

**HAZEL GRACE'S CHARACTER TRAITS  
AND THE REPRESENTATION OF JOHN GREEN'S  
LIFE EXPERIENCES IN *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS***

**THESIS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI  
MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG  
2019**

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**THESIS**

Presented to  
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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2019**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **Hazel Grace's Character Traits and the Representation of John Green's Life Experiences in *The Fault in Our Stars*** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those that are cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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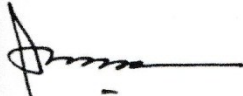
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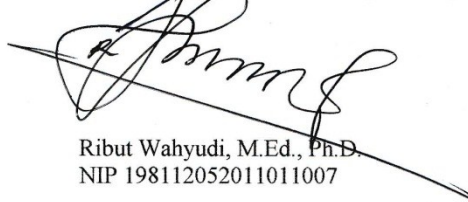
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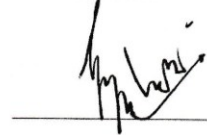
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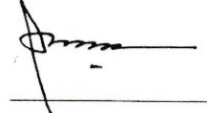
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## **MOTTO**

*“...Allah will exalt those of you who believe, and those who are given knowledge,  
in high degrees: and Allah is Aware of what you do”*

*(Al-Mujadilah 11:58)*

*“You can do it, as long as you are alive”*

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is presented to:

My Beloved parents (Moh. Mahsun and Roichanah);

My lovely brothers (Muhammad Sholeh Rafi'i and Muhammad Habiby);

My advisor, Mr. Miftahul Huda;

All of people who support and accompany me to struggle, pray for and support  
me to finish this thesis in any ways;

All my family, Naila's Family, Fadhillah's Family;

All of my lecturers for being so kind and patient in leading me, and my friends  
who always help me in any situation;

And many more that I cannot mention one-by-one.

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I address my special thanks to my beloved family: My late father Moh. Mahsun –*I hope you feel how grateful I am for you*–, my late mother Roichanah –*I hope you know how much I admire you*–, and my elder brothers Muhammad Sholeh Rafi'i and Muhammad Habiby –*thanks for all the supports, loves, and prays*–. To Naila's Family and Zaini's Family, I say thanks a lot for everything. As my precious family, you give me power to write this thesis. I have always known that, as long as I live, I feel so lucky to be born into this family.



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Finally, I acknowledge that this thesis still contains some deficiencies. Therefore, I need constructive criticism and suggestion from the readers to make it better. I hope this thesis can render inspiration and be useful for the readers.

Malang, 20 December 2019

The Researcher



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## ABSTRACT

**Aziziyah, S. N.** 2019. Hazel Grace's Character Traits and the Representation of John Green's Life Experiences in *The Fault in Our Stars*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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Literary work has at least two functions, i.e., to entertain and to educate. Literature also functions as a medium between work and art described through words or texts. In some cases, literary works are fictional stories expressed through the inner-process of self-experiences as well as through imagination and self-improvisation (creativity) of the author. Furthermore, literature might be empirical experiences taken from facts in the author's life on the basis of the wit and common logic around the author. I conducted a literary criticism by describing, analyzing, and interpreting the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) by John Green. The researcher highlighted John Green's view of Esther Earl and found out Hazel Grace's character traits in the novel by applying biographical criticism.

This study aims at seeing the author's perspective about Esther Earl, one of the author's friends in real life, and knowing Hazel Grace's character traits in *The Fault in Our Stars*. I also tried to explain John Green's creativity in describing Esther Earl in Hazel Grace's character (traits). This study applied biographical approach proposed by Wellek and Warren.

The result of this study revealed, through the biographical approach, the life experiences of the author of *The Fault in Our Star* that are related to Esther Earl from the author's point of view, which are similar with the character traits of Hazel, the main character of his novel. Regardless the fact that Easter Earl and Hazel share the same characteristics as suffering from a disease, Hazel is not only about Esther. John Green added his personal life experiences and improved the character of Hazel through his creativity.

## ABSTRAK

**Aziziyah, S. N.** 2019. Penokohan Hazel Grace dan Representasi Pengalaman Hidup John Green dalam Novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Dosen pembimbing: Miftahul Huda, M.Pd.

Kata Kunci: Penokohan, Pengalaman Hidup

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Karya sastra setidaknya memiliki dua fungsi, yaitu menghibur dan mendidik. Selain itu, karya sastra juga berfungsi sebagai media antara karya dan seni yang digambarkan melalui kata-kata atau teks. Sastra dapat berupa cerita fiksi dari penulisnya, namun juga dapat mengungkapkan pengalaman batin penulisnya. Sastra dapat berupa pengalaman empiris, yaitu pengalaman hidup nyata penulis dan realita yang terjadi di sekitarnya. Peneliti melakukan analisis terhadap karya sastra dengan mendeskripsikan, menganalisis, dan menafsirkan novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) karya John Green. Peneliti berfokus pada pandangan John Green tentang Esther Earl dan penokohan Hazel Grace, tokoh utama dalam novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. Peneliti melihat kreativitas John Green dalam menggambarkan Esther Earl pada tokoh Hazel Grace dengan menggunakan pendekatan biografis.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat aspek kehidupan pengarang sehingga dapat diketahui lebih dalam tokoh Esther Earl yang merupakan salah satu teman baik penulis di kehidupan nyata. Penelitian juga diarahkan pada tokoh Hazel Grace, tentang bagaimana kreativitas penulis menggambarkan Esther Earl di dalam novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan biografis dari Wellek dan Warren. Peneliti berupaya menemukan pengalaman hidup penulis dalam karyanya menurut teori Wellek dan Warren tersebut. Penelitian ini menceritakan tentang inspirasi atau pengalaman hidup penulis dan kreativitas di dalam karya sastranya.

Penelitian ini telah mengungkap pengalaman hidup penulis dari novel *The Fault in Our Stars* yang berhubungan dengan karakter Esther Earl dari sudut pandang penulis yang mirip dengan Hazel sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. Namun, karakter Hazel dalam novel bukan hanya tentang Esther meskipun mereka memiliki kasus yang sama tentang penyakitnya. John Green juga menambahkan pengalaman hidup pribadinya dengan kreativitasnya dalam novel *The Fault in Our Stars* tersebut.

## مستخلص البحث

العزيزية، سيتي. ن. 2019. شخصية هازل غريس وتمثيل تجربة حياة جون غرين في رواية الخطأ في نجومنا، قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانغ .

المشرف : مفتاح الهدى الماجستير  
الكلمات المفتاحية : تجربة الحياة، الشخصية

الأعمال الأدبية لها وظيفتان، وهما الترفيه والتعليم . بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تعمل الأعمال الأدبية أيضا كوسيلة بين الأعمال والفن الذي يتم تصويره من خلال الكلمات أو النصوص . يمكن أن يكون الأدب قصة خيالية من المؤلف ولكن من خلال التجارب الداخلية مثل فكر المؤلف وخياله أو إبداعه . من ناحية أخرى، يمكن أن يكون الأدب أيضا تجربة تجريبية، أي تجربة واقعية للمؤلف والواقع الذي يحدث حول المؤلف . يجري الباحثون تحليلا للأعمال الأدبية، وهذا يشمل وصف وتحليل وتفسير رواية الخطأ في نجومنا (2012) لجون غرين . يركز الباحثون على وجهة نظر جون غرين عن إستير إيرل ويعرفون سمات شخصية هازل غريس في فريق العمل الرئيسي في رواية الخطأ في نجومنا . علم الباحثون بإبداع جون غرين في تصوير إستير إيرل على شخصية هازل غريس في رواية الخطأ في نجومنا باستخدام نقد السيرة الذاتية .

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى النظر في جوانب حياة الكاتبة لمعرفة شخصية إستير إيرل التي تعد واحدة من الأصدقاء المقربين للكاتبة في الحياة الواقعية، ثم معرفة شخصية هازل غريس في رواية الخطأ في نجومنا وشرح كيف يصور إبداع الكاتبة إستير إيرل في شخصية هازل غريس في الرواية . في هذه الدراسة باستخدام نهج السيرة الذاتية من نظرية ويليك ووارن، تم مساعدة الباحث في العثور على تجربة حياة المؤلف في عمله وفقا لنظرية ويليك ووارن . يحكي هذا البحث عن الإلهام أو التجربة الحياتية للمؤلف والإبداع في عمله الأدبي .

