

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
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FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGE

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE AND CIVILIZATION

**DEFENSE MECHANISM AND TRAGIC DOWNFALL IN JOHN
GREEN'S *THE FAULT IN OUR STARS***

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for a Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

Candidates:

Mr. Mohamed Essalih BOUGHERARA

Ms. Nor EL-Houda BELLAKHDAR

Supervisor:

Ms. Khaoula REBAHI

2018/ 2019

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2018/2019

Dedication A

To my parents...

Mohamed Essalih

Dedication B

To my family...

Who have always nourished me until I have become the lady I am today.

I am forever in your debt.

I Love you from the bottom of my heart to the deepest corners of my soul.

May you always be content!

Nor El-Houda

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of defense mechanisms and the role of tragic downfall in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. On the one hand, it applies Freud's defense mechanisms to Hazel as the protagonist of the novel who suffers from cancer and tries to resist it in her own terms. On the other hand, the study goes further with Aristotle's theory of the tragic hero which is clearly applied to Augustus who suffers from cancer too and has in mind that idea of doing a heroic act in order to stay in memory and never fade into oblivion. The current study is actually discussed through a descriptive analytical approach for portraying the characters' use of some resisting tools and their trying to get through hamartia and their flaws. Thus, the research is made up of two main chapters. The first chapter is theoretical and deals with a socio-historical and a conceptual framework. The second chapter represents the core of the study in which the main theories are applied. Eventually, the characters attempt to seek some ways in order to make their lives worth living and get rid of their harsh conditions. Yet, they may face a tragic downfall due to their own decisions which primarily contradict their wishes.

Key Words: Cancer, Defense Mechanisms, Hamartia, Tragic Downfall.

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Introduction

It is easy for people who did not suffer any disease to live without ever pondering the impact of the said disease on the life of a patient. The facts and realities of what such patients go through on a daily basis might not always be the same as they appear to be to the eye of the observer. Life and death are recurring themes in literature. Having the knack of putting the issues of life, love, disease, and death together and framing it into a novel can lead to a work of art that fills the readers with a sense of pleasure and appreciation.

John Green is New York Times bestselling and an award winning author. He won many prizes including the Edgar Award, Printz Honor, and the Printz Medal; in addition to, being a finalist for the LA Times Book Prize twice. He wrote *Looking for Alaska* (2005), *An Abundance of Katherines*, *Paper Towns* (2008), *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012), and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (2010) in collaboration with David Levithan. Along with his brother Hank, John is considered as one half of the Vlogbrothers in what is regarded as one of the most famous online video projects worldwide. They have more than three million subscribers on their channel. John currently lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, with his wife and son.

Postmodernism as a term can be defined as a reference to both a state of contemporary life and a textual aesthetic practice. It came into view as a reaction against Enlightenment ideas and principles which were implicitly embodied in Modernist literature in the wake of the Second World War. Similar to Postmodernism as an entity, postmodern literature is hard to define as well as difficult to determine its precise aspects, depth, and significance. While Modernist literature searches for meaning in a chaotic world, postmodern writers usually avoid the possibility of meaning. The latter use metafiction and pastiche to undermine the presence of a sole storytelling power within a given text. Moreover, postmodern authors

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employ a collection of different elements of culture among which some topics and genres were deemed unfit for literature in a previous time.

John Green's *The Fault in our Stars* is an enthralling twenty-first century novel, issuing two teenage lovers, Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters, who are suffering with cancer. On the surface, the story may seem as a banal love story of typical teenagers; however, it is more about the passage of two human beings through battling the mighty disease. This novel represents the struggle that both characters go through, a sixteen-year-old Hazel who suffers from thyroid cancer and Augustus who lost his leg and is still in remission, where they met in a support group for patients with cancer in a church. It follows their actual view of life and faith in accordance with their lifetime experiences, however short those might be.

The Fault in our Stars is one of the New York Times bestselling novels that follow the journey of the unusual, complicated relationship between Hazel and Augustus. By writing this novel, Green attempts to turn down the stereotype that fighting the fatal disease of cancer is an epic impressive deed. Through a skilful use of metaphors, symbols and many other significant tools, Green discusses how fighting cancer affects the everyday life of the patients and the lives of those around them. He portrays the injustice of the illness that plagues people nowadays. He opts for showing the actual suffering of the patients which is full of tears, pains, and frustration rather than sugar-coating the truth. This novel is highly recommended to read for it shows how one should find joy in the little things and appreciate what life gives no matter how hurtful they may become at the end. This American writer has succeeded in crafting a piece of writing which envisions the happenings that anyone could experience any given day.

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In fact, *The Fault in Our Stars* is one of Green's bestseller books because it deals with a realistic story of a very young girl who suffered from cancer, and who struggled for survival. The protagonists of the novel are trying very hard to cope with their real situation and to defeat the harsh circumstances of their illness. Both Hazel and Augustus are looking for some ways and trying to find a consolation for themselves in order to get rid of such pain. So being unable to have a fine breath and unable to walk for long distances are real pains that both of the protagonists are suffering from. Hazel and Augustus are most of the time entrapped by reality, and in order to feel at ease they seem to create a kind of mechanism to defend their psychology and to motivate themselves. For Hazel reading has always been a good cure to feel better, and even for Augustus who is interested in poetry and literature. The characters are really fighting in order not to lose control over their personalities, and they are actually taking their chances to love and to be loved by others in spite of the fact that they are dying because of cancer. Even though they are falling like autumn leaves, they insist on surviving and achieving certain goals either through reading or through travelling and discovering what is behind reality.

A fine number of researchers including Annisa Patmarinanta, Dinar Utami Ariyati, Rahul Gautam, and Imogen Belcher have analysed the themes used by John Green in *The Fault in Our Stars* and interpreted some literary theories to this novel from different angles. They have made their researches on this work and discussed it in different context: philosophically, theologically, psychologically, and sociologically.

For instance, Annisa Patmarinanta has analyzed the characters through her article which is entitled *A Study on Characterization on the Main Character in "The Fault in Our Stars"* (2016). This article sheds light on the personalities of the main characters of the novel: Hazel and Augustus. It studies the dialog of the characters and examines the different quotes of the work through the application of the theory of character and characterization. It

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portrays the main characters as two kind, sometimes depressed, booklovers who struggle to stay alive with an admirable stubbornness. Furthermore, this research represents the theme of the novel which mainly revolves about battling the disease to stay alive (26).

Another study on *the Fault in our Stars* has been conducted by Dinar Utami Ariyati, which is an article entitled “*Hazel Grace Lancaster’s Struggles to create her Essence*” (2015). It is a study in depth aiming at exploring every step taken by the protagonist Hazel in order to find her essence using Martin Heidegger’s concept of death. This research reveals that Hazel passes three important phases for the purpose of creating her essence. First, she regards the possibility of her death as a threat for the lives of other people. Second, she confronts with death and realizes that it also has its positive aspects which lead her to appreciate life more. Third, Hazel confronts with the unexpected death of another character in the story which makes her reach her last stage and conclude that life, for her, continues even if it has already stopped for another person she loves (1-2).

Rahul Gautam is a researcher in English language and literature studies. In his essay, entitled *Morality in the novel “The Fault in Our Stars” by John Green* (2015) is trying to explore the theme of morality with a relation to both cancer patients’ hazel and Augustus. The novel clearly shows how destiny can steal young adults’ dreams, aspirations, and ambitions. Gautam wants to study the psyche of the protagonists and how life treats them so cruelly (1-2). The belief in death appears in both of the protagonists. On the one hand, the case of Augustus who suddenly changed from the escapist into the realist when he met Hazel. On the other hand, Hazel who became so brave after meeting Augustus and fell in love with him. Although they had beautiful moments and they enjoyed being together, yet they still think of their inevitable death (5-7).

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Yet, another researcher has done a research on Green's novel named Imogen Belcher. In her MA dissertation entitled *Curing Cancer Fiction: The Significance of Abjection within Young Adult Novels about Cancer* (2013), she has analysed the psyche of the main characters and their visions to life through a psychoanalytical approach. Green's novel is written from a first person view, Hazel, who is at the same time the protagonist of the novel. Hazel, in fact, is telling the real she feels when she has huge amounts of pain in her body. She is describing life when it has no sense and without any aim, that is why she prefers to make borders around her instead of communicating with the outside world. However, meeting Augustus who is suffering from the same pain helped her much more to get over her borders and to know about life ignoring her illness (15-16).

From the above consultations, we can insert forward some questions that will guide our work. The main question that shapes our dissertation is the extent to which are defense mechanism and tragic downfall present in *The Fault in Our Stars*, and how can they affect the characters' attitude? Moreover, the research seeks to answer further sub questions among which the question of how could the protagonists cope with illness and fight their antagonist, which is cancer, in order to survive? In addition, which kind of defense mechanisms does Hazel use in order to retreat from disease? What kind of hamartia does Augustus suffer from?

In certain cases, when human beings cannot live with pain, they look for some suitable escapes to find life and to feel at ease. They may prefer to get rid of reality and to create certain life of their own. Human beings are in fact weak creatures who cannot struggle for long time. In a way, they may find a particular corner where they could exchange bravery, inspiration, and life in its stranger meaning. It is really argued that reality can highly influence the characters, that is, they may have a strong desire to put an end to it.

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People who are suffering from hard diseases such as cancer may feel victims. They may easily fall for self-delusion. Indeed, they may accept their illness as reality; and reality for them may become rude. Yet, they may witness a sudden event that leads them to see the bright side of life. Here, reality instead of being defenseless; it may become more defensive. However, accepting reality as it is means accepting illness. This may result in struggles with life and unstoppable pain. That is, cancer patients may find a way to defend their psyches and defeat daily grief.

In fact, the fundamental target of this research is to explore Green's protagonists' use of defense mechanisms in order to cope with their illness and keep struggling for life. Additionally, among the essential objectives of this research is to portray different types of downfalls that the protagonist went through and to find out the tools they have used in order to get rid of entrapment. Another objective is to depict the protagonists' strong desire for knowing the vague secrets behind illness, that is, what are they able to achieve in a very limited time.

Defense mechanism and tragic downfall in John Green's the Fault in our Stars is going to be discussed through a descriptive reading for the purpose of portraying how the protagonists struggle and fight for their lives. Furthermore, the research is going to be conducted through a psychoanalytical theory in order to analyse both Hazel and Augustus's personalities as the main characters and how they cope with their medical issues as well as to show the effect of tragedy throughout the story and the representation of death. The current study seeks to identify the main defense mechanisms used by Hazel as it seeks to prove that Augustus is a tragic hero who has a hamartia. So the descriptive reading of *The Fault in Our Stars* is going to be followed by a deep analytical one.

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The current research is actually divided into two main chapters. The first chapter contains multiple interpretations of both the notions of defense mechanism and tragic downfall. The chapter seeks to examine these matters in different fields. Yet, the chapter also deals with psychoanalysis as a literary theory through which the second chapter will be conducted.

Indeed, the second chapter represents the core of the study. It reflects the theory of defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud and the theory of the tragic hero by Aristotle in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. The protagonists of the novel seem to have some resisting tools in order to retreat from reality. Yet, they seem to apply those tools in their daily life in a complicated way that makes them rely on each other.

The finding of this study will redound to the benefit of the any literary research considering that the tragic downfall plays an important role in literature today. The greater demand and use of such a theory, which roots back to the Greek times, justifies the need for more investigation about modern version of the tragic hero.

Chapter One:
At the Crossroads of Psychoanalysis

1. 1. Introduction

The wide ranging interest from researchers and scholars in explaining and clarifying psychoanalysis in general and defense mechanism and tragic downfall in particular marks a multitude of arguments across a large spectrum of disciplines. A rich body of questions and findings are provided concerning the concept of defense mechanism and its types, tragic downfall, its reasons and effects, and Freudian's achievements, particularly pertaining to the psychoanalysis theory and division of the mind. In part, the proliferation of researches related to defense mechanism stem largely from Sigmund Freud's findings concerning the human psyche. Over time, an amalgam of literary works made use of both tragic downfall and defense mechanism which further highlighted the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature.

1. 2. *The Fault in Our Stars*: A Socio-Historical Context

John Green wrote the fictional book about cancer: *The Fault in Our Stars* for the mundane reason that he wanted to write about cancer. He wanted to show that people who suffer from a certain illness do also perform many other things. They are not, in any way, defined by their illness or disability; they are their own self. For Green, people who live with illness should not be regarded as "merely sick" because at the end of the day, each of them has, like any ordinary human being, a desire to love and live to the fullest. Being ill does neither diminish the meaningfulness nor the complexity of their lives. Green also reckons that being ill can be seriously isolating due to how difficult it really is to deal with the physical effects of illness let alone the social stigma that said illness brings about.

It is a truth widely acknowledged that Esther Earl is known as the girl who inspired the "*Fault in Our Stars*" book. The book is even dedicated to her. She met her demise in 2010 at the age of 16, four years after she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer.

Chapter One: At the Crossroads of Psychoanalysis

Esther met Green for the first time at a 2009 convention of Harry Potter fans. She was a Nerd fighter and a member of the Harry Potter Alliance. She was already a fan of the books that were published by Green when she met him at Leaky Con in 2009. However, after their in-person meeting, Esther and Earl became very good friends.

