never complains about it. She associates every feeling she has with death; in fact, feelings are felt by a living person not dead. However Hazel always perceives herself as a dead person who holds a living being qualities. Green here defamiliarizes the word dying to show that Hazel has normal feelings like everyone who is alive. He says: *"And yet still I worried. I liked being a person. I wanted to keep at it. Worry is yet another side effect of dying"* (Green, 40)

Furthermore, for Augustus, death is to be forgotten, his fear of oblivion is stronger than her fear of his illness and death. Green says

*"Patrick said, "Augustus, perhaps you'd like to share your fears with the group."*

*"My fears?"*

*"Yes."*

*"I fear oblivion," he said without a moment's pause. "I fear it like the proverbial blind man who's afraid of the dark."* (Green 13-14)

Even after his death, Augustus's letter to Van Houten explains his strong desire to leave a mark. It demonstrates how Augustus is portrayed as a person who is giving and unselfish just because of his desire to be memorable. Augustus wrote, Green says: *"We all want to be remembered. I do, too....I want to leave a mark..."* (Green 169)

### 3.3.2.3 Reconceptualizing Love

Love; as life and death, is defined by other meanings by John Green. He defines love to be a promise, to be a help, and a permanent process. The first definition of love in the novel is presented by Isaac. When his girlfriend Monica left him, he reconceptualizes love by the word always. The word always in fact refers to the promise of always being here. And when Augustus and Hazel help Isaac after his depression; Isaac in here defines love to Hazel saying that love is to keep the promise. She likes how he describes love because she has never experienced it before. Isaac feels so sad; however, they both help him. Augustus told him that he must get rid of the pain by breaking something, not just the pillow. He allows him to break his basketball trophies to feel good. But Isaac did not feel good after that.

To Augustus, love is caring about others and helping them. Augustus devotes his short life to showing that he loves Hazel so much. He helped her many times to fulfill her dreams and to live her age as a teenager normal life. Their love story becomes remarkable to everyone and they describe it as a galaxy full of stars and that their love will never end even after their death.

For Hazel, love is Augustus himself. At his pre-funeral, Hazel speaks about their love story and has been very thankful to Augustus because he had shown her love. She assumes that Augustus has given her the greatest feeling in the world through his caring and his unlimited love. Green says

*“I want more numbers than I’m likely to get, and God, I want more numbers for Augustus Waters than he got. But, Gus, my love, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. I wouldn’t trade it for the world. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and I’m grateful.”* (Green 142)

All in all, reconceptualizing such meanings allow "*The Fault in Our Stars*" readers to easily understand how each character depicts his feelings. Life, death, and love are not the only concepts that are defamiliarized in the novel; however, they are the most significant.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The last chapter was devoted to analyzing John Green's novel "*The Fault in Our Stars*". The analysis reveals that the three young characters are suffering from their cancer. However, each one of them adapts different defense strategies and mechanisms to face their health conditions. They also tend to question their present and their future. They ask questions about their existence in the world. Augustus believes that life is worthy to enjoy every day in a special way, yet Hazel thinks that present life doesn't really matter, and she cares about what will happen to others after she passes away. The analysis also revealed that the author in order to answer the characters' questions uses deconstruction and he reconceptualizes different concepts to give an insight into how can a word give different meanings at once. In the end, it becomes clear that life, death, and love can be defined by the characters' relationships with others, and that the real meaning of these concepts is demonstrated through the lived experiences.

## General Conclusion

Young Adults Fiction's focus on the theme of life and death is very significant in John Green novel's "*The Fault in our Stars*". They seem to be represented by different points of view that were portrayed through the characters' beliefs. This dissertation is an attempt to investigate how John Green deconstructs and reconceptualizes the concepts of life and death in his novel. It has depended on the psychoanalysis approach to give a deep reading to the main characters Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac. It also uses the theory of existentialism to answer the questions of the characters about the meanings of life, death, and existence. The dissertation was divided into three main chapters the quest of answering the main question.

The first chapter of this dissertation is the theoretical debate. It was devoted to explaining the meaning of the psychoanalysis approach and criticism that was first coined by Sigmund Freud. The approach refers to a theory that explores and examines the existed links between the mind, body, and social order. The chapter focused on defining the Freudian division of mind by shedding the light on the definitions of the id, ego, and superego depicts Freud's representation of the three structures of the mind. The id is defined to be the primal urges, primitive needs, and uncivilized passion the person is born with. The superego is the moral part of the mind that embodies parental and societal values. The ego, however; collects the two and attempts to balance primitive drives and socialized morality. Moreover, it defines the defense mechanisms that represent the unconscious psychological strategies that enable a person to protect himself from unacceptable thoughts or feelings.