وكانت نتيجة هذه الدراسة بمنهج السيرة الذاتية الذي يحلل عن التجارب الحياتية للمؤلف من رواية الخطأ في نجومنا التي تتناول شخصية إستير إيرل من وجهة نظر المؤلف على غرار عدة شخصيات من هازل كشخصية رئيسية في رواية الخطأ في نجومنا . لكن شخصية هازل في الرواية لا تتعلق فقط بإستير على الرغم من أن لديهم حالة مماثلة حول مرضها . كما أضاف جون غرين تجاربه الحياتية الشخصية

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms, previous studies, and research method.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Johnson and Danziger (1961:8) once said:

*“Perhaps the oldest and most venerable way, describing literature as an art is to regard it as a form of imitation. This defines literature concerning life, seeing it as a way of reproducing or recreating the experiences of life in words, just as painting reproduces or recreates certain figures or scenes of life in outline and color.”*

The above quotation means that literary work is an art displayed through words or texts. Literature in its basic fiction form consists of characters, plot, and interactive way of dialogues or texts with some values. Literature can show life experiences described in words so that human beings can generate, produce, and enjoy literary work by playing with words or texts.

Literary work has two functions: to entertain and to educate. Literature also functions as a medium between work and art described through words or texts. Literature is a part of human life. A literary work is considered as a form of expressions of an author. Literature can be a fictional story from the author, but it is expressed through inner experiences such as through the author’s imagination or creativity. However, literature can also be an empirical experience based on the author’s real-life experiences and any realities around him/her.

Through literary work, an author can freely write about their life experiences along with various rules and norms in their interactions with the environment. Why literature is a popular art is because it is a form of description of human life. In this case, an author is a part of society so that readers feel close with the thought, feelings, and imagination of humans who can expostulate elements of philosophy, science, psychology, social, and technology.

Literary work has various genres, such as poetry, prose, and drama. Prose can be in the form of novels and short stories. Stories in literature can be either nonfiction or fiction. In nonfiction types, the writer is responsible for the truth or accuracy of their story. In fiction types, however, the writer does not necessarily refer to reality. According to Wellek and Warren (1984), literary works may indeed reflect an author's experiences, but they must also reflect the author's hope and dreams, or literary tradition and convention, and not a document for biography.

Novel is one of literary works with an inherent meaning to be a medium to express ideas, emotions, or even personal experiences, which are constructed to be an exciting story. A novel is a long, fictional narrative that describes intimate human experiences. According to Wellek and Warren (1984:282), "The novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. The romance in lofty and elevated language describes what never happened nor is likely to happen." Novel may be the mirror of real social life. It means that novel may be realistic; it is the picture of human's social life, including interaction in the economy, life, religion, and so on.



In a novel there are many elements that build the unity of the whole story. One of the components is character. It is a central point in the book because various characters support the story of a novel from the beginning until the end. Characters in literary work are created by the imagination of the author related in real life. Doody (1996) defines novel as a story of prose in a long shape. This long shape means that the story includes complex plot, characters, and settings. Novel has intrinsic elements that develop the story from inside.

This research aims to describe Hazel Grace's character traits and the representation of John Green's life experiences in *The Fault in Our Stars*. The story of this novel is about characters who are diagnosed of having a chronic cancer. They are Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters. People with cancer have a limited interaction to the society because most of them are treated as a special one. Immediately after a chronic disease is diagnosed, the patients can be in a state of crisis marked by physical, social, and psychological disorders.

A patient who is diagnosed with chronic disease usually carries on the need to make temporary or permanent changes in physical and social activities. Furthermore, people who are diagnosed with chronic disease should integrate their patience into their lives psychologically if they wish to adapt with their disorders. The main characters in *The Fault in Our Stars* are struggling against the disease and confronting the death in such ways.

*The Fault in Our Stars* is a work of art written by John Green. This novel is one of not so many favorite teenage novels. It tells about a couple who suffers cancer disease. *The fault in Our Stars* is the sixth novel of John Green as an adult

novelist. His experience of becoming a chaplain at a hospital surrounded by children with life-threatening illnesses for five months inspired him to write *The Fault in Our Stars*. The writing of the novel was also inspired by the death of his very best-friend named Esther, who died from Thyroid cancer. In *The Fault in Our Stars* novel, John Green named the main character Hazel, who in the novel suffers the same cancer as his friend did: thyroid cancer. Both John and Esther are chaplains in a children's hospital and it was Esther who gave John the idea to write the novel.

The main character of the novel is a sixteen-year-old teenager named Hazel Grace Lancaster. She has thyroid cancer. She likes bed and loves reading. This novel is about love, faith, spirit, and mortal affection. It is an inspiring novel for people with cancer that gives more spirit and power of how to live the life. Those happen in Hazel Grace and Augustus Water's life when they meet subsequently and decide to build a relationship and love each other.

The author John Green captures the extraordinary spirit of a young teenager to live her life as a cancer carrier. It can be seen when Hazel wishes to meet the author of her favorite book. Hazel is prepared to die until at the age of 14. A medical miracle, however, shrinks the tumors in her lungs and her life continued for another. Two years after the miracle, at the age of 16, Hazel begins to lose her life as a happy teenager. She loses her high-school life, her friends, and her state of normality. Hazel's life is tethered to an oxygen tank.

Hazel is a strong and confident young girl. At the same time, however, she is also hopeless with her disease. Hazel has very limited interaction to the outside

world. She only has one friend until 16 years old. Indeed, people with cancer have limited interaction with others. It is hard for them to interact with the society and build a relationship with other people. Therefore, one day Hazel's mother suggests her to go to a support group in a church called "Literal Heart of Jesus," through which her mom is hoping to connect Hazel with other people.

Hazel meets many people in that support group who experience the same as her: suffering from cancer. One of them is Augustus Waters, the one whom Hazel is falling in love with. They fall in love and enjoy some great times together. After meeting in that group, they have a lot of interaction and they become close friends with wonderful relationships. As people with cancer, they try to support each other. Their relationships make their life more beautiful and for some time they forget the harsh life as people with cancer, even at the end Augustus is forced to give his life to his cancer.

Hazel is worried that her love to Augustus will hurt him because she knows that her life is about to end. Hazel thinks that her death would brake Augustus' heart. Surprisingly, Augustus loves Hazel too, and Hazel changes her mind about her fear, and her life becomes more cheerful with Augustus. The fact that August dies first instead of her does brake Hazel's heart heavily. Hazel feels so hopeless, Augustus death ruins her life worsen than ever. She always feels that August is her spirit booster, and his death makes her life torn apart. Therefore, Hazel has to continue living her life with the ruins of her broken heart and seeing forward into her life with such different perspective, more grown-up view of life.

Augustus has taught Hazel much about life. Augustus is the memorable character of *The Fault in Our Stars*, his charm, and honesty, and he knows it.

John Green enchants the readers to feel psychological conflicts encountered by people who live their life with cancer. The novel takes the readers to understand how teenagers pass their transition period desperately in need of interacting with others but they cannot do so because the cancer disease costs their social life. And, *The Fault in Our Stars* novel narrates about the relationship between Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters, a close friendship with fantastic thing in this world.

The novel is bestselling teenage novel with the heartbreaking story about the struggle of the main characters compelling for people with cancer and how love gives more spirit and power to live. This novel has grabbed the top Amazon book charts. Before his book *The Fault in Our Stars* was even published in January 2012, John Green was also at the top of the New York Times Bestseller list. This book has been translated into 47 different languages.

The traits of Hazel as the main character are interesting to analyze in terms of their similarity with John Green's life experiences. The novel tells a story about characters who have cancer living with fear and changes in physical and social activities. John Green successfully describes the character, setting, plot, style, and point of view in *The Fault in our Stars* to make the readers interested in reading the novel and be inspired with the characters' story.

## **B. Problems of the Study**

Considering the background of the study above, the researcher formulates the problems to answer in this thesis as follows:

1. What are John Green's views on Esther Earl based on his life experience?
2. What are Hazel Grace's character traits in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*?
3. How does *The Fault in Our Stars* represent John Green's life?