Green admitted that the death of Esther further pushed him to invest his time in creating the masterpiece of *The Fault in Our Stars*. Her death caused Green so much grief and anger that he poured it in the form of constant writing about a love story of two teenagers who met at a support group for cancer. Esther's death helped Green to have more insight about teenagers and their struggles; to imagine teenagers as more empathetic than they were given credit for. Esther's sense of charm and snark along with Green's working experience as a chaplain student at a children's hospital further inspired the birth of the novel.

Green also reminded the readers that Hazel of *The Fault in Our Stars* is not Esther and that Esther is not Hazel; they are totally different. She was indeed a great inspiration to Green due to their friendship and Green's affection towards her. However, Green states that he did not include many specific details about Esther because her story belonged to her alone. Their apparent similarities are mostly some superficial things like the oxygen tank and the form of cancer. Other similarities involve their outwardly focused personalities and their ability to be silly and funny in a very normal way. Green wrote on his blog "and it's extremely important to me that I not claim to be telling Esther's story. Esther's story belongs to Esther and to her family, and they will tell it brilliantly and beautifully."

Green's novel is regarded as a heartfelt expression of what Green felt like after a very young friend of him died because of thyroid cancer. Green gives full credit to Esther

for being able to write such a sensational novel. For him, Esther introduced him to a gallery of ideas, mainly of hope in a world gone bleak; a world that is indifferent to individuals and ignorant of the sense of empathy. John wanted to make a difference and capture the complexity of life in an uncomplicated way. He wanted to make people aware of his thoughts and opinions regarding a multitude of topics in life. He learned that a short life can be as meaningful and rich as that of a long life; he came to believe that life is not about the number of years that one gets to live, but rather the way he or she lives it full of love and fun with the people they care about. Life is more meaningful in the littlest of details, the stolen moments here and there, and finding joy in small things within short-lived years.

The Fault in Our Stars deals with young adult people suffering from cancer in different stages. Cancer, in fact, is a serious condition that results from the mutations of cells during the process of cell replication. The latter often results in tumours that can take place in any portion of the body. Cancer must be given a stage from 0 to IV when it is first identified in the body of the patient. The stage name helps choosing the type of treatment that is necessary. There are three common forms of cancer treatment depending on the diagnosed stage; surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Hazel Grace Lancaster is diagnosed with Stage IV thyroid cancer that intentionally affects the thyroid gland located below the thyroid cartilage in the front of the neck. She is treated with multiple therapies like radiation and chemotherapy for the tumours in her lungs. In her case, the tumours have increased in their size very dangerously that cause her a kind of effusion in her lungs. At such point, doctors establish care to rise up the quality of life remaining to the patient and to enhance it as much as possible. Hazel, actually, finds her suitable way in regulating her life as a cancer survivor. She escapes to reading instead of thinking about the side effect of her disease. Yet, she has

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to sit for another clinical trial using a new experimental drug called Phalanxifor that can shrink her lungs and help her breathing.

Augustus Waters is diagnosed with another different type of cancer that occurs at the level of his bone. He loses his right leg due to osteosarcoma. This type of the cancer often requires the removal of the body part because it begins in the bone matrix and it becomes difficult to remove. Augustus is the kind of character who seems to suffer trauma and unable to bear reality. The thing that encourages him to think of heroism and the ability of doing a heroic act before passing away.

As a matter of fact, the second half of the story is all about people attending support groups and dying because of cancer. However, Hazel and Augustus have a chance to go to Amsterdam seeking for facts and hoping their wishes come true. Therefore, Amsterdam, where a part of the story take a place, is the counterpoint to Indianapolis where the majority of the events pass in *The Fault in Our Stars* novel. Indianapolis represents the characters' everyday life and their cancer treatment as it represents the American society and its vision towards a cancer survivor.

Still, Amsterdam reveals the image of a beautiful city constructed in a complicated way. Just like Hazel's lungs fill with fluid, the city of Amsterdam do with the canals in the centre. The city is beautiful because of the canals that run through its body. The city is known for its water, and thousands of tourists visit in part for its unique city plan resulting from the system of canals. The thing that makes Hazel feels a similar relationship with her body. On one hand, she fights to stay afloat, but in the eyes of others and eventually herself, she is also beautiful despite the cancer's effect on her.

1. 3. The Notion of Defense Mechanism

For most people nowadays, the idea of voicing some utterances and doing some things without knowing the reason behind such actions is not that difficult to perceive. However, the assertion that a number of unconscious mental processes account for such kinds of behaviours has, for many years, been less justified. It is only recently that academic psychologists have taken a wide ranging interest regarding this issue which eventually led to validating the existence of unconscious mental processes (Crammer 1).

A group of mental operations are referred to as defense mechanisms are found within these unconscious processes. These are different in reference to the specific ways in which they function, but they all serve one purpose primarily to protect the person from going through excessive anxiety and further preserve both the self and self-esteem. Aside from different conscious coping strategies, these mechanisms function on an unconscious level; thus, the individual is not aware of how they actually operate (1).

To define defense mechanism, one needs to refer to emotions, or as they are essentially called, “affects”. Clinically, every affect is composed of both a sensation and a thought. Therefore, defense is defined as the mental process that shuts out, either the sensation or the thought, and sometimes both, out of consciousness (Blackman 3).

Psychological defense mechanisms are regarded as a prime component of one’s ability to maintain emotional homeostasis. Without these mechanisms, the conscious mind would be much more vulnerable to the emotional input which is usually negatively charged; for instance, that related to sadness and anxiety. In order to ensure or restore a more healthy state of mind, psychological defense mechanisms perform by attenuating negative emotions. Thus, much like the immune system functions without one’s conscious

awareness, the psychological defense system is often designed as such; that is, it is expressed unknowingly in each and every person (Bowins 1-2).

1. 3. 1. Background of Defense Mechanism

The history of defense mechanism is both lengthy and interesting. The short version is that it unsurprisingly began with Sigmund Freud who, in 1894, realized that some particular thoughts are shut out of awareness by some kind of a mental activity. By 1900, Freud referred to this activity as “the censor” and later on as “repression” in 1923 (Blackman 6). It was in Freud’s early studies on Hysteria that different mechanisms were mentioned that patients were using to defend against some psychic conflicts; conflicts that occur within the human’s mind. Historically, defenses were conducted in patients undergoing psychoanalysis. Defense mechanisms first occurred in the discussions in Breuer’s and Freud’s paper on *The Physical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communications* (1893/1955), where the concept repression was used to describe a patient who was not able to remember the traumatic events she went through during her childhood. However, it was not until 1894 that the term “defense” was used in *The Neuro-Psychosis of defence* (1962). In this publication, Freud portrayed a conceptualization and a theory of defense mechanisms. The proliferation of researches that stemmed from these studies explored the theoretical role of defense mechanisms in psychopathology. In recent years, an intense interest has been found in empirical study of defense mechanisms and the role they maintain in many features of psychosocial functioning among which normal development and psychopathology take place (Presniak 1).

Ego defense mechanisms are known as defensive coping or subconscious efforts on behalf of the individual for adaptation purposes; to protect one’s self, to evade or reduce

anxiety and tension. Defense coping involves internal and most importantly subconscious conflicts that appear when one cannot emotionally handle an intensely threatening problem at a conscious level or to deal directly with that situation. Defensive coping, which is considered in a way as a kind of self-deception, refers to the various ways in which individuals convince themselves that they are not truly threatened and that they actually do not want the things they cannot get. Sigmund Freud depicted the regular attitudes featured by individuals in order to reduce or avoid anxiety which he called defensive mechanisms. Psychologically, these mechanisms could be either healthy or unhealthy, yet in any of those cases, the fundamental purpose is to decrease tension (Gokdag 2).

1. 3. 2. Use of Defense Mechanisms

As mentioned above, in case of any kind of stress, the human mind tends to react in two main ways. The first one refers to what is known as direct coping which increases problem-solving efforts. The second includes putting the defense mechanisms into effect. “Freud’s concepts and defense mechanisms are tactics developed by ego to cope with the sub consciousness and superego” (Gokdag 3). All defense mechanisms share two common features. As the first one, the individual is totally ignorant of the fact that he or she put into use defense mechanisms. As for the second, these somehow harm, alter, or ignore the reality.

Today, there is a multitude of defense mechanisms which work fairly at an unconscious level as a way to deal with stress and traumatic events or to better ‘defend’ oneself which implies that most of the people do not recognise that they are using them at the time of a given situation.

1. 3. 2. 1. Denial

Denial or the refusal of accepting a hurtful or threatening reality is one of the most common of defense mechanisms. Many people utilize denial in their daily life in order to avoid dealing with painful emotions or areas of their life they do not wish to address. For instance, a mother who lost her son during a war rejects this reality and expects him to come back every single day is a typical example of denial. Similarly, a person who is a drug addict or a functioning alcoholic will simply deny this problem, which is obvious to all the people around them, and claim that they do not suffer any problem, pointing to how well they function in their jobs or relationships. The denial mechanism functioning gradually faces growing difficulty when the ego matures and comes into terms with reality, and the person exerts more energy for denial (Gokdag 3).

1. 3. 2. 2. Repression

Repression is another mechanism which is responsible for wiping all of the individual's painful feelings and memories and evicts the mind of the distressing thoughts in a way that he or she would not be able to remember them again. For example, soldiers in the battle field try their best to forget about the memories that torment them and cause them to collapse psychologically. According to number of psychologists, repression indicates an individual's struggle against internal reactions that clash with feelings of repression; such as, offensiveness. This kind of conflict between one's emotions and values could result in stress and a way to cope with this stress in a defensive manner means suppressing one's emotions; that is to say, to totally omit any awareness of underlying hostility and anger. Thanks to repression, neither inappropriate subconscious motives translate into actions, nor did the memories concerning what one wrong in the past revive.

Cultural expectations and the superego of the individual are solely responsible for what one wants to repress (3-4).

1. 3. 2. 3. Projection

If the problems can neither be denied nor repressed completely. One ruins the nature of the problem as to solve it easily. Reflection can be a good example for this situation in which a given person can pass his or her repressed feelings, impulses, and thoughts onto other individuals. It is rather the misattribution of a person's undesired thoughts, motives, and feelings which are regarded as unacceptable for the person to express or acknowledge. For example, a person loves someone, remember that his parents always told him to be well-behaved and get along with others. The parents' recommendations are implemented into the son's superego. When he discovers that he does not like a certain person, he will feel guilty and anxious. The reflection mechanism then takes place by creating the thought of "this person does not like me". In this way, the individual places the source of the conflict away from him (4).

1. 3. 2. 4. Identification

Identification is the opposite of reflection. It refers to adopting another person's, behaviours and then demonstrating them. A person picks the qualifications of another person through identification and shares the accomplishments of that person in the same way. In this way, he or she avoids feeling unworthy or inefficient (4). Identification also refers to the fantasy of being another person or attitudes and character attributes drawn from another person. For instance, a little kid who feels extremely small and weak may copy the attitudes of his father for the sake of feeling big and strong (Baek).

1. 3. 2. 5. Regression

Regression is a process which refers to the implementation of childish attitudes by individuals when being under severe stress. It is a reversion to an early stage of development when faced with some unacceptable impulses or thoughts. For many psychologists, an adult who is dealing with feelings of helplessness demonstrate childish behaviours to make the situation more tolerable (4). Adults may regress when they are under a great deal of stress by staying in their bed and refusing to be a part of ordinary daily activities. For instance, a teenager who is overwhelmed with emotions of fear and anger might become clingy and begin displaying earlier childhood attitudes he or she has since overcome (Grohol 1).

1. 3. 2. 6. Displacement

It refers to the ideas, feelings, and impulses that a person may have toward an important person or object are repressed and then taken upon another person or object. Displacement is often used when people are unable express their emotions freely, or in a safe manner, to the person they are directed at. For instance, a student may repress his feelings of hatred toward his father but express anger and defiance toward another authority figure in his life. The student instead is redirecting his anger from his father to another person (Baek 1).

1. 3. 2. 7. Rationalisation

Rationalisation is a defence mechanism that involves an individual's justification of an unacceptable behaviour, thought, or feeling in a more logical, reasoned manner so that the unconscious motives or meanings would not be revealed. This defensive manoeuvre is also referred to as "making excuses". These meanings and motives might cause said individual feelings of anxiety and damage to his or her self-image. People who rationalise

realise, whether consciously or unconsciously, that they have done something foolish or ill-advised. Thus, they concoct a reason, or several reasons, for why they behaved as they did. However, in reality, they actually attempt to mask reality and their lack of work and interest (Phaneuf 13).

1. 3. 2. 8. Fixation

Fixation refers to a self-defence mechanism that occurs when an individual attaches to something in a very obsessive manner. It takes place when a person does not feel safe to try new things and prefer the familiar things that he or she is accustomed to. This defensive manoeuvre might be caused when said individual is overwhelmed with feelings of uncertainty or insecurity.

1. 3. 3. Defense Mechanism in Various Extremes

In fact, the term defense mechanism has been used in so many fields and extremes among which literature, education, philosophy and so many others. Scholars have been trying to make use of the meaning of defense mechanism in those fields in order to analyse the psyche of the human beings.