It has also explained the two used theories in analysis; existentialism and deconstruction. Existentialism is defined to be a philosophical approach that refers to the existence of individuals by having their free will to decide their choices. I.e. an existing person can define his identity, thoughts, relationships, and values. And so on in his personal life. Furthermore, deconstruction and reconceptualization go more into the linguistic aspects and their relationship with literature and the portrayal of meanings. Deconstruction is defined as breaking the meaning of the concepts

by using their binary oppositions in contrast. Reconceptualization attempts to explain the deconstructed meanings by giving other identifications to the concept itself.

The second chapter of this dissertation was the theoretical framework that discussed the literary genre of John Green's novel "*The Fault in Our Stars*". In the second chapter, Young Adults Fiction is mainly written to attract young readers. It focuses on the protagonists' experiences that lead them to self-discovery and self-realization. YA fiction summarizes the painful struggle of characters toward the world. The protagonist of YA sees himself stuck between the age of childhood and the age of adulthood where all meanings of life are vague and changeable. It focused on the themes of self-discovery, self-realization, life, life, mortality...etc. Furthermore, the second chapter introduced "*The Fault in Our Stars*" writer John Green summarized the novel that talks about three young kids who suffer from cancer. Their perspectives on life and death become the center of this novel because it has been always changeable.

The last chapter of this dissertation was the analytical chapter. It started by introducing the main characters of the novel Hazel, Augustus, Isaac, the parents, and Peter Van Houten. It later went deeper into the characters' struggles to protect themselves from depression and low self-esteem. Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac use various defense mechanisms to cope with their life as ill kids. Each one of them desires to live his short life by accepting –as Hazel- or denying- as Augustus- his illness. Moreover, to analyze deconstructed meanings and reconceptualize some concepts, it was needed to see the answer of what each character believes about his existence. The chapter examines the characters' understanding of their identity and the real meanings of things. The existentialism analysis of Hazel and Augustus reveals that they might be used as binary oppositions because they are totally different. From the quest to answer the question of what life is for both of them, it can be seen that Hazel sees that her existence in life is related to the fictional characters that she was reading about. However, Augustus believes in his existence in life and seeks strongly to be always there even after his death.

The chapter depended on binary oppositions such as death/life, health/illness, and oblivion/memorable to explain how Green is playing with the language by giving one concept two meanings or more. Green demonstrates the meaning of those concepts through his characters. Their view of each concept is different from one another. Hazel sees that life is isolation and pain; Augustus sees the opposite, life is to leave a mark on people around you. Death for Hazel is her illness; for Augustus, it is oblivion.

To conclude, deconstructing the language in Green's novel was very creative because he in the end could relate everything to each other. As readers read and try to understand, they notice that life is death, and death is life because Hazel is Augustus and Augustus is Hazel. They manage their differences and their clashes of views at the beginning to end the story with the most memorable and valuable relationship. They, with the help of each other, could change their view of life and death to be at a point that means the same.

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### ملخص

هذه الأطروحة هي تحقيق في مفاهيم إعادة تصور الحياة والموت في رواية جون غرين *The Fault in Our Stars*. تصور الرواية المعنى الحقيقي للموت والحياة وكيف جون غرين، الكاتب الأمريكي الخيالي الشاب، يستخدم هذا الموضوع بطريقة خاصة به، جعل القارئ يفكر ويسأل عن الحياة والموت وما إذا كانت نعمة مليئة بالفرح سيكون لها نهاية مؤلمة أو رحلة مؤلمة ستلتئم بنعمة هادئة تسمى الموت. المشكلة البحثية التي أثرت هي كيف ينجح جون غرين في تسليط الضوء على موضوع الحياة والموت من خلال التركيز على الشخصيات الرئيسية "علم النفس وكيف يشكل وجهات نظرهم حول الحياة والموت. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار وتحديد معنى الحياة والموت في الرواية ورأي الكاتب. تعتمد الدراسة نهجًا انتقائيًا يعتمد على النقد الأدبي التحليلي النفسي لفهم أخلاق وسلوك الشخصيات الرئيسية بشكل أفضل. تشرح نظرية الوجودية معنى الوجود والجوهر وتشرح نظرية التفكيك و كسر معنى الموت والحياة.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

الحياة، الموت، الخطأ في نجومنا، التحليل النفسي، الوجودية، التفكيك، هازل، أغسطس