## **C. Objectives of the Study**

The aims of this study are to answer the formulated problems above. The researcher investigates the characteristics of Esther on the basis of John Green's views and tries to find out Hazel Grace's character traits in *The Fault in Our Stars*. After finding out the correlation between the characters of Esther and the character traits of Hazel, the researcher analyzes John Green's creativity in describing Esther Earl in the character of Hazel Grace through biographical criticism.

## **D. Significance of the Study**

This study shall give theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study can enrich the development of literary criticism, particularly on the use of biographical criticism proposed by Wellek and Warren (1984). This study is expected to briefly show how to apply biographical theory into literary work

analysis. Furthermore this research may also be a useful reference for other researchers who wish to carry out similar or relevant studies.

Practically, the researcher hopes this research can be useful for the readers, especially those who want to know about the character of Hazel. It is also projected aim to understand the character traits which is self-experienced in the author's life showed by the character of Hazel by means of biographical approach. This research may give more academic perspectives for the readers about biographical theory of Wellek and Warren (1984). After understanding the study, the readers are expected to be able to implement the theory into their own research.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation**

The research focuses on particular issues of character traits of Hazel in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. It is about Hazel Grace's characterization in the novel based on John Green's life as the author by analyzing his creativity in describing Esther Earl. It applies biographical approach to find out the relation of Easther and Hazel viewed from John Green's creative work.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, the researcher gives some definitions of key terms commonly appear in this study:

1. Life experience refers to any experience and knowledge gained through living. It helps to shape the way people look others and view anything around them.
2. Character traits are the aspects of a person's behavior valued by the people around them. Character traits are personalities, morals, ethics, and beliefs of characters in a literary work.

### **G. Previous Studies**

There are some previously undertaken studies on *The Fault in Our Stars*. The first study is *An Incomplete Psychological Novel: A Psychoanalytical Analysis of Hazel in John Green's "The Fault in Our Stars"* (Pangestu & Sunardi, 2016). The researchers applied qualitative method by focusing on the identification of Hazel Grace as the main character through psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud as its analytical tool. The writers tried to identify the self-defense mechanisms of Hazel Grace and their triggering factors.

The second study is *A Psychological Analysis of the Main Character in Green's "The Fault in Our Stars"* (Widyastuti, 2017). The study focused on the psychological dimensions of the main character by analyzing the behavior and personality in general and how they developed for the rest of the story. It analyzed and explained the relation between the main character's psychological needs according to Maslow's motivational theory while facing the chronic illness and the psychological condition using Kubler-Ross's theory. It discussed grief stages that the main characters are going along the story.

The third study is *Psychological Relationship in “The Fault in Our Stars” Novel: An Analysis of Social Exchange* (Fithroni, 2017). This study analyzed the relationship of Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters as the main characters. It aims to know the factors underlying friendship. The research focused on the factors underlying friendship using Robert S. Fieldman’s theory. Then, it focuses on the relationship analysis by implementing Thibaut and Kelley’s social exchange theory. The researcher concluded that the relationship needs perpetuity factors such as similarity, reciprocity of liking, positive qualities, physical attractiveness, and physical appearance. The researcher also found out that the relationship of Hazel and Augustus is satisfactory, stable, and independence.

The fourth study is *The Motivation of the Main Characters to Cherish Their Life as Seen in John Green’s “The Fault in Our Stars”* (Damayanti, 2016). The writer focused on the motivation of Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters in the novel. The writer examined the motivation of the characters in doing something that they have not done yet, i.e., cherishing their life. The writer applied psychological approach through the lenses of characterization and motivation theories. The study found out that Hazel Grace is a loving and considerate person while Augustus Waters is a caring person.

The fifth study is *Fear Reflected in John Green’s “The Fault in Our Stars”: A Psychoanalytic Approach* (Husna, 2016). This study applied individual psychoanalytic approach to analyze the fear experienced by the main characters. The design of this study is descriptive qualitative. This research showed that the main psychological problems encountered by the major characters are their fear of



death, pain, and oblivion. Along the study, the characters attempt to figure out ways to overcome their fear.

The sixth study is *Mother Daughter's Ego in the Novel "The Fault in Our Stars" by John Green* (Marfiah, 2017). The researcher discussed about the mother's and daughter's ego in the novel through Sigmund Freud's theory about personality. The researcher applied descriptive qualitative method. The study revealed that the mother showed over-protective, understanding, loving, and caring about Hazel's condition. Meanwhile, the daughter showed some personality aspects like compulsive, understanding, spoiled, and selfish.

## **H. Research Method**

This section contains research design, data source, and steps of data collection and data analysis.

### **1. Research Design**

This study is literary criticism, which is primarily concerned with discussing and analyzing individual work of literature. The most important aspect is careful reading and re-reading the work in order to decide what it is about and how it works. This is a part of literary criticism studies because it does not require statistical data analysis to explore and interpret the fact.

This study applied biographical approach by elaborating the life experiences of the author that are related to the main character and finding Hazel Grace's traits shown in *The Fault in Our Stars*. The novel is a kind of

commemoration between the author John Green and his special friend Esther Earl who reached him inspiration on his life. The study also showed how John Green's creativity is described in Esther's character in real life and Hazel's character traits in the novel.

## **2. Data Source**

The source of data of this research is a novel written by John Green entitled *The Fault in Our Stars*. The novel was published by Dutton Books Publisher in 2012. The researcher analyzed the data collected from the novel, which are in the forms of words, phrases, and sentences.

## **3. Data Collection**

For collecting the data, the researcher did some steps as follows:

- Reading the novel to get a general understanding of the story;
- Reading the novel by focusing on Hazel's character traits;
- Finding out Esther Earl's characters from John Green's point of view;
- Highlighting the similarity between Esther Earl's character and Hazel Grace's character traits;
- Listing similarities and differences of between Esther Earl's character and Hazel Grace's character traits to identify John Green's creativity.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

All collected data were analyzed through some steps below:

- Organizing the data into typology of biographical criticism. The researcher matched the data of Esther's characters based on John Green's view and Hazel's character traits in *The Fault in Our Stars*;
- Interpreting data based on the biographical approach.
- Drawing conclusion and rechecking the suitability of the answers with the research problems.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher presents theories that are related with the study. It discusses about literature and author, biographical criticism, character and character traits, representation, and biography of the author.

#### A. Literature and Author

According to Hudson (1965:10), literature is the vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, and what they have thought and felt about those aspects. It is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language. It is the expressions of everything they have seen, such as their experiences, thought, and feeling in their life. To express them, authors use language as a medium. Sometimes an author uses his/her imagination in producing a literary work.

Wellek and Warren (1984) argue that it is not the material but the facts and information that support and surround a story, such as the biography of the author, also his/her social, religion, environment, and education background. It is about things that can't be found inside the story itself. Through literary work, people can analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of literature. The intrinsic elements are the basic parts of literary work, such as theme, symbol, imagery, figure of speech, characterization, setting, point of view, etc. Meanwhile, extrinsic elements are supporting elements of literature that are from outside of the literary work.

Biography is only regarded when it gives contribution to the making of literary works. From biography, readers would know not only the genius, moral, intellectual, and emotional development of a human but also the condition and creative process. According to Reaske (1966), biography is a detailed description or account of someone's life. In the basic list of a biography are education, work, relationships, and death. Biography also portrays the author's life experience. A biography presents the subject's life story by the author, highlighting various aspects of the author's life, including intimate details of experience, and may include an analysis of the subject's personality.

An exploration on the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study (Wellek & Warren, 1984). It means, biography is an ancient literary criticism and one of the oldest theories to analyse a literary work. It reveals the creativity of the author in creating a work by revealing the relationship of the author's life experiences and the work itself. However, even when there is a close relationship between the work of art and the life of an author, this must never be construed as meaning that the work of art is a mere copy of life. It means, not always literary work is mere copy of life. Usually, an author improves their personal life story and leave some mysterious hopes or dreams for the readers.