1. 3. 3. 1. Defense Mechanism in Education

The use of defence mechanism in the field of education is quite prevalent since students sometimes need to cover up their inadequacies. The ability for students to succeed in school depends largely on finishing their academic activities and aspirations; however, when students fail to meet up with these requirements, they indulge in implementing defence mechanisms. Their failure to function appropriately in attending lectures, finishing assignments, and preparing for exams are encapsulated in various defence mechanisms for the sole purpose of defending them against blame, individual and public disapproval. They reject any form of responsibility for their own failure and underachievement. For instance,

some students use projection in order to justify their inabilities to meet up with challenges (Ozoh).

1. 3. 3. 2. Defense Mechanism in Literature

Defence mechanisms are largely found in a number of literary works. For instance, defence mechanisms are used to overcome anxiety in Phyllis Ayame Whitney *The Singing Stones* which was published in 1990. The novel tells the story of a ten-year-old girl called Jilly Asche who suffers anxiety after being in an accident with her father. She becomes anxious when meeting with strange people and getting asked about the accident. Though the novel is just fiction, it can be used as the interpretation of life and can be regarded in relation to humans. Repression, regression, denial, reaction formation, intellectualisation, and many other defence mechanisms are used by Jilly in order to overcome moral, realistic, and neurotic anxiety (Khairul 4-10).

In *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) written by Tennessee Williams, the implementation of defence mechanisms is quite present. The play, which was a dramatic psychological reflection of the happenings in Williams' life, is a memory play where characters use defence mechanisms as an endeavour to put an end to their misery like displacement, repression, denial, regression, and projection (Mustafa 2-5).

1. 3. 4. Defense Mechanism and Reality

People often tend to believe that defence mechanism is used only by psychiatric patients, particularly psychotics. However, a deep understanding of how defence mechanisms function leads to note that defence mechanisms also function in the lives of *sane* people, like any normal person.

Applying a complex theory like psychoanalysis in everyday life has its own variety of setbacks, but it is undoubtedly valuable. Psychoanalysis makes it easier to capture the

full essence and comprehend, which is rather a difficult task, one's behaviours and attitudes. When the human behaviour is analysed through the defence mechanisms that are implemented by others, a great deal of knowledge is grasped about one's self which provides an opportunity to mediate the unproductive traits of his or her personality to fulfil some semblance of personal growth (Phaneuf 1).

Defense mechanisms are ubiquitous in our daily life. Social conflicts, family disputes, the problems individuals face in their evolution towards maturity, and academic and professional failures all generate defense mechanisms. The major indicators of the use of defence mechanisms include worries, lack of self-confidence, feelings of guilt and personal inadequacy. Defense mechanisms are also useful when they help individuals defend themselves against stress, anxiety, loss of self-image, and any other given threat that they encounter when trying to meet the requirements of reality (2).

1. 4. The Notion of Tragic Downfall

Human beings can be affected by daily life conditions or the events that may take a place around them. They may suffer from traumatic events that have once been in their past and keeps affecting them in the present. Throughout life, any single person may go through ups and downs that both can show them the right path to be followed as they can destruct them. Reality is actually defenceless and nude that makes human being fall tragically and sometimes get lost (Rogti 5).

Life is actually full of good as well as bad incidents. The good ones make the human character enjoy the moments whereas the bad ones lead them to downfalls, and maybe to tragedies. The Collins dictionary, in fact, defines a downfall as the thing that causes failure or the loss of power to a successful person. The same dictionary defines tragedy as an event that is extremely sad usually because of illness, death or suffering.

Therefore, the tragic downfall is the weakness or the shortcoming that causes a kind of flaw within the human character and it is most of the time personal because it occurs to the personality.

1. 4. 1. Reasons of Tragic Downfall

The downfall of the human beings is out of their relationships, contacts and even their health instability. This last is highly interesting and most leading to some of the tragic downfalls and errors. Actually, the term health gathers between the mental as well as the physical one. People who suffer from dangerous illnesses are at risk to get a psychological downfall more than any other ones (Ries & Sprecher 125).

Psychological downfall comes because of traumatic background or painful realities. That is, suffering from a past event can result in a tragic downfall which is the last phase in such a situation. The human being is a weak creature who can easily fall after a sorrowful incident like the loss of a close person, the loss of health, and even the bad conditions of life around them. Being unstable at the level of feelings and thinking is actually a kind of disorder that contributes to the corruption of the psyche and destruct the ability of well thinking and concentration (Edwards 20).

Yet, physical health plays a crucial role in one's social life and interactions. So physical illness may affect negatively on one's progress and relationships. It is argued that those people who suffer from physical illnesses are isolated and usually prefer to stay on their owns rather than to interact with others. This is counted as a reason for a tragic flaw (23).

Moreover, people who endure depression, delirium, and anxiety are classified as patients with cognitive impairments. They usually suffer from successive downfalls in their lives due to their life conditions and their disability to cope with their situations. They

are most of the time disillusioned and disappointed and they cannot be involved in social partnerships (36).

The tragic downfall of the human being is, in fact, a result of the loss of control over the inner self. People who suffer from such a dilemma are most of the time those who hold a noble position within the society and those who suffer from physical illness are included as well.

1. 4. 2. Tragic Downfall in Literature

The character's weakness or shortcoming causes the downfall of the protagonist of a tragedy. Tragic downfall is also referred to as "*Hamartia*" or "*tragic flaw*". In fact, it is commonly defined as a personal flaw in the personality of the protagonist that causes his tragic downfall in a tragedy. The hamartia is the tragic flaw that causes the tragic hero's downfall. Tragic heroes all have tragic flaws that make them look like ordinary people. Hubris is a common tragic flaw that means pride of strength. The hamartia is usually caused by bad choice of the tragic hero and not by fate. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* defines hubris as:

Doing and saying things at which the victim incurs shame, not in order that one may achieve anything other than what is done, but simply to get pleasure from it. For those who act in return for something do not commit hubris, they avenge themselves. The cause of the pleasure for those committing hubris is that by harming people, they think themselves superior; that is why the young and the rich are hubristic, as they think themselves superior when they commit hubris (qtd.in Cudjoe, et al 3).

The tragic downfall has been present since the Greek times and still be in most of the contemporary literary works in all the genres.

1. 4. 2. 1. “Hamartia” or “Tragic Flaw”

Hamartia is actually defined by Meriam-Webster as a fatal flaw leading to the downfall of a tragic hero or heroine. The origins of the word go back to Greek and Aristotle who does not explain the term in further details finds it. Yet, the concept of hamartia has been portrayed and interpreted by several critics in different ways. Leon Golden, for instance, asserts “in the past and still, to some degree today, it has been common to render hamartia as ‘tragic flaw,’ and to see in Aristotle’s use of this concept the nuance of moral culpability and sin which the term manifestly has, on occasion, in Greek usage”(25-26). That is, it is clearly understood that the concept hamartia is highly related to tragedy in literature from which the concept of *tragic hero* has originated.

The term *hamartia* and the term *tragedy* are interrelated ones that hamartia or tragic flaw occurs only in literary tragedies. The protagonist in a certain literary tragedy is going to face a personal downfall because of the tragic flaw. Tragedy for Aristotle means “the imitation of actions which excite actions or fear” (qtd.in Butcher 45). He further explains the plot of the tragedy:

The change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear, it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense, nor calls forth pity or fear. Nor, again, should the downfall of the utter villain be exhibited. A plot of this kind would doubtless satisfy the moral sense, but it would inspire neither pity nor fear; for pity is aroused

by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves (qtd. In Butcher 45).

Aristotle, with the use of hamartia, wants to shape a clear image about the psyche of the human being before the tragic downfall, and after it. That is all to say that the tragic flaw is the link between a stable situation of a certain person and the reasons for the downfall. Hamartia stands in the middle of that situation.

1. 4. 2. 2. The Tragic Hero

Aristotle has introduced the concept of the tragic hero first in his book *the Poetic* and he emphasised on the characteristics of the tragic hero in a literary tragedy. Indeed, he clarifies his personal view of the tragic hero in a tragedy:

Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality. Now character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or the reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of character: character comes in as subsidiary to the actions. Hence, the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character (qtd.in Linnebank 5).

Aristotle agrees that both thought and character shape the layout of a tragedy from which actions flourish and control the overall of it. Yet, a tragic hero must be identified according to some specific characteristics. In his *the Poetics*, Aristotle explains how a tragic hero should be and how other people may easily discover him. A tragic hero is not good neither evil, but he is of a high position within the society. However, the hero, in spite of having characteristics of normal people, should not be an ordinary person (Linnebank 7).

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In fact, Aristotle distinguishes eight major characteristics of the tragic hero: He is of noble birth and holds a high position in society. His actions and decisions can affect many people because of his position. He holds noble ideals, and usually has a tragic flaw. He falls from his position to one of disgrace. The downfall is caused by a major decision or action on his part. With his downfall; he has a moral revelation about himself. Eventually, a tragic hero must die by the end of the literary genre (8-9).

More specifically, the tragic hero creates his own tragic downfall because of the error he makes, and this error reveals what is known as *hamartia*. In such a context, Robert Hull argues: “the individual who suffers cannot be one who is utterly blameless” (288). That is, the hero is responsible for his own downfall.

1. 4. 2. 3. Tragic Flaw in Some Chosen Literary Works

Literature, with its changeable seasons, has witnessed several designs of the tragic hero since the ages of the Greek. Therefore, either in classical literature or in contemporary one the character still has a crucial role in a tragedy, and the downfall of the protagonist in a literary work affects both the remaining characters and the readers. Charmezel Dudt writes: “What makes a tragedy so tragic is not that the noble individual falls into ruin, but that his fall causes so much suffering in others” (qtd.in “Some Thoughts about Tragedy” 2).

In Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* (429 B.C), Oedipus is considered as the tragic hero of the play because of the error and guilt he makes. Oedipus sets himself to discover the person who killed king Laius and to end the suffering of Thebes. Later on, Oedipus learns that he took his father’s life and married his own mother, Jocasta. That is, Oedipus’ wrong decision leads him to a downfall and affects the surrounding characters like Jocasta who ended her life.

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Otherwise, epic poetry also consists of the tragic flaw of the hero. Beowulf, for example, is a larger than life hero who is trapped because of a single error. In the complete version of *Beowulf*, the hero is fighting against evil but still not sure who is evil and who is good. Therefore, fighting for the sake of being a warrior is in fact Beowulf's mistake; so being a hero needs both wisdom and power. Beowulf may not understand the real meaning of bravery, and he died because of the downfall he creates for himself.

In fact, the tragic flaw is present in most of Shakespearian works. Just observing the titles William Shakespeare indicates the presence of the tragic hero. *Othello* (1622), *Macbeth* (1623), *King Lear* (1623), and even *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) are all considered as Shakespeare's masterpieces. Tragedy, for Shakespeare, is when a good individual's wrong choice destructs them and causes suffering, pain, and death to others. Indeed, Romeo and Juliet made the choice to die, Macbeth responds with a kind of psychotic fatalism, Othello died with grieving tears and sadness because he accused Desdemona, and Cordelia is the one who suffers though the error is committed by her brother King Lear ("Some Thoughts about Tragedy" 2).

American modern literature has also contained some kinds of tragic downfalls of the characters. Drama, for instance, is highly recommended for such techniques and portrayals. Actually, Tennessee Williams has conducted some of his plays with the use of the tragic flaw of his protagonists like Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), and Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). Yet, the downfall of the protagonists in such works does not mark their death because they find illusion as an escape to forget about their errors and faults. Both of the protagonists represent the fact that humankind cannot hold very much of the real world, so they would refer back to the one of fantasies (Rogti 125-126).

Yet, several novels are based on some of the characteristics of the tragic hero who suffers from hamartia. Jojo Moyes' *Me before You* (2012) is a good example in which the protagonist longs to escape from his own harsh life and turns to moments when he used to be happy and enjoying his life. Will is portrayed as a tragic hero who is suffering because of his inability to move and who falls in love with his servant Louisa. Will's decision to die after meeting Louisa does not only affect his parents but it also affects the life of Louisa who has been a lover and supporter for him. Throughout the story, the writer seems to rely on the tragic flaw of the main character to go further with the ending of the events.

Eventually, tragedy is not a genre that can be related only to drama and plays, rather it can be found in several stories, novels, and even in movies. The tragic flaw of the hero is in fact a sign of his own downfall. Tragedy may reflect a kind of sad emotions within the psyche of the reader or the audience. To avoid such negative emotions, Aristotle creates what is known as *catharsis* which is the process of releasing and providing relief from strong or repressed emotions ("Some Thoughts about Tragedy" 1). It is actually what the audience feels after the tragic hero has learned the important lesson from his downfall.

1. 4. 2. 4. Catharsis

It is highly argued that a well-constructed tragedy must affect a kind of catharsis in the individuals of a specific audience. Catharsis is actually much more than about bringing the emotions of pity and fear through the tragic pleasure. In his *The Poetics*, Aristotle states:

The poet who produces not the fearful effect through spectacle but only the startling-sensation effect shares nothing in common with tragedy; for it is not necessary to seek every pleasure by means of tragedy but to seek the appropriate kind of pleasure. And since it is necessary for the poet to

produce the pleasure from pity and fear through imitation, it is clear that this kind of tragic pleasure must be created within the circumstances of a tragedy (qtd.in Ananth 2).

Yet, the writer must heal the audience simultaneously and try to create another atmosphere that satisfies the readers after the effect of the tragedy on their emotions. That is why Aristotle creates catharsis which has been interpreted as a method of *purgation*, *purification*, and *cognitive stimulation* (Ananth 2).

In fact, the purgation is the removal of unhealthy emotions such as pity and fear through the tragic pleasure which is the psychological relaxation of the individual after the elimination of such emotions. That is to say, pity and fear must be purged in order to guarantee the readers' relief. In a way, the purgation of negative emotions is usually followed by a purification which is the act of separating or cleansing one's tension and anger through convincing them that a particular mistake is an honest mistake like in *Oedipus Rex*, and *King Lear* where both of the protagonists committed honest mistakes in an unconscious state of being (3).

In another way, scholars insist on understanding the cognitive stimulation since it links between the renderings of purgation and purification. It is the act of understanding the plot of a certain story and the actions of the characters. Through such a technique, the audience will automatically get rid of the negative emotions of the tragedy and feel satisfied. That is, the aspects of the human conditions are better understood through emotions of pity and fear (3).

1. 5. Psychoanalysis: A Literary Theory

Sigmund Freud was born in 1856 in Freiburg, Germany to a Jewish family. Freud's family moved to Vienna, when he was four, where he lived and worked up until

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1938 when he was forced to escape to England after the Anschluss. Even though Freud always complained about how oppressive Vienna had been, he lived there, along with his family, his entire life in the same address for almost fifteen years. He was regarded as a brilliant student and graduated with distinction in 1873. He got his medical degree from the University of Vienna in 1881 and he further won a scholarship to study in Paris under the great Jean Martin Charcot. For Freud, Charcot was a continuous source of admiration for not only initiating the way to take mental illness seriously, thanks to his diagnosis of hysteria along with his use of hypnosis, but also for being a very encouraging and charismatic teacher. On his way back to Vienna in 1886, Freud set up practice as physician. He died in London in 1939 (“Psychanalysis”16).

During his university years, Freud was influenced by a large group of people. The future psychoanalyst worked in companionship with Ernest Briicke in his laboratory. The medical positivism that prevailed in Vienna and in other places in the last three decades of the nineteenth century marked a noticeable impact on young Freud mainly through the three representatives: Hermann Helmholtz, who wrote on thermodynamics, Gustav Fetchner, who was both a physicist and philosopher , and eventually Ernest Briicke who was regarded as a positivist and physiologist. In 1895, Freud worked in collaboration with Breuer which was published in *Studies on Hysteria*; this work was primarily based upon the case of Anna O. The latter had steered Freud’s psychical studies into a new direction. Furthermore, *The Interpretation of Dreams* is often considered as Freud’s most useful book and it executed a substantial role in his career (17).

Freud was a very relentless and determined questioner. He soon found that the most significant pieces of information appeared when his patients were given the freedom to pursuit the flow of their inner thoughts and feelings. Consequently, he asked them to describe as best they could, and without attempting to make their passing ideas reasonable,

or indeed to censor or unwind the logical and moral bindings upon one individual's process of describing the series of thoughts and feelings to another, which proved a worthy source of information. When the flow of thought, on its own, was both undirected and unhindered led to the subjects that Freud had previously deemed interesting and to others whose importance he had not suspected. Freud referred to this procedure of self-description "free association" (18).

Psychoanalysis is a term that refers to the theory whose main focus is the dynamic relationship between the body, mind, and social order. It was first developed in the work of Sigmund Freud for he studied and wrote about a multitude of subjects which encompassed religion, occultism, trauma, and humor (Jarvis). He exerted a remarkable influence on the Western world. As a further step into exploring psychiatry, Freud's discoveries were wholly unexpected. Freud was treating a trivial part of the entire world's population. His patients consisted mostly of Jewish, middle class, and well educated people. These cases further helped Freud to observe, discover, and formulate theories that altered the way Western individuals viewed and understood themselves. What went beyond the realm of discovery was Freud's ability to combine the meaning of dreams, the importance of infancy period for adult functioning, and the prevalent presence of transference reactions into one significant discipline from which psychoanalysis was structured (Bergmann 2-3).

1. 5. 1. Fundamental Concepts

The idea of the unconscious is probably one of the major and defining ideas that characterize psychoanalysis. Freud believes that only a small proportion of the human mind is known through rational thought while the bigger part is outside conscious awareness. The latter deems its presence through different ways including dreams, slips of tongue, the clinical method of "free association", and a number of actions whose

motivations are not clear, and are often contrary to, conscious intent. Psychoanalytically speaking, the unconscious stands as the repository for experiences, thoughts, and feelings that is repressed by, and generally unacceptable, by the human mind (Bondi 3). According to Freud, if what is repressed contrives to break through consciousness or action, people are no longer normal. It was regarded as an act of a genius that Freud reached the conclusion that the same road that leads to abnormality also leads to cure, providing that it happens under the supervision of the analyst and within the safety of the analytic situation.

Psychoanalysis is also regarded as a method which discovers the unconscious inner reality through interpreting what is observable and often apparently insignificant data. Hans H. Strup has pointed out that it is a theory of personality and human development, a method that examines the unconscious and the conscious driving forces that rule human behaviour, a technic for treating people who suffer neurotic disorder. Both neurosis and certain psychoses are among the unfortunate consequences of the developmental history of a given individual, specifically of adverse experiences in early childhood. The helplessness and dependence on love and support that the infant experiences for a prolonged period paired with the child's innate aggressive and sexual strivings result in personality malformation and neurotic conflicts. The neuroses that are embedded in early childhood happenings and conflicts resume being largely unconscious and; thus, they cannot be modified in accordance with reason. Painful emotional conflicts can be deemed as the reason for conflicts which creates a fertile soil for anxiety, and endeavours to expose them are faced with types of resistances; for instance, repression, rejection, and reaction formation that function under the umbrella of defense mechanism. Typical neurotic symptoms involve phobias, depression, and anxiety which pave the way to some character traits, or rather problems, like non-assertiveness and impulsivity. In some cases, such character problem may lead to aggressive behavior (Kwizera 4-5).

Psychosis, on the other hand, as Harold Kaplan has indicated, is also one of the main mental disorders in which an individual is neither able to think properly or act emotionally accordingly, nor meet the ordinary demands of daily life. Among the characteristics of psychosis is regressive behaviour as in the case of schizophrenia with impulse mood diminishment, mood inappropriateness, and abnormal mental control like hallucinations, delusions, illogical speech, fear, and social withdrawal. In other cases like the one of manic depressive illness, the victim, or patient experiences multiple mood shifts from high to low, getting from being excited and agitated to depressed and moribund (Kwizera 6).

1. 5. 2. Freudian Division of the Mind

Psychoanalysis has been identified as a discipline that is basically concerned with the study of the human psyche. This last can be understood as the human soul, mind, or essence. The Australian neurologist Sigmund Freud who originated the psychoanalysis theory has actually divided the mind into three main parts: *the id*, *the ego*, and *the superego*. This division is actually not a separation of the mind into functions, but it is a separation of the aspects of the mind. Indeed, the three parts function in different levels of consciousness. Freud thinks that the mind of the human being is in conflict with itself, and such a conflict is the reason of the human's sadness and anxiety (Stevenson 1). Therefore, creating such an umbrella to identify the needs of the human bring in either their happiest times or roughest ones makes of Sigmund Freud a person of different kind. So that the poet W. H. Auden writes: "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. 5. 2. 1. The Id

The id can be defined as a part of the mind in which innate instinctive controls and major processes are dominant. The id usually forms a memory of the fulfilled wish by the end of its motivation. That is, the id can be temporarily satisfied, but still in need to fulfil the remaining urges. If a baby is starving, he will cry so that the mother understands the desire of her baby and feeds him through her breast. In fact, the baby will immediately create a memory in his mind that he can only satisfy his desire and hunger through his mother's breast (Stevenson 1).

1. 5. 2. 2. The Ego

The ego is a person's sense of priorities and respect that are ruled by reality. The formation of the ego comes because of the id's needs and relations with realities. Often, the ego acts to suppress the id's impossible urges and inappropriate desires. That is, it sometimes refers back to *defense mechanisms* in order to deal with such restraints of the mind. The ego's attempts to restrict the id's inappropriate desires build more memories and skills that help the individual be more aware. Simply, the creation of the ego helps the individual to become a self rather than urges and needs (2).

1. 5. 2. 3. The Superego

The superego is the part of the mind that acts as self-improvement conscience, and tries to apply what have been learnt in life through real situations. It uses self-blame as a mean to reinforce rules within the inner self. The superego is actually divided into two main parts. The first is conscience which decides what is correct and what is wrong in order to prohibit the id from inappropriate urges. The second is the ego ideal which tries to guide the individual into perfect goals and morals created by the society. The superego

tends to oppose the ego and the id and make the world according to the ideal conception of the society and relies on a societal characterization of the surrounding events (2).

The three parts above are specified with their own characteristics. They may even reflect their aspect on the human soul not only mind. However, they are usually interacting in relations with one another in a dynamic way.

1. 5. 3. Psychoanalysis and Literature

Psychoanalysis is not only a field of therapy and medicine that help healing the patients with disorders at the level of their psychology. It is actually a method of understanding different fields such as philosophy, anthropology, religion and most importantly literature. Freud's artistic creation is considered as a guide for literary studies:

Freud remarks that his clinical cases read like novels, his conferences, his essays, his theoretical works all bear witness to a clarity, a patience and a desire to convince rarely found elsewhere though Freud himself is keenly aware of the limitations of a rational approach, which does not suffice to overcome the resistances rooted in the audience's unconscious. No one described analysis better than Freud himself; there would be no point in trying to substitute a commentary for his works (Michaud 2-3).

Psychoanalysis owes much to literature and serves in turn as a way for understanding literature. Therefore, both literature and psychoanalysis are interrelated and complete each other to form the psychoanalysis literary theory. This last in turn investigates the characters' state of feeling as well as it deals with the psychology of the writer, the poet, or the playwright.

De Facto, Sigmund Freud per se has analysed several literary works to prove the accuracy of his theory, among these works he has dealt with *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*.

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Freud thinks that the interpretation of dreams is necessary within any work of literature as he links literature to the study of arts. Art needs to go beyond the psyche of the artist in order to understand the exact meaning. In fact, Creativity comes from dreaming and it has a strong connection with literature. Therefore, psychoanalysis and literature are very connected since both of them deal with dreaming and the work of arts. For Freud, a literary work is the same as a daydream because the author is portraying what is in his mind in an unconscious situation, and sometimes the author reflects some of his own characteristics in his characters (Hossain 43).

Psychoanalytic literary criticism shed lights on multiple elements in a literary work. The most significant elements that psychoanalysis usually deals with are the author, the characters, the audience, and the text. The theory is used to study the author's life and the events he includes in his literary work. In effect, the psychological theory becomes a tool to study the characters' behaviours and motivations. That is, psychoanalysis deals with the protagonists' state of feeling and the reasons behind their behaviours. The theory is also used to investigate the audience's reactions towards the literary works and how they feel about the authors' styles and creativity. Since language and the use of symbolism and expressionism are so important in any literary work, psychoanalysis is used to study the author's use of different techniques (43).

Several psychoanalysis concepts contribute to the formation of several literary works. That is, many authors rely on psychoanalysis as a tool to shape their works. Concepts as the primacy of the Unconscious, The Iceberg theory of the psyche, dreams are an expression of our conscious, infantile behaviour is essentially sexual and the relationship between neurosis and creativity are highly recommended by most of the writers (43-44). Paris (1974) writes: "Psychology helps us to talk about what the novelist knows, but fiction helps us to know what the psychologist is talking about... The chief

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impulse of realistic fiction, however, is neither formal nor thematic but mimetic, and novels of psychological realism call by their very nature for psychological analysis” (qtd.in Hossain 44).

Yet, the interpretations of dreams have been very changeable in literature. Psychoanalysis deals with the protagonists’ dreams and expectations as their own escapes from the cruelty of the world. Nevertheless, the question arises “will they get rid of that cruelty after the fulfilment of dreams?” Actually, reality remains as it is and nothing will change. That is for Freud, it is much better to face inappropriate desires and to keep struggling:

No doubt a wish-fulfilment must bring pleasure; but the question then arises ‘To whom?’ To the person who has the wish of course. But, as we know, a dreamer's relation to his wishes is quite a peculiar one. He repudiates them and censors them –he has no liking for them, in short. So that their fulfilment will give him no pleasure, but just the opposite; and experience shows that this opposite appears in the form of anxiety, a fact which has still to be explained. Thus, a dreamer in relation this dream-wishes can only be compared to an amalgamation of two separate people who are linked by some important common element (qtd.in Watson 3-4).

The ego here is unable to defend the id’s inappropriate wishes, and this can reflect the situation of several characters of the literary works.