In literature, the author's biography helps the readers to understand the creative process of the author and the genesis of the literary work. Biography is like sedimentation of the experience, whether it is personal, as individual experiences, or collective, as inter subjective experiences. Analyzing literary work

is not only about the work itself but might also be about the personal identity of the author, as a biography (Baym, 2004).

According to Baym (2004), biographical approach is one of the oldest literary approaches. Biographical approach is the systematic study which talks about the process of creativity. In other words, literature is born from the author's creativity. Literary studies employing biographical approach have some purposes. First, it explains a great many allusions or even words in the author's work. Second, it helps people in studying the most obvious of all strictly developmental problems in the history of literature. Third, it accumulates the materials for other questions of literary history (Wellek & Warren, 1984).

Biographical approach allows people not only to examine forms of wisdom but also to identify the actual types of life situation that are seen as electing or requiring wisdom. It explains the event of his remembered life story that integrate information about life experiences. Therefore, biographical approach is a shape of historiography. It tells about a period in the author's life time.

However, biographical approach has some weaknesses. The biographical approach forgets that a work of art is not simply the embodiment of experience but always the latest work in a series of such works; it is in drama, a novel, a poem determined, so far as it is determined at all, by literary tradition and conventions. The biographical approach actually obscures a proper comprehension of the literary process since it breaks up the order of literary tradition to substitute the life-circle of an individual (Wellek & Warren, 1984).

The biographical approach ignores quite simple psychological facts. A work of art may be the 'mask', the 'anti-self' behind which a real person is hiding, or it may be a picture of the life from which the author wants to escape (Wellek & Warren, 1984). Simply, there is a parallelism between the author and the characters in his/her works.

According to Guerin et al (1999), biographical approach can be defined as the approach that sees a literary work chiefly, if not exclusively, as reflection of the author's life and the time experiences of the characters in the work. Moreover, biographical approach is the study of the social structure or way of life of a certain time period which gives the readers a greater knowledge base to draw conclusion and better understanding the upon story by discovering details about the author's life and time experiences (Roberts, 1999).

## **B. Biographical Criticism**

Biographical criticism studies a literary work in the context of the author's life experiences and, more broadly, the author's historical period. Biographical criticism uses details about an author's personal life or life experiences to analyze literary works, such as economic status, life events, family, political views, and educational background of the author. Biographical criticism is a form of literary criticism which analyzes a writer's biography to show the relationship between the author's life and their works of literature (Johnson, 1779:81). Biographical criticism explores how understanding an author's life can help readers more thoroughly comprehend the literary work.

The researchers of biographical criticism not only concern with simply describing the author's life but instead with interpreting the literary work using the insights provided by the author's knowledge. This approach begins with a simple but central insight that literature is written by actual people and that understanding an author's life can help readers more thoroughly comprehend the work. It often affords a practical method by which readers can better understand a text. According to Kennedy and Gioia (2015), a biographical critic must be careful not to take the biographical facts of author's life too far in criticizing the works of that author.

Biographical criticism is a form of literary criticism that analyzes literature through the writer's biography, life experiences, race, gender, etc. Biography refers to an author's background or life experiences, and criticism refers to how we analyze and interpret a work of literature. Biographical criticism is an approach used to understand a literary work by studying deeper about the life of the author. Often a particular poem or novel is subject to this kind of analysis simply by nature of its material in relation to the background of the author's personal experience.

According to Wellek and Warren (1984), in using biographical criticism there are three points of view to carefully consider. First, the author's biography explains the process of creating that literary work. Second, the author shifts the attention to human personality. It means, the author is still the main focus when creating a literary work. Third, biography is a material for science or future science, the psychology of artistic creation. It means that biography can be used as



a technique or science for analysing a poetry, novel or other literary work through the condition of the author when creating their literary work.

### **C. Character and Characterization**

Character is one of important elements in dramatic or narrative work. Characters are “persons in a dramatic or narrative work, endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say (the dialog), and what they do (the action)” (Abrams 1981:20). Characters are anyone portrayed or presented in literary works. Character is an important part in a story because it has prime function to build up the story. Character is not only person but also elements of nature, such as the mind, the wave, the gross, or even animal. Stories exist only because these things are treated as characters (Soebroto, 1988).

According to Peck and Coyle (1986), people in a novel are referred to as characters. We assess them on the basis of what the author tells us about and on the basis of what they do (action) and say (dialog). In other words, characters refer to human beings and figures in literary works related to an individual personality. Characters are created by the author through his or her words in their literary work. Without characters, literary works are not complete.

One type of a character is protagonist, the main character(s) in a story. This character is considered as good human in real life. Usually, this character is mentioned as a hero in the story. It is the opposite of antagonist, a character who stands directly opposing the protagonist. This character is considered a bad character. Another type of a character is the so-called flat character, which is less representing human personality than the embodiment of single attitude. This

character has only one side and there is no change in the traits. Meanwhile, round (complex) character is the opposite of the flat character. This character is more complicated and many sided. This is also obviously more lifelike than the single, flat character. This character can be seen from many sides because this kind of character has many character traits (Kenney, 1996).

Furthermore, characterization is the way an author reveals the details about the personality of a character. There are several ways possible to take in characterization, i.e., by description or report, action, character thought or conversation, and free indirect speech (Nurgiyanto, 1998). In other words, characterization can be presented through dialogues, actions, thoughts, personalities, cultural backgrounds, religions, education, etc.

The method of characterization used by the author to develop a character includes explaining the character's appearance, displaying the character's actions, revealing how the character thinks, showing the character traits, and how the character speaks and interacts with others. The author usually expresses characterization through behavior, background of the character, family, and the beginning life in the story.

According to Murphy (1972), characterization can be portrayed through some techniques of characterization as follows:

1. Character as seen by another. The author describes a character in the story through point of view of the others.
2. Personal description. The author may use this method to describe a character by their physical appearances, such as face of the character, body, etc.

3. Past life. This technique describes the character by letting the readers know about a character's past life and the author give clues or reasons through some events that help to shape the personality of a character. It can also be shown through the characters' conversation or attitudes towards others.
4. Speech. The author gives readers some clues to a character in a novel or drama through what the character says, including the way a character builds conversation with others or how a character gives opinions.
5. Reactions. The reader can identify a character by understanding how he/she reacts to various situations and events showed by the author in the story.
6. Conversation of others. A person's characters can be identified through his/her conversation with others people or the things they say about others.
7. Thought. The author gives the readers knowledge or what other person is thinking about, the other person's mind, and what the other feels.
8. Direct comment. The author can describe or give comments on a person's character in the story.
9. Mannerism. The author describes a person's way of behaving or attitudes that a particular person has.

#### **D. Character Traits**

According to Allport (1967), the personality of an individual can be studied through common traits and personal dispositions. The common traits are used to compare people based on six grounds: religious, social, economic, political, aesthetic, and theoretical values. Character traits describe someone

behavior. They are aspects of someone's behavior that are valued by the community or society around them. They are often used in the context of specific situations, such as encountering an opportunity or a challenge.

For example, think of a favorite hero in a literary work. The readers can see how the hero acts under pressure and how he/she behaves when others are in trouble. The words used to describe these behaviors, such as caring, brave, and honest, are character traits. Character traits are frequently based on personalities, ethics, morals, and beliefs. Character traits can help to make decisions that align with the values.

According to Holman and Harmon (1986), character traits owned by any round characters. They possess many unpredictable traits. The round characters usually are major figures in a story. They may be considered dynamic in which they demonstrate their capacities to change or to grow. Round characters are usually the main characters in a story. Round characters show or express many individual and unpredictable traits.

There are some points to consider when determining character traits. First, words of the character. The readers know through what the characters say in the story and how the characters talk about themselves to the readers. Second, acts of the character. The readers know through what the characters do in the story and how the characters solve a problem or face new situations. Last, feeling. The characters show their feeling through what they feel in the story written by the author, such as being happy, worried, sad, and so on.

## **E. Biography of John Green**

John Green was born on August 24, 1977 in Indianapolis. Three weeks after John green was born, his family moved to Michigan, the later Birmingham, Alabama, and finally to Orlando, Florida. John Green is one of American authors and YouTube content creators. Books have a part to play in this as far as he is concerned. John Green now one of the USA's best-selling young adult novelists.