Psychoanalysis lends itself to the literary studies of poetry. The psychoanalyst deals with the words of the poet as a doctor does with his patients. Psychoanalysis offers a situation in which the reader may interpret the psyche of the poet through his use of language and symbols. Psychoanalyst may face difficulties analysing deeper meaning of

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poetry because they usually seem hidden, but they can work on them with interpretations. That is, interpretation is a major concept in both literature and psychoanalysis (Jarvis 3).

The word metaphor has its own effect in both literature and psychoanalysis. The psychotherapist may distinguish different connotations and interpretations for one single metaphor in a literary work. Both culture and language contain metaphors that may lead the psychotherapist to analyse them according to their real meanings (Fitzgerald 570). That is, the literary meanings through which a psychoanalyst can find truth and explanation for certain situations. Examining the capacity of metaphor in literature and its contributions to psychoanalysis, Cox and Theilgaard (1987) state:

We have given many examples of the way in which metaphor can serve as a container for feelings that are too overwhelming to be tolerated. We have also shown how it can prove to be a vehicle for carrying, mobilising, expressing, and integrating effect and cognition in furthering the therapeutic process. Metaphor exerts its mutative effect by energising an alternative perspectival aspect of experience (qtd.in Fitzgerald 571).

Metaphor, as a part of literary language, can hold several meanings of different feelings and emotions. That is, the writer is to some extent supposed to use such kind of figurative language in order to describe the psyche of his characters in a way that the psychotherapist is supposed to analyse and go beyond the figurative meaning.

In fact, the psychological approach through which a literary work is analysed emphasises both the extrinsic and intrinsic sides of the work. The characterisation of the literary work can be done through a method of telling as well as a method of showing. For the first method, focus is placed on the figures of the literary work and the commentary of the author. It is very interesting to investigate the characterisation of the characters from

the author's point of view because it leaves a kind of credibility. The author is the responsible one for the depiction of the conflict that occurs within the literary work, so psychoanalysis is just a tool for describing this conflict from a psychological perspective. Otherwise, the method of showing gives an image about the author outside the story. It is actually the characters' role to show up their characterisation through language and the readers can identify the actions of the characters right from their language (Mustikawati 8-9).

Literature is a field of humanities which deals with human issues and struggle for life and surviving. Most literary interests like authors, poets, playwrights and others find literature as an escape to do their works. However, psychoanalysis is a method of investigation that deals with these issues in a psychological way. The interpretation of the literary work can be done through psychoanalysis in a way that enables the psychotherapist to study the psyche of the characters and even the psyche of the writer.

1. 6. Conclusion

Human beings are weak creatures that can be affected so hard by their harsh conditions of life and the surrounding incidents. People who are trapped in reality usually seek some ways to get rid of it, or at least to resist against it. However, once they make a wrong decision they should accept the results. In this chapter, we tempted to make a kind of a conceptual framework in which we examined the rooted meanings and connotations of the terms defense mechanism and tragic downfall. Yet, the last two terms are actually a part of the psychoanalytic literary theory which deals with the study of the psychological side of either the writer or his protagonists from different angles. On a one hand, it is commonly agreed that the hero who makes a wrong decision will face a tragic flaw that leads him to his downfall. This is clearly proved by Aristotle in his theory of the tragic

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hero who suffers hamartia. On the other hand, several writers shape their characters as they suffer from a serious disease. The characters in this case are coping with that illness physically and psychologically, and in order to fight such monster they refer to some sort of resisting tools or “defense mechanisms”.

In the next chapter of the present research, we will try to apply the theory of the tragic hero by Aristotle and the theory of defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud on the protagonists of *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) by John Green. The whole work will be conducted under the psychoanalytic literary theory as an umbrella. We will deeply study the psyche of Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters and how they affect each other, and we will focus on the ego as a defense mechanism for Hazel as one of the protagonists to retreat from her present conditions and forget her trauma. Since both of them are suffering from cancer, they seem to have different tools of resisting their illness. Otherwise, they seem to be the modern version of the tragic hero.

Chapter Two:

Fatal Decisions and the Clash with Life

2. 1. Introduction

As people waste their breath complaining about life, somebody out there is struggling to survive and draw in a lasting a breath. After being diagnosed with cancer at such a young age, both Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters undergo a series of considerable changes in their social life and also changes on the level of the concept of death and dying which automatically influence their behaviours and the decisions they eventually make. Both of the main characters do not possess any power over the crippling situation itself but they do have the power to decide how to respond to it.

Cancer has become the background of the development factor of both characters. On the one hand, Hazel struggles to come into terms with what her existence entails not only on herself but also on the people around her, namely her parents and Augustus and the bitter consequences that would follow her impending death. This creates quite a jumble of thoughts and heightened emotions which composed the core issues that Hazel suffers from; the thing that drives her to unconsciously employ several self defence mechanisms as a potent endeavour to comfort and defend herself against any imposing threats. On the other hand, Augustus suffers from a long lasting fear of oblivion. He wants to be remembered and craves to be cherished in the memories of the people around him long after he dies. He wants to achieve something great and heroic for the world to remember his existence which further compels him to make some mistakes and faulty choices that resulted in some serious decisions which might not always be very promising in the larger scheme of reality and might eventually lead to his tragic downfall.

2. 2. Psychological Reading of *the Fault in Our Stars* (2012)

Green's novel *The Fault in Our Stars* is actually dedicated to his friend Esther Earl who was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 12 and died at the age of 16. Green says: "*Esther was a major inspiration for the novel*". He has chosen an exact theory to shape the

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layout of the events that are based on reality. John Green seems to choose the field of psychology in order to conduct the event of his novel. It is clearly observed that Green relies on the interpersonal theory to depict the relationship between Hazel and Augustus. This theory deals with the individuals who have similar situations and trends in life. That is, both of Hazel and Augustus suffer from cancer and are interested in literature (Fithroni 9).

As a matter of fact, social psychology is a crucial part that needs to be included while analysing the interpersonal relationship between two characters. Social psychology is interested in how two persons may influence each other and be interdependent. Myers 1959 states: “*Social psychology is a science that studies the influences of our situations, with special attention to how we view and affect one another. More precisely said, it is the scientific studies of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another*” (qtd.in Fithroni 9-10). That is, Hazel and Augustus are two interdependent characters who share the same aspirations, interests and state of health.

The Fault in Our Stars is a novel about coming of age and experiencing life in its harshest situations. Both of the protagonists are struggling against cancer and pain. That is to say, they even share the same pain. That is why they are socially attracted to each other. So according to social psychology theories, there are several points through which two persons are attracted to each other and among these points similarity, reciprocity of liking, positive qualities, physical attractiveness, physical appearance, and social behaviour are major ones (10). Hazel is obliged to carry an oxygen tank because of cancer, and Augustus has lost his leg due to cancer also. So, both of the protagonists in *The Fault in Our Stars* have some handicaps which do not prevent them to make a friendship and to fall in love later on.

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Green seems to deal with a kind of reciprocity of liking within his novel. That is, someone seems to like those who like him and exchange the same emotions with them. The case for Hazel is that she has ever prevented herself to make friendships and to be loved by someone because she has always thought of her death and considered herself as a grenade that can explode at any time and hurt the surrounding: *"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?"*(Green 53). But when she has suddenly met Augustus, she decides to love him back and make a friendship with him.

In fact, the protagonists seem to have different qualities of positivity. On the one hand, Hazel is thoughtful, educated, and open minded that makes conversations with Augustus and discusses her opinion with him. The thing which makes Augustus to fall in love with her. On the other hand, Augustus is warm, good listener, literate, and incredible. That is, his illness did not prevent him from living the way he wants and expressing his views in different fields. It is clearly observed that both of the characters have many similarities that is why they are psychologically related to each other.

Green's protagonists are dream seekers with a huge suffering and big aspiration. They affect each other in the way they think and interpret things around them. Hazel's choice of facing the real world is a brave step taking by a patient of cancer. Also, Augustus encouragement for Hazel is a changing point in the life of both of them. It is so clear that Hazel and Augustus are interdependent characters with acceptance of their flaws and faults. They both enjoy the feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and gratification in their relationship despite the fact that they have cancer in their bodies.

2. 3. Hazel's Defense Mechanisms

People who suffer from cancer have a kind of limited interaction with society, as a distinct entity, since they are always treated as the special ones. Falling under this category; that is, being diagnosed with a chronic disease, leads the person or rather the “patient”, as is the case with Hazel Grace in *The Fault in Our Stars*, to go through a crisis marked namely by physical, social, and psychological disequilibrium. Many patients become overwhelmed with their illness since it touches almost every aspect of their life through which the human psyche automatically tries to adapt to all these changes by the use of defence mechanisms. After all, confronting the very possibility of death is not an easy task.

Hazel Grace Lancaster

Hazel Grace Lancaster is a seventeen year old girl who was diagnosed with thyroid cancer that spread to her lungs at the age of thirteen. She was prepared to die, as prepared as one could be in such a state, until at 14 a medical miracle shrunk the tumours in her lungs at the time. She is the novel's narrator. She has a mother and a father who loved her so much and supported her tremendously. She lives tethered to an oxygen tank, the tumours kept at bay with a constant fluid of chemicals. Hazel has a very limited interaction with outside world. Her world revolves almost around reading the book of *An Imperial Affliction* written by Peter Van Houten for the umpteenth time and watching TV shows with her mother. So, under the persistence of her parents, she starts attending the Cancer Kid Support Group in church called “Literal Heart of Jesus” in the hope that she interacts with people and makes some friends. She then meets Isaac and Augustus Waters whom she has a lot of interactions with and they soon become very good friends. As teenagers with cancer, they try to complement each other's life and they soon become good friends. She comes to love Augustus dearly and they develop a close relationship full of love and funny moments and

start to find beauty in a world gone bleak in an effort to ignore their condition as people suffering from cancer.

2. 3. 1. The Essence of Hazel Grace's Common Issues

Having cancer is not something easy to deal with, let alone for a teenager who is supposed to be going through a transition period to maturity. Hazel does not struggle like any ordinary person in daily life. She rather struggles to fight the cancer cells in her body. She has to consume phalanxiphor every day to slow the growth of cancer cells and be attached to a tank wherever she goes that provides her with two litters of oxygen per a minute. It is a common fact that people who are diagnosed with chronic diseases become psychologically obligated to integrate the patient role into their lives if they are to adapt to their disorders. A large number of patients become greatly overwhelmed by the upcoming changes in their lives and, in some cases, by the glooming prospect of death. Hazel fervently hopes that she can live like a normal person, breathe like a normal person. She clearly states:

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 under oxygenation (Green 28).

The aspect of fear is highly featured in the *In the Fault in Our Stars*. Hazel's first fear is when she describes herself as a grenade that would someday explode and hurt all those around her. She is constantly living with the troubling awareness that she would soon die and cause those around her tremendous heartache especially after she read the condolence messages of Caroline Mathers, Augustus' ex-girlfriend who died of brain cancer. She then worries that continuing her relationship with Augustus until that time would inevitably hurt

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him and tries to distance herself from him. She also feels like she is a burden to her parents and cannot rid herself of the nagging idea that she is the source of their sadness:

I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there is nothing I can do about hurting you; you'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 (52-53).

Hazel is hardly averse to feelings of abandonment. She is quite adamant in her belief that when she meets her demise, she will leave her parents and her boyfriend Augustus:

Just before the Miracle, when I was in the ICU and it looked like I was going to die and Mom was telling me it was okay to let go, and I was trying to let go but my lungs kept searching for air. Mom sobbed something into Dad's chest that I wish I hadn't heard, and that I hope she never finds out that I did hear. She says: "I won't be a Mom anymore". It gutted me pretty badly" (62).

Hazel is afraid that her parents won't be able to survive her loss when it happened because it is going to happen; it is only a matter of when. She is scared that her mother will never be fine again or that her father will become a miserable alcoholic, or worst of all, that they will leave each other. She craves the mere possibility of sparing them the pain and melancholy that would befall them upon her death that she even started to have dreams about it like the time she dreamed herself being utterly alone in a huge lake without any boat in sight. These feelings weigh heavily on Hazel's shoulders that they follow her to the unconsciousness of sleep. This demonstrates Hazel's fear of abandoning life and being abandoned by those around her. The fear that she would one day lose someone she cares

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about or, the opposite that she would leave those who care about her. A good example is the time when Patrick, the Support Group leader, started to pray for those who died of cancer by the end of one session:

It was a long list. The world contains a lot of dead people. And while Patrick droned on, reading the list from a sheet of paper because it was too long to memorize, I kept my eyes closed, trying to think prayerfully but mostly imagining the day when my name would find its way onto that list (13).

Hazel is worried that her entire life has become revolved solely on her illness. She does not abide the idea that she has become her illness, that she is not doing any interesting activity that is worth mentioning, or that when she someday died, all people would remember is her battling cancer, and eventually failing at that. The mere thought grieves her like no other; it can be indicated by her thought: *“that when I died they’d have nothing to say about me except that I fought heroically, as if the only thing I’d ever done was Have Cancer”* (54).

Hazel has the misfortune of suffering from a serious case of low self-esteem. Low self-esteem refers to the belief of being less worthy than other people and, as such, deemed unbefitting of attention, love, or any of the rest of life’s rewards. Hazel often feels herself less worthy than the other people around her and that she does not deserve any attention much less love. This unpleasant state of feelings was further intensified by the sheer fact that she is battling an incurable cancer. This result in her thinking that she is a non-regular teenager lending her feelings of an astute lack of confidence as she regards herself of less value than other normal teenagers which make her feel unentitled to any rights to feel love or be loved.

2. 3. 2. Hazel Grace's Self-Defense Mechanisms

Hazel Grace employs various defence mechanisms in an attempt to keep anxiety unconsciously at bay in order to comfort herself and avoid indulging in what she assumes she cannot handle. In Psychoanalysis, the reason that might lead a given person to use self defence mechanisms can be traced back to one's childhood experiences or different events that trigger one's self to defend itself against any outside threats or challenges. However, in *The Fault in Our Stars*, Hazel is told to have had a great joyful early childhood period until she reached the age of twelve. The novel does not even provide information about it. This maybe refers to the fact that there is not anything worth mentioning that the author deemed it appropriate not to inform the readers of anything; there might not have been particularly any worthwhile memorable things about Hazel's childhood.

On the other hand, once Hazel reaches thirteen, things start to change as she was diagnosed with stage four of thyroid cancer. Owing to the knowledge that the cancer is incurable, she loses any traces of hope, belongingness, and falls into the abyss of depression. Believing that she is at the threshold of death's door, Hazel embarks on a journey of self-hate, depression and despising life altogether which prompts her to employ several self defense mechanisms.

Identification

In *The Fault in Our Stars*, Hazel attempts to emulate Anna from her favourite book *An Imperial Affliction*. She has been reading it back to back countless times. Hazel loves this book due to the fact that it tells stories of children who suffer from cancer. She especially adores the protagonist of the novel, Anna, who has blood cancer. She identifies herself with Anna that she starts to adopt Anna's belief concerning the children with cancer

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as a side effect of the relentless mutation that will bring wonderful diversity to the world. Moreover, Hazel imitates Anna's attitudes, styles, and value:

I spent like thirty minutes debating with Mom the various benefits and drawbacks of the available outfits before deciding to dress as much like Anna in AIA as possible: Chuck Taylors and dark jeans like she always wore and a light blue T-shirt (89).

It is quite clear that identification is employed as a self defense mechanism on behalf of Hazel unconsciously. Her love for the main character Anna reached such proportions she does not even realise that she tries to imitate her in various aspects of her life; that is, her patterns of thought, action, and value. Through Anna, Hazel learns how to comfort herself despite having cancer. Anna says things that Hazel would just love to hear; things that in reality were never before uttered by the people around her. Anna provides a deep sense of relief that makes Hazel feel comfortable when she is depressed:

Also Anna is honest about all of it in a way no one else really is: Throughout the book, she refers to herself as the side effect, which just totally correct. Cancer kids are essentially side effects of the relentless mutation that made the diversity of life on earth possible. So as the story goes on, she gets sick (30).

Denial

Denial is another self defense mechanism that Hazel employs throughout the novel. It is manifested in Hazel's constant way of acting that everything is fine and that nothing is the matter, despite the realisation that she is everything but fine. When it is her turn to introduce herself in the Cancer Kid Support Group, she replies: *"I'm Hazel, I'd say when*

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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" (9).

Hazel longs to believe, and for the people surrounding her also to believe that she is just doing fine, although she suffers from an incurable disease that would inevitably lead to her demise. Even though she starts getting bouts of pain in her shoulder coupled with a headache during a certain time through the first quarter of the novel, she goes through a phase of denial that something is amiss with her and keeps telling herself that she is just fine. *"Is everything all right?" asked Mom as I ate" (53).* Hazel response is " *'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. 'Is there broccoli in the burgers?' "(53).*

By continuing to say that she is fine, Hazel denies that she is ill and dying. She lies both to herself and the people around her:

I told myself that imagining a met in my brain or my shoulder would not affect the invisible reality going on inside of me, and that therefore all such thoughts were wasted moments in a life composed of a definitionally finite set of such moments. I even tried to tell myself to live my best life today (53).

Displacement

Displacement is a self defense mechanism that occurs in *The Fault in Our Stars*. Hazel drops out from her school due to her illness. She then takes further steps in order to distance herself from her friends and stay away from most people camping at home and watching TV. Hazel acts in such a manner because every time she meets or talks with her friends, she feels hurt. She also gets jealous because she cannot be as healthy and "normal" as her friends are. Hazel does not like the way her friends regard her with pitiful eyes and

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how they treat her like a sick person, who she actually is, but that does not make things any more bearable. *“Any attempts to feign normal social interactions were just depressing because it was so glaringly obvious that everyone I spoke to for the rest of my life would feel awkward and self-conscious around me”*(29). Thus, Hazel chooses to disregard the outside world and be alone spending hours upon hours reading a book:

And I liked Kaitlyn, too. I really did. But three years removed from proper full-time school exposure to my peers, I felt a certain unbridgeable distance between us. I think my school friends wanted to help me through my cancer, but they eventually found out that they couldn't. For one thing, there was no through. So I excused myself on the grounds of pain and fatigue, as I often had over the years when seeing Kaitlyn or any of my other friends (28).

The presence of Hazel's friends and parents make her feel somehow threatened which leads her to choose the companionship of books rather than that of actual people. This is a clear manifestation that Hazel does not only avoid people but also assume that books are much less threatening than the other alternative which is her friends and parents. Hazel does not perceive herself capable of defending herself against these people, so she chooses the safer option which is book. For Hazel, books are the least “dangerous” thing for her. She likes to be alone with her books: *“Anyway, I really did like being alone. I liked being alone with poor Staff Sergeant Max Mayhem”* (29). It is clearly evidenced that Hazel employs displacement as a mechanism to replace what causes fear and all the other jarring emotions of insecurity or uncertainty with something or someone that is less threatening.

Fixation

Fixation is another notable self defense mechanism that is used by Hazel in *The Fault in Our Stars*. In the novel, Hazel reads *An Imperial Affliction* almost every single day. Since being diagnosed with thyroid cancer, Hazel has been reading the novel many times. She has come to love the novel due to the fact that it tells stories of children with cancer. Hazel harbours great affection for the protagonist Anna who suffers from cancer like Hazel does. Opposite to the other children with cancer who were featured in the novel, Anna starts a charity that raises money to cure Cholera instead of dedicating her efforts for a charity that fights cancer. She calls it “*The Anna Foundation for People with Cancer Who Want to Cure Cholera*”. Hazel’s fixation also springs from her astonishment of how the novel comes to an end right in the middle of a sentence. Since the novel does not have any proper ending, Hazel does no longer have to rein her imagination about what happens next in the novel. She keeps thinking of the endless possibilities that might happen to the other characters in the novel among which that the book ended because Anna probably died:

My favorite book, by a wide margin, was *An Imperial Affliction*, but I didn’t like to tell people about it. Sometimes you read a book and it fills you with this weird evangelical zeal, and you become convinced that the shattered world will never be put together unless and until all living humans read the book (23).

Hazel’s great attachment or rather obsession to the reading of the same book repeatedly points to the fact that she employs fixation as a defence mechanism. This might indicate some kind of insecurity in Hazel’s character. Fixation takes place when a given person does not feel safe to try new unknown things so that he or she prefers the familiar

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side of things. That is also another reason to Hazel's rereading of the same novel over and over:

And then I started reading *An Imperial Affliction* for the millionth time... I know it's a very literary decision and everything and probably part of the reason I love the book so much, but there is something to recommend a story that ends (30).

Rationalisation

In *The Fault in Our Stars*, Hazel attempts to provide logical explanation for her illogical behaviour or act. For instance, Hazel claims that the reason she attends the Support Group and permits the nurse to inject medicine into her body is to make her parents happy. In reality, Hazel acts this way because, unconsciously, deep down to the very marrow, she still wants to be a healthy girl who enjoys her teenage years and grow into a young lady without cancer in her lungs: *"I went to Support Group for the same reason that I had once allowed nurses with a mere eighteen months of graduate education to poison me with exotically named chemicals: I wanted to make my parents happy"* (11).

Hazel uses rationalisation as one of her various defence mechanisms to conceal the motives that would trigger feelings of guilt and anxiety in her. For the eventual purpose of hiding her real reasons, Hazel always tends to provide more logical and acceptable explanations to her behaviours.

After analysing Hazel's character, one comes to recognise Green's strength in writing. He puts a lot of thought into small details such as Hazel's name. In one of his vlogs on YouTube, he explains the reason he chose this name specifically, he states: *"Hazel is an in-between colour, and she has an in-between life, in-between health and sickness, in-*

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between adolescence and adulthood, in-between swimming and drowning, etc.” (qtd.in O 2).

Before ever meeting Augustus, Hazel’s character was not something to boast about. Hazel has been pessimistic and distant because being diagnosed with cancer tends to have that effect on people. Her condition causes a lack of social motivation for which she becomes a lonely girl who does home activities rather than venturing out and meeting new people. She has come to regard her life as worthless to the extent of even welcoming death in some instances since it was going to happen sooner anyway. So it might as well happen and be done with it. She tries not to get closer to others so as not to let them get attached to her, or she attached to them, in order to spare them the evitable pain of loss and to stay “emotionally safe”.

Having the opportunity to meet Augustus and come to know him better, Hazel’s character undergoes a significant change. After meeting Augustus, Hazel becomes a more loving and considerate person. She comes to love Augustus unconditionally and wholeheartedly and finds herself giving into all the sweet real tide of feelings thinking that he is not ideal or anything, but he is still her perfect prince charming with all his imperfections. She realises that she will always love her parents from whom she derives the necessary strength of spirit to fight cancer and be grateful for all she still has. Moreover, she makes her parents promise that they will continue to live after her death and not succumb to grief or depression which gives her a measure of comfort and relief. Love boosts her to strengthen her survival abilities and to adopt a new spirit to live life more meaningfully and face her illness with a grateful heart. Hazel also becomes considerably considerate concerning her dealings with the people surrounding her and has come to care about her friends like Isaac, who lost eyesight due to cancer, by sharing affection, giving hugs, and keeping in touch.

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On the other hand, Hazel's parents make it clear that she is not a burden but a gift that they cherish every single day and that they will continue to love and support her no matter what happens. Hazel also realises that Augustus will always love her after he assures her that keeping him away will not decrease his affection towards her which empowers her to appreciate life and enjoy the time she still has with the people she loves and do her best to minimise the traumatic thoughts of death and dying. By the end of the story, Hazel turns out to be the victim to the suffering that she feared most after Augustus dies unexpectedly when the cancer spread in his body. However as much as the loss devastates her, Hazel is extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to know Augustus and experiencing the beauty of love with him. For that alone, she cherishes the little time they shared and the memories they made even when an infinity could not be enough.

2. 4. Augustus' Tragic Downfall

The Fault in Our Stars is actually considered to be a tragedy in addition to a young adult literary piece. Young people are confronting the issue of dying that is why some of them are seeking for certain ways to retreat from such reality. Augustus, as the protagonist of the novel, finds out that he should do something brave and heroic in order to stay in memory.

Augustus Waters

Augustus Waters is a seventeen-year-old boy who has lost his leg due to osteosarcoma which is a form of cancer that occurs at the level of the bones. He lives with his parents in Indianapolis, and he attends a support group created for cancer survivors. Actually, he is obsessed with video games playing and reading books. Augustus, in fact, is Hazel's boyfriend and the protagonist of *The Fault in Our Stars*. He falls for Hazel from first sight and thinks that she is the girl that is meant to be. He is concerned in life as well as

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death just like Hazel, but his concern comes out of his fear of dying without making a heroic act in life. In fact, Augustus is obsessed with doing something great that keeps him feel the belonging to life that is why he thinks that he can do a heroic act through his relationship with Hazel. Augustus' parents are kind and hopeful people. They cope with their son's miserable condition and play the role of the good friends because they always encourage their sick son. They consider Hazel as a part of their family since she means a lot to Augustus.

2. 4. 1. The Hero's Choices, Mistakes and Decisions

Augustus seems to feel ignorance and that people around him do not see him the way he thinks he must be seen, in addition to his fear of oblivion. That is when Patrick, a member of the support group, asked him about his fear, Augustus answers: "*I fear oblivion, I fear it like the proverbial blind man who is afraid of the dark*" (Green 12). Augustus' fear seems to oblige him to make some fatal decisions in his life and that is all due to his illness and what cancer is able to do in his body. Augustus, in fact, is so determined to make the other people see him like a hero and he is obsessed with making a heroic act that saves him from fading into oblivion. However, Hazel seems to be totally against Augustus' way of thinking, she clearly comments:

There will come a time 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 will have been for naught (13).

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The thing that makes Augustus fond to know much more about Hazel and whether he would be able to accomplish his decision of making a heroic act with her. Hazel directly adds a statement of encouragement: “*if the inevitability of human oblivion worries you, I encourage you to ignore it. God knows that’s what everyone else does*” (13). That is, she would spend her life dreaming instead of making a wrong decision.