Green was fresh out of Kenyon College in Ohio, where he had studied English and religion, mostly Islamic history. After graduating from college, John green spent seven months working as a student chaplain at a hospital, counseling with a religious bent the families of children who were dying, or had died of cancer and other illnesses. His experiences of working in a hospital inspired him to become an author.

John Green's religious vacation was replaced by an ambition to write. A religious studies and English major in college, John Green always harbored aspirations of becoming a novelist. Still, his practical nature led him to pursue a "day job" as an Episcopal priest. A seven-month stint as a chaplain in a children's hospital, however, convinced him he was not cut out for the ministry. John Green lived for several years in Chicago, where he was a viewer journal for Booklist magazine, and later to New York City, where he wrote reviews and worked in public radio while Sarah, his wife, attended graduate school.

In 2005, his first novel *Looking for Alaska*, a coming-of-age story inspired by his time at a boarding school in Alabama, was published by Dutton Children's Books. It was a school story and teen romance inspired by his experiences at

Indian Springs, fictionalized as Culver Creek Preparatory High School. John Green came to prominence as a writer when his first novel, in which Miles as the narrator, has been compared to Holden Caulfield from Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, made the American Library Association's 2005 top 10 books for adults and won the ALA's 2006 Michael L. Printz Award.

John Green is the Florida native who now lives in Indiana with his wife and two children. He wrote his first young adult book *Looking for Alaska* in 2005 and followed that with two more novels: *An Abundance of Katherines* in 2006 and *Paper Town* in 2008. John Green's books *Looking for Alaska* and *An Abundance of Katherines* won prizes and wide readership.

John Green says he is novelist with a day job making YouTube videos. John Green and his brother Hank Green entertain millions with their Vlogbrothers online video project. That seems a modest position description, particularly right now. He has been named one of Time's 100 most influential people and has written an international best-seller that has just been made into a Hollywood movie. He had majored in literature and religious studies, and was planning to attend Chicago Divinity School.

Working at the hospital was part of the process of preparation for Episcopalian ministry. The hospital experience affected him in many ways. It helped him to decide that ministry was not for him. It challenged him to think about the best and most constructive ways to care for people, and developed his notion of empathy. He suspects it helped him to be an author, given that empathy is crucial to the job. He stayed in Chicago, and got a job as a publishing assistant

and production manager with Booklist, a book review magazine published by the American Library Association. John Green wrote hundreds of book reviews and novel of his own.

John Green is a prolific user of social media and has 5 million Twitter followers. We can find him on Tumblr ([fishingboatproceeds.tumblr.com](https://fishingboatproceeds.tumblr.com)) and on his website ([johngreenbooks.com](http://johngreenbooks.com)), which gives a lot of background information about his work and provides detailed answers to questions. There are some works by John Green: *Looking for Alaska* (2005), *An Abundance of Katherines* (2006), *Let in Snow: Three Holiday Romance* (2008), *Paper Towns* (2008), *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (2010), *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012), and *Turtles All the Way Down* (2017).

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Generally, this chapter contains three main parts. The first part is about John Green's views on Esther Earl's characters. The second part is Hazel Grace's character traits as portrayed in the novel. The last part is the "creativity" of John Green in describing Esther's character in Hazel's character traits.

#### **A. John Green's Views on Esther Earl's Characters**

John Green and Esther Earl are best friends in real life. They met at some events as a fan with her favorite author. After being well-known, Esther gave John Green many inspirations in his life about how Esther fought against her disease and how she received or faced her life that finally inspired him to dedicate *The Fault in Our Stars* for Esther.

After reading the biography of John Green and how he interacted with Esther Earl, the researcher catches some characters of Esther Earl. These are the characters of Esther from John Green's points of view:

##### **1. Loving**

John Green saw Esther as a girl who loved her family, friends, and other people around her. Esther used the rest of her life to love them. She also spread out her loves on YouTube videos and her writings on Blogs. Esther did not look like a sick person on the internet so that Esther had a very big internet presence on



multiple platforms, including Tumblr, Twitter, YouTube, and Skype to interact with her internet friends and fans.

*“But this much was true, at least as far as I knew her. She was generous, and loving, and full of grace—which was, after all, her middle name.”*

Esther was a girl who acted on the internet. She loved to acquaintance with new people and interacted with her friends on the internet. Her friend on Catitude named Andrew Slack admitted that John Green loved the characters of Esther because she was a loving girl. She liked to show great care to other people.

*“John Green loves Esther because Esther was lovable,” Slack said in an email. “And that’s why I love Esther.” (abcNews.go.com)*

John Green referred Esther Earl as a young girl with cheers in her life and empathy to others. She loved her family and her friends so much. She was an unusual mix of teenagers and empathy and a very outwardly focused girl. She was really attentive to her friends and family. She was a thoughtful girl because Esther also liked writing on her diary book and her blog to share anything. Her father said that she liked to write about her expression or mind since she was a child. This condition was portrayed in the quotation of John Green on his blog:

*“... young, blessed with a genuinely sophomoric sense of humor, silly, empathetic, madly in love with her friends and family, and a very gifted writer.”*

Even though she was dying, she never showed to her friends and family that she was terminally ill. She was acting to her internet friends like nothing happened to herself. She still looked fully alive to play and joke with people around her. Even though her thyroid cancer affected her life, and that meant that she could not see her friends and family very often, Esther always loved them until the rest of her life.

*“... when she could not get out of bed, she found ways to be fully alive: to play with her friends, to crack jokes, to love, and to be loved. And then she was gone, all at once.”*

Esther was a happy girl. She never showed her sadness about her illness. She always had a smile on her face, never a frown. She always shared her happiness with her family and friends. Esther loved to act crazy things, and she always asked her family to take a picture on herself on the hospital bed. She sometimes made silly videos to upload on YouTube and posted silly pictures on Facebook, Instagram, or other social media she had.

## **2. Funny**

Since his acquaintance with Esther, John Green saw Esther as a funny girl although she was diagnosed with cancer at the age of twelve and became an internet celebrity as she blogged and posted on YouTube videos. She showed her personality on the internet with her friends, her family, and her fans. People knew her best act through the funny and empathic videos. She liked to entertain her internet friends. She did not show her illness on the internet.

*“Even amid very serious illness – far sicker than Hazel – Esther was extremely funny,” Green said.*

Before John Green met Esther Earl at Harry Potter Conference, he was a former student chaplain at a children’s hospital. Everyday Green met children who suffered from disease and illness. Then, he struggled to write a novel about teens with cancer or illness. After meeting Esther, he realized that a child with cancer was not as sad as he had used to think. Even though she was dying, Esther

showed herself to John Green that a kid with stage-four thyroid cancer could be just funny and cheerful as normal children.

*“... kids with stage 4 cancer can be just as funny, and as normal and as afraid as any other kid.”*

Esther always shared her cheerful jokes with her family and friends on the internet with her silly acts. She did not want to make people whom she loved sad. Although John Green told the world about Esther Earl by his video –blogging on his YouTube and talking about his book dedicated to Esther, he believed that Esther gained followers because she was quirky and absurd about her sense of humor and her ability to listen to others.

John Green was Esther’s favorite author. She was obsessed with Green’s earlier books and started being a fan of a group dedicated to his work. She met John Green for the first time at Harry Potter Conference, and there Esther greeted Green first and asked him to take a picture together. Esther was a part of Nerdfighter, the community subculture based mainly on the internet founded by John Green. They both soon became best friends. John Green did not want something horrible happened to her because he really loved Esther, who helped to realize him about empathy with others.

*“I didn’t want to imagine that this hilarious, devoted fan might die, and Esther wanted friendships that weren’t defined and circumscribed by illness.”*

*“She was so funny, sharp-edged, and self-aware. She had such an improbable capacity for empathy.”*

On the internet, Esther is a very cheerful girl and she shared her daily activities or thought to her internet friends. She did not show that she was terminally ill. She was incredibly funny on the internet, but in the end, on August

9<sup>th</sup> she put up a video where she admitted she had lost touch with most of her friends because her condition was coming down.