As a matter of fact, Augustus’ tragic flaw seems to be both an action and a trait. An action because he directly decides to complete his act through Hazel after hearing from her, and a trait because he does not give up though he knows Hazel’s opinion about his fear. That is when Hazel asks Augustus about the way he looks at her, he declares: “*you’re beautiful. I enjoy looking at beautiful people, and I decided a while ago not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence*” (15). Yet, he exaggerates: “*I mean, particularly given that, as you so deliciously pointed out, all of this will end in oblivion and everything*” (15). That is, he insists on his decision and he will never get trapped into oblivion. He is that sort of unwillingness to stay passive in front of what seems to challenge his dignity and status though he considers himself as a common person, and indeed he is.

Hazel sees that Augustus’ tragic flaw is pointed in him and the way he tries to hurt himself much more than he really suffers. That is when he acts like he smokes cigarette despite the fact that he has cancer:

The whole thing where a boy who is not unattractive or unintelligent or seemingly in any way unacceptable stares at me and points out incorrect uses of literacy and compares me to actresses and asks me to watch a movie at his house. But of course there is always a *hamartia* and yours is that, oh my God, even though you had freaking cancer you give money to a company in exchange for the chance to acquire yet more cancer. Oh, my

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God. Let me just assure you that not being able to breathe? Totally disappointing. Totally (17).

He, in a way, seems to deny the fact of his illness and that it is so dangerous to take a cigarette especially for one who is diagnosed with cancer and has late stages of it. For Hazel, Augustus' mistake is that he keeps hurting himself in purpose and that has a kind of hamartia which is mostly applied in tragedies. Augustus actually does not even know what hamartia means, and Hazel explains: "*a fatal flaw*" (17). Psychologically, the tragic hero is unconscious with what he determines himself to do because all of his interest is placed on doing a heroic act.

Augustus Waters is highly influenced by Hazel that he wants to share her interests and to know more about the way she thinks and treat most of her stuffs. He asks her about every single detail in her life just to point out how to accomplish his heroic act and save his dignity before passing away. Augustus is obsessed with Hazel's activities and more importantly her readings because she spends most of her time reading. So checking out her favourite book, he insists: "*I am going to read this terrible book with the boring title that does not contain storm troopers*" (23). Hazel feels like she identifies with the girl in that book, *An Imperial Affliction*, and that the author, Peter Van Houten, is best understanding her and her situation. This makes Augustus eager to read that book and discover another side in Hazel.

Augustus' reading of *An Imperial Affliction* shows him some of the points that Hazel believes in. He asserts: "*pain demands to be felt*" (34), and Hazel directly notices that this sentence is a line in her favourite book. It actually looks like Augustus does not clarify which kind of pain, and whether it is the pain caused by cancer in their bodies or the pain of being ill with cancer and accept reality as it is with the loss of many functions in life. Augustus repeats the same sentence about pain and how it must be felt in order to calm down

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his friend Isaac who is feeling alone because his girlfriend has left him. However, this time Augustus means the pain of love and being left.

For the sake of Hazel's happiness, Augustus eventually decides to use his wish as a cancer survivor. He finds Hazel as an inspiration for his wish and that she either has the opportunity to get answers for her questions about the ending of *An Imperial Affliction*. Introducing the idea to Hazel, Augustus says: "*Now, I'm not going to give you my Wish or anything. But I also have an interest in meeting Peter Van Houten, and it wouldn't make sense to meet him without the girl who introduced me to his book*" (49). He seems to offer Hazel a trip to the Netherlands in order to meet her favourite author and get answers though he knows that she is afraid to get close to people because she thinks that her death will harm them one day. Augustus is able to make his heroic act, and he is sure that he makes the right decision concerning Hazel.

Alas, Augustus makes his first big mistake when he offers Hazel the trip to Amsterdam. He does not expect that Hazel may get disappointed because of Houten who hurts her so deeply. Though Augustus does not hold a high position, Hazel sees him in a different way. He seems to be the kind of tragic heroes who do not pay attention to their faults and suddenly fall down. He is actually trying to make Hazel feels happy and does not notice that this act may lead to his own downfall. However, he is still determined to do a heroic act that saves his esteem.

In fact, Augustus is a modern version of the tragic hero which is totally different from the Greek one of Aristotle. Yet, any tragic hero must have his own hamartia and his own downfall. Augustus waters is a common person who suffers from cancer and tries to protect his dignity. He seems to accept his situation and stands for the chaos of the world like in a showdown where only one side must win, that is; either he wins against cancer

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making his heroic act or he dies the way he does not want to. Augustus is focused on his own life and trying to make Hazel happier. He seems to find happiness even inside his sufferings. He cares much more about Hazel and wants to see her wish come true regardless to what may happen to him in such a trip.

Van Houten is likely to prove that both Hazel and Augustus are suffering from hamartia. But each one of them is doing it in his own terms unlike the Shakespearean characters. Hazel's tragic flaw is being very ill, and Augustus is being very well or seemingly to be so. Houten replies once:

I am in receipt of your electronic mail dated the 14th of April and duly impressed by the Shakespearean complexity of your tragedy. Everyone in this tale has a rock-solid *hamartia*: hers, that she is so sick; yours, that you are so well. Where she better or you sicker, then the stars would not be so terribly crossed, but it is the nature of stars to cross, and never was Shakespeare more wrong than when he had Cassius note, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves" Easy enough to say when you're a Roman nobleman, but there is no shortage of fault to be found amid our stars (59).

Actually, Van Houten seems to have a different opinion about Augustus' mistake as a tragic hero. Within the same respond from him, he clearly tries to convince Augustus to let Hazel at ease and to never push her to do things she is unable to bear. That is, Augustus is not obliged to make a heroic act in order to save his esteem rather he should just love Hazel and be a part of her life not a part of her sufferings. Van Houten adds:

I digress, but here's the rub: The dead are visible only in the terrible lidless eye of memory. The living, thank heaven, retain the ability to surprise and

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to disappoint. Your Hazel is alive, Waters, and you mustn't impose your will upon another's *decision*, particularly a *decision* arrived at thoughtfully. She wishes to spare you pain, and you should let her. You may not find young Hazel's logic persuasive, but I have trod through this vale of tears longer than you, and from where I'm sitting, she's not the lunatic (60).

Van Houten believes that being so close to someone who is apparently dying is a fatal decision which may affect him and ruin his psychology. So it looks better if a cancer survivor stays in his own away from the others because once he passes, he will leave just the grief for them. Van Houten sees reality just like Hazel before she met Augustus. That is why Van Houten keeps telling them that they are having their own hamartia or fatal flaw. Whenever they are together, they may affect each other with their fatal decisions.

Actually, Amsterdam is a new experience for Augustus who decides to take Hazel there in order to achieve her desire. Augustus' love towards Hazel is true and pure in a way that he wants to do a heroic act to save such affection. So his parents may not be agree on such a sudden decision because it can be wrong despite the fact that they appreciate their son's decisions and care about his priorities. When they try to discuss that decision with him, he clarifies: "*Because it is my life, mom. It belongs to me*" (72). Augustus is the kind of people who looks for life in the simplest things, and this is a main trait of the tragic hero. Yet, he seems to be a stubborn person who never takes back his promise. He is the kind of heroes who have an inner struggle with themselves. Augustus struggles very hard to get his position within the society and to save his dignity and self-esteem. That is, he fights both a mental and a physical battle to survive and to protect his thoughts and actions.

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Augustus eventually prefers his love towards Hazel rather than acting in a heroic way. He fails to make another decision which is to tell Hazel about his emotions towards her hoping she has the same towards him. So, like any other tragic hero Augustus is in love:

I'm in love with you, and I'm not in the business of denying myself the simple pleasure of saying true things. I'm in love with you, and I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we're all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we'll ever have, and I am in love with you (78).

He cares more about his feeling than his fear to fade into oblivion. Actually, he looks like someone who was blind to see the truth and finally got to realise it. Despite the fact that he does not accomplish his heroic act, he declares his feelings to Hazel. That is, Augustus Waters is actually in need of someone who better understands him, cares about him and more interestingly shares him the same thoughts and actions as well.

Moreover, Augustus is certain that some decisions and choices are obligatory in order to survive or at least in order not to waste the chance to survive. Death, for him, is not an option but it is a reality. However, the way he lives before his death is an option and it is up to him to choose how to live. That is, he is convinced that sometimes he has the right to make a wrong decision that may lead him to his downfall. He states:

When I first found out I was sick I mean, they told me I had like an eighty-five percent chance of cure. I know those are great odds, but I kept thinking it was a game of Russian roulette. I mean, I was going to have to go through hell for six months or a year and lose my leg and then at the end, it still might not work, you know? (83).

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Yet, he seems to make some decisions according to his fear of fading into oblivion. He is aware of everything around him, but keeps challenging his real situation which is being a cancer survivor who might be dead at any time. He further explains his fear to Hazel:

I fear earthly oblivion. But, I mean, not to sound like my parents, but I believe humans have souls, and I believe in the conservation of souls. The oblivion fear is something else, fear that I won't be able to give anything in exchange for my life. 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 (84).

Though Augustus is sure about his opinion, Hazel is against such an idea. For her, it is somehow weird and mean to think that dying without doing a heroic achievement is like having a life with no sense. So being a cancer survivor does not mean a meaningless life. That is, Augustus sets his choices out of his fear of death and he seems very mean to think that the lives that matter the most are those which are lived for something and ended after witnessing a heroic act. Augustus is still certain that Hazel Grace is the right person to his heroic ideas even though he loves her and can never hurt her. Hazel, in turn, seems to be at the middle of that all afraid, sad, and confused. She is unable to agree with Augustus' decision and his thoughts of heroism.

Augustus and Hazel's expectations are actually destroyed by Van Houten who depicts them as apparitions. The term suggests that they have a problem of existence and they are so temporary in life. Van Houten states: *"You are a side effect of an evolutionary process that cares little for individual lives. You are a failed experiment in mutation"* (95). That is, they are not important since they have cancer and their death is a fact to be

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considered one day. Furthermore, both of the protagonists seem to be a different version of the tragic hero except that their flaws do not lead them to their downfall. To meet Peter Van Houten for them is to get answers for their questions and to know reality. However, Hazel seems to begin realizing the difference between expectations and reality as well as fiction and reality. Hazel's disappointment is somehow viewed due to Augustus' decision to go to Amsterdam. So he is responsible of his own flaw.

Yet, Augustus is still fighting to accomplish his heroic act with Hazel. It seems like his decision failed him and Hazel, instead of being happy, is somehow disappointed. Augustus confirms: *"I'll fight it. I'll fight it for you. Don't you worry about me, Hazel Grace. I'm okay. I'll find a way to hang around and annoy you for a long time"* (107). He adds: *"I'm sorry. You'll be okay. It'll be okay. I promise"* (107). Augustus is extremely annoyed because of what happens with Van Houten who was so mean with them and with Hazel in particular. Hazel is pretty sure that even she has her own tragic flaw which is believing in her expectations and making decisions according to her imagination, she insists: *"I guess I had a hamartia after all"* (108).

2. 4. 2. The Downfall of the Tragic Hero

Augustus water is, in fact, the kind of tragic heroes who are ready to face their downfalls so peacefully. He seems to know much more about his own hamartia and facing his flaw is a must. It turns out to be so clear that his downfall is hidden within his fears of oblivion and losing Hazel just like what happened with him when he lost his ex-girlfriend. Augustus clarifies: *"I like this world. I like drinking champagne. I like not smoking. I like the sound of Dutch people speaking Dutch. And now . . . I don't even get a battle. I don't get a fight"* (108). That is, his last fight starts when he decides to travel to Amsterdam in order

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to see Hazel's wish coming true, but he fails. Indeed, he is not even sure that he may win his war against his illness:

What am I at war with? My cancer. And what is my cancer? My cancer is me. The tumors are made of me. They're made of me as surely as my brain and my heart are made of me. It is a civil war, Hazel Grace, with a predetermined winner (108).

Augustus gives up upon his own heroism and believes that dying because of cancer has no honour and kids with cancer are likely to be forgotten by their relatives, friends and all the rest. For him, doing a heroic act is expected to keep him in memory but it turns out to create his own hamartia and lead him to his downfall at the end. He is extremely disillusioned that he may die without any memory that reminds people of him and saves him from oblivion. Indeed, he tries hard to keep up Hazel's morals and he fails to survive with his decisions. Augustus Waters is the tragic hero of *The Fault in Our Stars* and Hazel Grace Lancaster is the person who gets affected because of the decisions of the tragic hero.

Augustus' downfall appears in his disappointment on dying without accomplishing something heroic. He believes that dying because of cancer is the worst thing ever in that world. He is not that lucky person who dies in a real battle like a hero:

If you go to the Rijksmuseum, which I really wanted to do, but who are we kidding, neither of us can walk through a museum. But anyway, I looked at the collection online before we left. If you were to go, and hopefully someday you will, you would see a lot of paintings of dead people. You'd see Jesus on the cross, and you'd see a dude getting stabbed in the neck, and you'd see people dying at sea and in battle and a parade of martyrs. But Not. One. Single. Cancer. Kid. Nobody biting it

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from the plague or smallpox or yellow fever or whatever, because there is no glory in illness. There is no meaning to it. There is no honour in dying of (109).