*“On the Internet, she wasn’t Esther Earl Who Has Cancer and an Oxygen Tank. She was Esther Crazycrayon, the Funny Girl in Catitude.”*

### **3. Courageous**

John Green said Esther was a great friend to him. Esther became the friend of John Green, who credited her for inspiring him to complete the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. According to John Green, Esther was a courageous girl he had ever met. Before he met Esther when he was working at the children’s hospital, John Green thought about this world for being the sort of guilty place where children did nothing wrong had to live in fear and pain for years and died. However, Esther covered her fear and pain in front of people and kept showing that she was still awesome and courageous.

*“... But even in her final days, Esther was wholly alive, as alive as anyone else, and so even though everyone who loved her understood she was dying,”*

From Esther, John Green was reminded about a short-yet-good life. Esther showed to John Green and her friends that they had to be grateful for the life they had and used the rest for their best lives. Therefore, Esther was known by John green and her internet friends as a courageous girl for her short life, as shown in the following statement:

*“... and in my memories, she reminds me that a short life can also be a good and rich life, that it is possible to live with depression without being consumed by it, and that meaning in life is found together, in family and friendship that transcends and survives all manner of suffering.”*

## **B. Hazel Grace's Character Traits in the Novel**

The researcher has collected data about Hazel Grace's character traits based on the reading of *The Fault in Our Stars*. There are several character traits attributed to Hazel Grace.

### **1. Selfless**

Hazel tends to think of others before thinking about herself. After knowing that she suffers from cancer, she becomes awfully lazy. She does not want to leave the house and decide to stay inside for reading novels or watching TV. Her mom believes that one of the symptoms of depression is disinterest in activities, but Hazel refuses to attend Support Group, as shown in the following excerpt:

*The Support Group, of course, was depressing as hell. It met every Wednesday. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.9)*

Actually, Hazel admits that she attends the Support Group to make her parents happy because her mom wants Hazel to have an activity and not feeling depressed about her disease. She does not want those she loves, especially her mom and dad, feel sad.

*I went to Support Group for the same reason that I'd once allowed nurses ... with exotically named chemicals: I wanted to make my parents happy. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.11)*

### **2. Loving**

Hazel is a teenage girl who really loves her mom and dad. Hazel knows that anything she does is insignificant in the grand scheme of the universe. She decides to act in certain ways, by keeping most people at a distance, knowing her disease and death that may ultimately hurt them.

*My dad started crying a little. I didn't look over at him... I hated hurting him. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.66)*

Hazel thinks of others before herself. She is not scared of dying but she worries that her parents will be lost when she is gone. This is based on Hazel's statement in the novel:

*"Do you think you guys will stay together if I die?" I asked.  
"I just don't want to ruin your life or anything."  
Mom leaned forward and pressed her face into my messy puff of hair and kissed me at the very top of my head. ... (The Fault in Our Stars, p.162)*

When Hazel and Augustus Waters meet in the Support Group, they fall in love with each other. When Hazel gets acquainted with Augustus, Hazel opens herself up to Augustus and learns to be more social and loosen up with others. Augustus accepts her affection and starts to love again, but Hazel resists his affection because she does not want Augustus to be another "love victim" when she dies. The quotation below supports the statement above.

*I wanted to know that he would be okay if I died. I wanted to not be a grenade, to not be a malevolent force in the lives of people I loved. "Just, like, what happened." (The Fault in Our Stars, p.94)*

### **3. Determined**

Hazel Grace is a strong-willed, determined girl. Hazel's determination has been shown in the novel when she goes to great lengths to figure out the ending of *An Imperial Affliction* novel by Peter van Houten, a book in particular that really inspires her. It is about a young girl with cancer and it portrays her own experience with cancer more accurately than anything she has ever encountered. However, the story makes her curious because the book ends in mid-sentence.

*"I can tell you that you got everything right in An Imperial Affliction. Or at least you got me right. Your book has a way of telling me what I feel before I even feel it, and I've reread it dozens of times. I understand the book ends*

*because Anna dies or becomes too ill to continue writing it, but I would really like to know what happens to Anna's mom— .... What happens to Anna's friends .... These questions have haunted me for years—and I don't know how long I have left to get answers to them.” (The Fault in Our Stars, p.42)*

Someday, Hazel recommends Augustus read that AIA book. It serves as Hazel Grace's obsession throughout her cancerous life. She passes her curiosity and asks Augustus his opinion after reading that book. Then, they have the same question about what happens at the end of the story.

The effort of Hazel shows her obsession in finding out the ending of the book even though Hazel's medical condition does not make her stop from traveling to another country and tracking down the author to find out the answer of her countless questions. Hazel's condition does not stop her determination to figure out the missing answer she is looking for.

*“'Cause I'm just—I want to go to Amsterdam, and I want him to tell me what happens after the book is over, .... (The Fault in Our Stars, p.68)*

Hazel and Augustus decide to go to Amsterdam and uses Augustus' Wish from the Genies to grant their dream to meet the author and get the answers to countless questions that haunt them. After negotiating with Hazel's doctors and parents, Dr. Maria allows Hazel to go to Amsterdam. Hazel feels really thrilled that she gets an opportunity to meet her third best friend and the author of her favorite book. Then, she hopes to survive with her cancer until after she gets the answer to what happens to Anna's mom in *An Imperial Affliction* book.

*If I could just stay alive for a week, I'd know the unwritten secrets of Anna's mom ....  
“Keep your shit together,” I whispered to my lungs. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.72)*

Hazel and Augustus believe that Peter van Houten can give them insight into what happens to Anna's families and friends after Anna succumbs to cancer because it is much related to their condition.

#### 4. Courageous

Hazel is a courageous young girl. She shows her courage throughout the novel. When she is diagnosed with thyroid cancer at thirteen, she does not want to be covered by fear. She embraces the life she has and she continues trying her best even though she is in a bad situation.

*"So afterward, while I was getting eviscerated by chemo, for some reason, I decided to feel really hopeful. Not about survival specifically, but I felt like Anna does in the book, that feeling of excitement and gratitude about just being able to marvel at it all. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.95)*

Hazel tries to look good to anyone she loves. She does her daily activities well although she still thinks about her cancer that may kill her anytime. Hazel grows physically weaker. This change is apparent in the fact that she uses the stairs at the Support Group at the beginning of the novel but uses the elevator by the end of the story. However, she does not want to be a burden of her parents. The most important thing for her is enjoying life, no matter how her condition is.

*"Is everything all right?" asked Mom as I ate.  
"Uh-huh," I said. I took a bite of burger. Swallowed. Tried to say something that a normal person whose brain was not drowning in panic would say. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.57)*

Hazel knows that she will die soon and it will hurt people around her. But she hides her fear and acts as if nothing happens. Hazel is one of courageous people in the story. Not everyone can walk around with a big bright smile while



knowing that he/she is going to die pretty soon. This is supported by the following quote.

*People talk about the courage of cancer patients, and I do not deny that courage. I had been poked and stabbed and poisoned for years, and still I trod on. But make no mistake: In that moment, I would have been very, very happy to die. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.61)*

Before Hazel knows Augustus at the Support Group, she is an individual person and laments her illness that will kill her. She is not too optimistic about her life. Then, after she makes a friend with Augustus, Hazel's spirit goes out of her shell. Hazel starts showing her courage through the hard time when Augustus feels sick and dying. She realizes that Augustus is going to die, and she is brave enough not to freak out and go into denial. She does not mention it although it is hard.

*.... and only now that I loved a grenade did I understand the foolishness of trying to save others from my own impending fragmentation: I couldn't unlove Augustus Waters. And I didn't want to. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.116)*

She does not heed her own world of depression due to knowing that actually she is dying. Hazel is a girl with no illusions about her state of health. Hazel really knows that even though she is on a drug that keeps her tumor in check, she will never be a typical teenage cheerleader or lively girl. She is not just sitting, feeling sorry for herself. She never talks about her illness. Instead, she talks about her love story with Augustus that makes her crossed and get out of her comfort zone.

She is diagnosed with thyroid cancer. She cannot live to the fullest but she does her best to minimize the hurt or damage she might cause. Therefore, she

talks about how she covers her cancer with strong courage and live her best life every day regardless the fact that she is dying.