Expectations have taken both of the protagonists to have a clash with reality and to resist against it. Augustus has eventually realised that death is a must especially for a cancer survivor whose chances are very few. Augustus Waters, as a tragic hero, is brave, courageous, and realistic who makes out of his actions a brave step even though he does not succeed in completing it. Yet, he possesses good qualities which make his personality traits and involve Hazel to fall in love with him. That is all to say, Augustus' downfall helps him achieve a bit of victory and does not kill him.

In fact, Augustus' situation and state of health become hard and he starts fading away. However, he has never stopped thinking about his fate and what is going to happen after his death. He still fears fading into oblivion though he tried harder to do a heroic act along with Hazel. He declares: *"Sometimes I dream that I'm writing a memoir. A memoir would be just the thing to keep me in the hearts and memories of my adoring public"* (117). He is actually so determined to stay at the memory of all people though he gets his parents and Hazel. He feels like he is an antihero who dies out of cancer and not because of a heroic act. Augustus is unfortunately dying and he is a kind of developing self-hatred that he is disabled and totally destroyed, he says: *"I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this I disgust myself I hate it I hate it I hate it just let me fucking die"* (123). Hazel is astonished that he becomes somebody else that is absolutely different from the one she knows: *"The Augustus Waters of the crooked smiles and unsmoked cigarettes was gone, replaced by this desperate humiliated creature sitting there beneath me"* (123).

2. 4. 3. Eulogies and the Death of the Tragic Hero

Augustus Waters is like any other tragic hero either of the ancient era or the modern one who dies by the end of the story. Augustus' death is different from the usual ones. Usually, tragic heroes die because of a battle or a heroic act. But Augustus dies because of an inner battle between him and his illness. Actually, Augustus was certain that there comes a day when he will lose his last breaths that is why he prepares a prefuneral day in order to give a chance to all of his friends to talk about him and to stay in their memories.

Hazel's eulogy is most effective because she has ever expected that she is going to listen to Augustus' eulogy, but it is the opposite. She reads:

Augustus Waters was the great star-crossed love of my life. Ours was an epic love story, and I won't be able to get more than a sentence into it without disappearing into a puddle of tears. Gus knew. Gus knows. I will not tell you our love story, because like all real love stories, it will die with us, as it should. I'd hoped that he'd be eulogizing me, because there's no one I'd rather have (130).

She is in an endless love with Augustus and he feels the same that is why he decides to act heroically with her and make unusual decisions just for the sake of her happiness. Hazel adds:

I can't talk about our love story, so I will talk about math. I am not a mathematician, but I know this: There are infinite numbers between 0 and 1. There's .1 and .12 and .112 and an infinite collection of others. Of course, there is a bigger infinite set of numbers between 0 and 2, or between 0 and a million. Some infinities are bigger than other infinities (130).

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Hazel is so grateful because she met a brave boy like Augustus, and she will never forget him because he symbolises a hero for her and her dreams. She completes:

A writer we used to like taught us that. There are days, many of them, when I resent the size of my unbounded set. 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 (130).

In fact, Augustus' battle against cancer is not only about pain and the fact of being a cancer survivor. It is also a battle of consciousness that he wants to discover what he is able to do though he has cancer in his docile body. His death can be viewed as a heroic death because he tries so hard to reach the top of his dreams, but he fails because of his illness. Yet, he does not regret his decisions and choices and if he had the chance once again, he would go for the same choices.

Augustus' death has affected Hazel so strongly. She has never expected that he would die before her. She seems to feel like she is at the middle of that all alone, sad, and confused. Furthermore, Augustus' parents are also among the ones who are highly affected by his death. That is, Augustus has affected his surroundings by his decisions and eventually his death. Yet, Hazel seems to be satisfied and at ease during the funeral of Augustus. She shows up some feelings of gratitude, affection, and nostalgia to her beautiful days with Augustus. She quotes: "*Without pain, we couldn't know joy*" (136). She is highly inspired by Augustus who is considered as a hero for her.

2. 4. 4. Catharsis *The Fault in Our Stars*

The death of the hero in *The Fault in Our Stars* creates a sad atmosphere that is likely to be purified by the end of the story. Augustus Waters, though he was dying, still thinks about Hazel Grace Lancaster and how to realise her dreams. He knows that he will not be able to write her a eulogy, so he keeps contacting Peter Van Houten. In fact, Augustus Waters seems to complete his heroic act through convincing Van Houten to tell Hazel about what happened to the characters in *An Imperial Affliction*. Unlike any other tragic heroes who might have regretted their choices, Augustus Waters did not regret his choices, he writes: “*I like my choices. I hope she likes hers*” (154).

2. 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to apply two main theories and make a deep analysis of John Green’s novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012). The protagonists of the novel namely Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters are struggling against reality and trying to resist it through their own ways. Apparently, both of the characters are interdependent and rely on each other in order to find some tools to retreat and dwell into their own worlds. In fact, psychology has got its own role in analysing the spiritual conflict or in other word the inner conflict of the characters. The psychoanalytic studies shows several reasons that may lead the human character to destruction, disappointment and downfall.

On the one hand, Hazel seems to be a kind of escaper who finds life in reading books and ignoring reality. Yet, she identifies with a character and decides to know more about reality in its harshest conditions. It becomes so clear that Sigmund Freud’s theory of defense mechanism can be applied on Hazel since she sets herself to loneliness until she meets the love of her life Augustus Waters.

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On the other hand, Augustus seems to be a kind of hero who is so determined to make Hazel's wish come true and to stay in memory and never fade into oblivion. Yet, he wants to get the sequel of Hazel's favourite book and get closer to her. It is apparent that Aristotle's theory of the tragic hero is so welcomed to be applied on Augustus who clearly seems to be a modern version of the tragic hero who has his own hamartia.

Green shapes his character in a very successful way. They are interdependent enough to make some fatal decisions and get involved in a clash with reality that comes out of their disease. They seem to refer to different kinds of tools in order to fight and to realise their desires.

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John Green's *the Fault in Our Stars* is regarded as a real gem that has presented an interesting case of the two main characters that can be analysed by Freudian psychoanalysis perspective and Aristotle's theory of the tragic hero. Analysing literary characters using psychoanalysis is made possible due to the fact that literary characters represent real human life; they act as imitations of reality.

After analysing the characterisation of the two main protagonists and the sequence of events that they had to go through, it becomes abundantly clear that psychology plays a crucial role in this novel and that what motivates the characters to act in a certain manner entails the impact of their unconscious feelings and desires among which the desire to live and beat their chronic disease takes first place.

As a survivor of stage four of thyroid cancer, Hazel Grace keeps obsessing over thoughts of death and dying. From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that one can discern Hazel's struggles through reality by recognising the symptoms first. By knowing the symptom, it can give a clue of what kinds of struggles have been undergone which later build the pattern of anxiety. Based on that, the first main character Hazel Grace employs several psychological self-defense mechanisms in order to keep those unconscious fears, desires, and unresolved problems in the unconscious position, and consequently avoid threatening the conscious self-image.

Since being diagnosed with cancer, Hazel feels that life is at an end and that nothing holds any appeal anymore. She prefers staying at home and does not make any efforts to socialise. Thus, she assumes that books are less threatening than her parents and friends and perceives them as a suitable companion rather than those around her who are liable to cause her feelings of anxiety and fear. She then employs displacement in an attempt to stay alone

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and not confront reality or all it entails. This is where her fixation over the book of *An Imperial Affliction* starts. Having low self-esteem coupled with feelings of insecurity leads Hazel to develop a serious attachment to the book to the extent of unconsciously identifying herself with Anna, the main character of said book, and imitating her in several aspects of her life.

Hazel's utmost fear is to die and cause those she loves tremendous pain and heartache. Hazel is afraid of causing her parents and Augustus the pain of loss because she knows that her death is soon; it is only a matter of timing. She is afraid that her parents might succumb to despair and depression and what that might do to Augustus when he would lose his love to cancer like he did the previous time. This symptom relates to the category of *reality*. Hazel clings to the idea that if she keeps to herself and not venture out of her house or meet other people, she might spare them the impending hurt. On the other hand, her parents' disappointment in her for not trying to make friends and enjoy typical teenager's life causes pressure on her *ego*. Since there is conflict between her ego and superego, Hazel undergoes a phase of denial and rationalisation and starts acting as though nothing is amiss and that she is absolutely fine even when she is not in order to conceal the motives that would arouse anxiety or guilt in her.

As a matter of fact, the tragic hero is an archetype character found by the ancient Greek and still explored even by today's writers. A tragic hero with a fatal flaw that determines his downfall is first explored by Aristotle who loved tragedy. For Aristotle, a tragic hero is a great person who is neither a paragon of virtue and justice nor undergoes the change to misfortune through any real badness but because of some mistake. In a way, the Greeks used tragedy to instruct the inappropriate behaviour and to develop respect. However, modern writers have created a totally different type of the tragic hero. *The Fault in Our Stars*, for instance, is a contemporary work that is considered as a tragedy which

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contains some flaws and errors made by the hero who suffered from cancer and died by the end.

Augustus Waters is a tragic hero who possesses some desired traits such as love, generosity, self-worth, thoughtfulness, and ambition which later on turn to create his own fatal flaw and lead him to his downfall. Suffering is a major part of Augustus as a tragic hero. He suffers both outwardly from illness and inwardly from conscience and mental torture. Yet, he dies because of cancer rather than the miscalculation he does. In fact, Augustus Waters is the kind of heroes who has a hamartia by nature. He likes his choices though they represent his downfall. Otherwise, this is to be taken as a catharsis to elicit pity from the readers.

The Fault in Our Stars contains a moment of peripeteia which reflects Augustus' realisation of his downfall in Amsterdam. He is convinced that making a decision needs to be revised from different points. His fear of oblivion makes him thinking of doing a heroic act in order to stay in memory. That is to say, his decision of accomplishing such an act is his own hamartia. According to psychoanalysis, a person who is obsessed with acting heroically is a person who lacks some useful part in his real life and there comes a moment where he faces the truth and get convinced with his fate. This is actually the case of Augustus.

This research will hopefully invite future researchers to analyse the beneficial role of psychoanalysis in some works of literature and investigate the use of psychological self-defense mechanisms. It can provide useful information regarding the human psyche, since literary characters can be considered in a way as human replicas, and how people tend to employ different defense mechanisms when they feel that they cannot handle a certain situation or problem that they face. It can give people a fruitful understanding of how to

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behave in certain circumstances, especially in relation to children and teenagers since they are undergoing some serious personality development. By knowing the symptoms of anxiety; for instance, and then types, it can provide an idea of the defense mechanisms that are used to overcome it. After the defense mechanisms are fully investigated, they will direct people as to the treatment that should be taken and further informing them of the interpretations of their own behaviours.

This study further indicates that the characters differ in the kinds of personality which they show. Another suggestion would be to investigate whether or not Hazel and Augustus's love is true love. Was it born out of the despairing circumstances of two people who are surely about to die, so they might as well enjoy their last days, or was it a merging of two teenage hearts who gave more importance to the consuming love than life? This might be a very interesting idea to develop for future researchers.

Yet, readers may develop a clear idea about the notion of tragic hero and how it differs from one era to another. Several writers are now applying such a concept to develop their creative thoughts under a psychological understanding. The superego of the human being plays an interesting role in directing them to achieve the impossible. Therefore, it guides them to some unexpected result that is better known as hamartia. Future researchers may as well investigate some new reasons about the modern hamartia which becomes so applicable in different genres of literature.

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تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في استخدام آليات الدفاع والسقوط المأساوي في رواية جون جرين "ما تخبأه لنا النجوم". يعد التحليل الوصفي للشخصيتين الرئيسيتين، هازل جريس وأوغسطس وترز، والظروف المختلفة التي مروا بها أثناء محاربة السرطان أمرًا ضروريًا للوصول إلى استنتاجات قوية بشأن الدافع الحقيقي وراء السقوط المأساوي واستخدام آلية الدفاع عن النفس. من ناحية، تطبق هذه الدراسة آليات دفاع فرويد على هازل بصفتها بطلة الرواية التي تعاني من السرطان وتحاول مقاومته وفقًا لقدرتها. من ناحية أخرى، تذهب الدراسة إلى أبعد من ذلك مع نظرية أرسطو للبطل المأساوي الذي يتم تطبيقه بشكل واضح على أوغسطس الذي يعاني من السرطان أيضًا ويفكر في أن فكرة القيام بعمل بطولي تبقى في الذاكرة وتجنبه التلاشي إلى النسيان. باستخدام طريقة تحليلية وصفية، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تصوير الأسباب الكامنة وراء استخدام آليات الدفاع عن النفس من أجل تجنب الظروف غير المواتية وما إذا كان إنجاز فعل بطولي أو عدمه قد يرضي الأنا العليا. ومع ذلك، قد يتخذ البشر في بعض الأحيان بعض القرارات التي قد تؤدي بهم إلى سقوطهم بدلاً من تحقيق رغباتهم.

Declaration

We hereby declare that this dissertation has been composed by ourselves only. Except for ideas and passages that are properly cited in the text, this writing is all our own work. The work has not been previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. It respects the scientific standards for the scientific research.

Signed,

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