*In truth, it always hurt. It always hurt not to breathe like a normal person, incessantly reminding your lungs to be lungs, forcing yourself to accept as unsolvable the clawing scraping inside-out ache of underoxygenation. So I wasn't lying, exactly. I was just choosing among truths. (The Fault in Our Stars, p.29)*

## 5. Hopeless

Hazel is frequently portrayed as a courageous character, but sometimes she shows her hopeless character. Nevertheless, she is diagnosed with thyroid cancer and she believes her life is not long anymore. However, she does not let cancer define and rule her life. She basically does not want to make others sad, but sometimes she gives up with her life, as shown in the following excerpt:

*"NO!" I shouted. "I'm not eating dinner, and I can't stay healthy, because I'm not healthy. I am dying, Mom. I am going to die and leave you here alone and you won't have a me to hover around and you won't be a mother anymore, and I'm sorry, but I can't do anything about it, okay?!" (The Fault in Our Stars, p.160)*

Hazel knows that her parents suffer because of her thyroid cancer and she always avoids knowing new friends because she considers herself "a grenade" for others. She does not want to make people feel hurt about her coming death. She does not want to die without the security of knowing that her parents will be okay without her. This condition is portrayed in the following data.

*"I'm like. Like. I'm like a grenade, Mom. I'm a grenade and at some point, I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay?"*  
*"I'm a grenade," I said again. "I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there's nothing, I can do about hurting you; you're too invested, so just please let me do that, okay? I'm not depressed. I don't need to get out more. And I can't be a regular teenager, because I'm a grenade." (The Fault in Our Stars, p.58)*

*The Fault in Our Stars* does not tell much about how she fights against the cancer. It mostly centers on the journey of Augustus and Hazel and their love story. Hazel does not look like a cancer patient who is terminally ill. She is attributed as a courageous girl although, at some moments, she admits that she gives up of herself because she cannot do anything for her parents and her death may come anytime.

### **C. The Representation of John Green's Life in the Novel**

Esther's characters and Hazel Grace's character traits share many aspects in common. Their most apparent similarities are mostly superficial things, such as that they are given a drug for clearing up the worst symptoms although there is no cure. Both relies on support machines to help them breathe correctly. Other similarities include their outwardly focused personalities, their closeness to their friends and family, and their mind. It is most likely that Hazel's character traits in the novel represent Esther in John Green's life. The followings are similarities of their characters.

#### **1. Showing Love, Courage, and Determination**

Esther and Hazel are both loving characters. They love their family and friends but their unique ways.

Esther was a girl full of love and empathy. She was a very outwardly focused girl. She was really attentive to her friends and family. Esther loved her family and friends by giving attention to everyone who loved her. Esther shared

her love to her parents through letters or writings in her diary as well as her actions to them. She felt grateful to have them who took care of her for the rest of her life. She continued her life to be a loving and hopeful person until she died. She gave her loves to her internet friends by posting some YouTube videos that contain her daily activities, jokes, or opinions.

Esther was an avid reader and star of quirky on YouTube. She liked to share her writings on Blogs, or her pictures on Facebook. Esther was very active on social media and she liked to acquaintance with new people to be her friend. She liked to show great care to other people. She never showed her sad feeling about her illness. She always had a smile on her face, never a frown. She always shared her happiness with her family and friends. Esther loved to act crazy things to make her family and friends happy.

Meanwhile, Hazel shares her love for family and other people in another way. Even though she is only 16, Hazel is wise beyond her years. She spends a lot of time thinking about death, only to conclude that oblivion is inevitable because she loves them. Hazel thinks of others before herself. She is very self-conscious about her impact on other people. She does not want to make others sad when she is dying.

Hazel loves people around her, secluding herself in order not to hurt them with her upcoming death. Hazel always complies with the demands of her parents to make her parents happy. Hazel wants to minimize the pain that her death may cause. Therefore, she keeps most people at a distance. She makes everyone feel happy on her last days and not feeling lost for her.

In addition, Esther and Hazel are courageous girls. Esther showed strong courage even in her final days. She was fully alive and showed her best day for anyone she loved although anyone understood that she was dying. She does not want to make others sad of her death. Thus, she made everyone feel happy on her last days and not feeling the loss of her. Esther, who inspired John Green to write *The Fault in Our Stars*, became a good friend of John Green and supported his desire to write the novel. He spent a lot of time with Esther at the end of her life.

She bravely fought her cancer, which killed her slowly. Esther made John Green think about children with illness in the novel. She inspired his life about a kid having cancer. Watching children died of cancer had a profound effect on John Green's life. When working at the children's hospital, John Green thought that a child with illness is a kind of unfair destiny. But Esther changed his view. She could cover her fear and pain in front of the people and kept showing her awesome life.

Hazel shows the traits of a courageous girl throughout the story. When she is diagnosed with thyroid cancer at thirteen, she is not covered in fear. She embraces her life she has and she is constantly attempting to do the best. Even though Hazel is diagnosed with thyroid cancer and she believes that her life is not long anymore, she does not let the disease define and rule her life. She is dying from cancer, but she does not show her fear and self-pity. Hazel tries her best lives every day. She does not know exactly when she will die. It may happen anytime. Thus, she always tries to make everyone she loves happy. And, John

Green portrays about Hazel, the courageous girl, in *The Fault in Our Stars* beautifully.

Finally, Esther and Hazel both show great determination. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, John Green narrates about a determined character, Hazel Grace, who travels with Augustus to Amsterdam to meet her favorite author. Hazel shows curiosity about the ending of *An Imperial Affliction* novel, a fictional writing of Peter van Houten. The book tells about a girl named Anna, who is dying of cancer. The book has such an open ending that makes Hazel wonder about what happens with Anna. After rereading the book, Hazel assumes that Anna dies or she is too sick to continue writing again.

After reading the book, she finds herself in Anna character because the author intimately writes about kids suffering from cancer. She is desperate to know what happens to the character in that book, especially to Anna's mom because Hazel wants to know what happens to her mother after she dies. Therefore, she is eager to make contact with the author.

Unfortunately, Peter van Houten is a reclusive author. He is not an active social media user. Consequently, Hazel cannot stalk about van Houten to get more information on the story sequel of *An Imperial Affliction*. Hazel tries to meet her favorite author and she is still not sure that she will meet van Houten in Amsterdam. It is like a dream that Hazel will meet someone who makes her curious for several years. And, she expects to find the answer of her many unanswered questions directly from the author.

Hazel and Augustus finally meet van Houten. However, they feel disappointed of his behavior. Van Houten is an aggressive alcoholic. He is abrasive, drunk, and treating them with cruelty when they visit. He insults them and refuses to answer most of Hazel's questions. Although feeling disappointed, Hazel realizes that van Houten must have hidden something that makes him become cruel. Hazel is really curious about what happens to Anna's mother in *An Imperial Affliction* so that she knows what might happen to her mother.

After Augustus' funeral, van Houten admits that, deep down, he really cares about children with cancer. But when Hazel and Augustus come to meet him in Amsterdam, he gets more than he bargains for. They remind him of things that are painful in his life, i.e., about his daughter. It is really hard for van Houten to tell and recall his painful memory in his life. Finally, Hazel finds out that van Houten's daughter has died at the age of eight from Leukemia cancer. Van Houten loves her daughter so much, and the daughter has inspired him to write *An Imperial Affliction*. His wife, unfortunately, leaves him and that is the reason that drives him to abrasive, reclusive, bad-tempered, and alcoholic behaviors.

The story illustrates John Green's personal life experience without involving Esther. He improvised it with his creativity to make the story more interesting. When Green was a teenager, he had a book that occupied a similar place like *An Imperial Affliction* in his life, entitled *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. *Infinite Jest* successfully made him curious. He had many questions about that book. He said that the book was very important for him and made him think about adding *An Imperial Affliction* to his novel.

*David Foster Wallace's vast, brilliant and labyrinthine novel Infinite Jest. "It was very important to me and certainly shaped a lot of my thinking around An Imperial Affliction," Green says. "The way that Hazel talks about it is very much the way I talked about Infinite Jest." (The Sidney Morning Herald)*

It is about mid-sentence at the ending of the novel, and about his view of the world. According to Green, the meaning of life has died already. He argued that one of the things about being human depends on the ending. Everything about the universe depends on the end. One of the definitions of the matter decays and we can understand infinity.

*"I'm trying to write, but it's difficult. I'm still in the shadow of The Fault in Our Stars. I'm having a tough time letting it go. I'd like to entirely blame the process of publicity, but I think in truth it's more my own inability to let go of a story that was pretty personal to me."*

The principle was applied in his novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. The ending of the story also contains mid-sentence at the end. John Green did not provide full narratives about Hazel. Augustus dies, and he leaves a letter for Hazel. However, there is no further stories about what happens to Hazel Grace's life after the death of Augustus. The story ending still opens and leaves curiosity upon the readers.

## **2. Becoming Chaplain in a Children's Hospital**

John Green studied religion and English in the college. When he was a teen, he did not show his skill as a novelist but his practical nature led him to pursue a "day job" as an Episcopal priest for seven months, becoming a chaplain in a children's hospital. When serving as a chaplain, John Green thought about this world for being short of the reprehensible place where children who did nothing wrong had to live in fear and pain for years before finally died.



Becoming a former student chaplain at the hospital, he tried to write a novel about a child with cancer. However, it hurtled him and he got angry when he remembered about it. After getting to know Esther, a stage-4 thyroid cancer patient, he realized that cancer patients could be just humorous as well as afraid, just like any other kids in general.

*“Kids with stage 4 cancer can be just as funny, and as normal and as afraid as any other kid.” (USA TODAY) (accessed on October 5th 2019 at 8 am)*

John Green met many kids at the hospital. They were sometimes funny, bright, and angry, just like other humans. Knowing how children died and their families were had a profound effect on John Green’s life. It turned him to be an author and it convinced him to become a Christian priest for five months. He felt that his religious vocation was replaced by an ambition to write a book about child with cancer.

*“I was enrolled in divinity school and thought I was going to become a minister - I'm Episcopalian - but I was disavowed of that notion pretty quickly while working at the hospital,” Green said. (The Sidney Morning Herald) (accessed on October 5th 2019 at 6 am)*

John Green thought of someone, i.e., his grandfather who died at an old age enough. At the funeral, people told him to “have a good life.” But they had never thought about a child who had to face illness and fear of death at a very young age. John Green was thinking about how to use the best for the rest of their life in such a short life.

*“But you don't hear that when someone dies when they are 15 or 16 years old,” Green says. “And I think that is quite unfair to them ... So, when I was writing this novel, one of the things I was thinking a lot about was how much value, how much joy and how much good there can be in a short life.” (The Sidney Morning Herald) (accessed on October 5th 2019 at 7 am)*

*The Fault in Our Stars* was dedicated to Esther Earl, his best friend. This novel was the most physically and emotionally draining of John Green for writing his experiences. It took him a long time to produce the novel because it too bit him and made him angry about a child with a short life. He was so haunted by the reality of his experiences when he was a student chaplain and met young men and women with illness. Working at the children's hospital was a part of *The fault in Our Stars* process of writing and publication.

The hospital experiences affected him in many ways. It helped him to write a book about teens with illness and it challenged him to think about using the best life and most constructive ways to care to other people and developed his notion of empathy. John Green recognized the difficulty in writing *The Fault in Our Stars* because he used a woman's perspective. Therefore, his wife Sarah Green helped him. The novel's editor was also a woman.

*"But I started out thinking I am going to write from Hazel's perspective ... I felt such a connection to her and such empathy for her that it was relatively easy to write in that voice. But I did get the clothes wrong. My wife and my editor, also a woman, were able to help me with that." (Accessed on October 5th 2019 at 7 am)*

*The Fault in Our Stars* reveals that Hazel Grace comes to the Support Group to carry out the mother's request. The Support Group members are those suffering from cancer. They provide each other with various types of help. The leader named Patrick asks all members to introduce themselves and share what and how they are feeling and doing the day. Hazel and other members usually talk about their efforts in fighting against the diseases. It is the only space where the members can experience complete understanding of each other and not feeling

isolated due to their disease. The majority of the Support Group members are teenagers.

To support all of the group members, Patrick always says “*Living our best live today*” every time before the meeting is over. It is a general statement and does not differentiate between the members’ levels of sickness. Each of the group member should try their hardest effort to make the best of their disease and take advantage of their life opportunities.

The support group activities were captured by John Green when he became a chaplain at the children’s hospital. Every day he met cancer patients, and he saw how children fought against their illness. John Green also met the children’s family. He frequently imagined himself as a parent of a child diagnosed with cancer. It was too painful for John Green: seeing a child who was supposed to be happy and cheerful in their childhood but they had to struggle with their illness or to die in a short life.

### **3. The Love Story**

*The Fault in Our Stars* is not (simply) a cancer book; it is about love story between Hazel and Augustus. The teenagers, who are terminally ill at a very young age, should live in fear and pain for years during their life. The love story between Hazel and Augustus is one of John Green’s creativity. Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters meet at the Support Group for young cancer patients.

At first, Hazel refuses his affection but, as long as she falls in love with Augustus, their relationship proceeds gradually and, for Hazel’s part, cautiously.

Augustus Waters is a teenage boy who suffers from cancer and, after having a leg amputated, gets recovered. Hazel and Augustus have an instant connection at the Support Group. They are brought together not only by those pesky hormones but also by their wit, their sarcasm, and shared interest in Hazel's favorite book entitled *An Imperial Affliction* by Peter van Houten.

One day, Hazel visits Augustus' house and strikes a bond immediately. They agree to read each other's favorite novel. Augustus gives Hazel *The Price of Dawn*. Meanwhile, Hazel recommends *An Imperial Affliction* to Augustus, a novel written by Peter van Houten, who lives in Amsterdam. The book is about a cancer girl named Anna that parallels to Hazel's own experience.

After reading *An Imperial Affliction*, Augustus is frustrated to know that the novel suddenly ends without any conclusion. The novel ends in the middle of the sentence. It is unclear, whether Anna dies or becomes too ill to continue her story. Hazel explains that the author of *An Imperial Affliction* has retreated after the publication of the novel and has not been heard ever since.

A week later, Augustus tells Hazel that he has emailed van Houten's assistant, named Lidewij, and, through him, they might have connection to start a correspondence email with van Houten. They both write to van Houten with questions regarding the novel's ending and what happens to Anna's mother after the daughter dies. Van Houten eventually replies their email by Lidewij, explaining that he can only answer Hazel's questions in person. He refuses to answer through email or phone, but he can answer their questions face-to-face.

Then, Augustus uses his *Make a Wish* foundation chance to surprise Hazel with tickets to go to Amsterdam to meet van Houten.

After getting an approval from the doctors, Hazel and Augustus finally leaves for Amsterdam. They meet van Houten, but he is an aggressive alcoholic. He is abrasive and drunk. He treats them with cruelty when they visit. He insults them and refuses to answer most of Hazel's countless questions. In fact, Lidewij confesses to having arranged the meeting on his behalf, angering van Houten, who proceeds to insult Hazel's cancer, starting an argument and causing Hazel and Augustus leave his house disappointed.

Lidewij resigns as van Houten's assistant and takes Hazel and Augustus to Anne Frank House. Despite they do not get their answer, they still have another experience in Amsterdam. They confess their affection each other. After going back from Amsterdam, a few days later Augustus confesses to Hazel that his cancer has returned. They both affirm their love and support for each other.

Upon their return to Indianapolis, Augustus' health gets worsened and he ends up in the ICU for a few days. Fearing of his death, Augustus invites his friend named Isaac and Hazel to his pre-funeral, where they give eulogies. Augustus dies soon, and leaving Hazel heartbroken. When Augustus dies, Hazel realizes that van Houten shows up at his funeral to apologize to Hazel, but Hazel does not forgive van Houten.

Hazel learns that Augustus is not writing a sequel to *An Imperial Affliction*, but an obituary for her, and reads it after Lidewij discovers it amidst van Houten's letters. It states that getting hurt in this world is unavoidable, but we

do get to choose whom we allow to hurt us, and that he is happy with his choice. He hopes that she likes her choices too. The book ends with Hazel's stating that she is happy with her choice.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE



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