

Meaning of Life and Death in John Green's *The Fault In Our Stars*

M.Heatherfing

I M.A English Literature

Holy Cross College (Autonomous)

Nagercoil

&

K.Mihi Nancy

Assistant Professor

Holy Cross College(Autonomous),

Nagercoil

Abstract:

The present paper is an attempt to analyse a deeper insight of love, life, death, friendship and literature. *The Fault In Our Stars* is written by the famous American author John Green. This young adult fiction serves as a basis for search, scientific techniques, love, life and death. John green highly uses his imaginative power in his work. John Green's *The Fault In Our Stars* tells about a couple who suffers from cancer. The major character in the novel is seventeen years old teenager named Hazel Grace Lancaster. She suffers from thyroid cancer. Later on in the narration, she meets a boy named Augustus Waters, who suffer from cancer too. They fall in love and enjoy some great time together but at the end Augustus died. Green shows how Augustus and Hazel struggle to live a meaningful life before death. Green's fascinating thought makes Hazel to find the truth of life and he also shows the human life clearly with many sorrows and pain.

Key Words: Meaningful life, death and love.

Death is a part of life, and it is natural that authors and poets write about death. The word death brings different feelings to the mind of the reader. Most of them are scared about death. In literature death is tragic. The novel *The Fault in Our Stars* deals with the life of two

teenagers Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters. At the end of the novel the theme life and death is unfolded through Hazel Graces' relationship with Augustus Waters. The protagonist Hazel Grace is suffering from thyroid cancer.

John Green offers the readers many different points of view on the life and death through the conversation of Hazel by herself with other characters. The story begins with Hazel Grace' depression, because she suffers from metastatic cancer. "Depression is not the side effect of cancer, depression is the side effect of dying" (FOS 3). Hazel should attend a weekly support group. Hazel frames a bond with Augustus by the conversation about death and oblivion, when they meet in the support group for the first time. The support group has a very good mantra that is "living our best life today" (140). But according to Hazel Grace it is absurd. Hazel's life is completely filled with sadness. Because of the deadly disease Hazel compares herself to a grenade. When compared to these pain, treatments, medicines, sadness and support group meetings death is very near to him.

Hazel's oxygen tank is heavy hard to carry and it is so painful to her. To everybody it looks that she is fighting with death. She says that "I am a cancer fighting machine" (190). Hazel's only ambition is to visit Amsterdam to see her favorite author Peter Van Houten, who is awesome in writing novels. "I mustn't let it kill me before it kills me" (121), this line shows Hazel's eagerness to live in this beautiful world which is now considered to be a battlefield. Before her death she wants to kill her cancer disease from her body. She knows the meaning of life and death. Hazel hates her life, Augustus enjoyed his life. He knows that he will die once but till the death arrives he would be happy.

Green foretells about the death through an earthquake in Papa New Guinea. This represents the death of many people and their struggling. Green compares the color black with death. "To make it black and silence" (106). Black refers to the evil thing and also silent refers that the human body is silent without any breath. In this novel Green portrays, how Hazel and Augustus has planned for their funeral ceremony. Augustus says that they have bought a plot in crown hill and he walks for a whole day and finds a particular spot for his funeral before

his surgery. Augustus also reveals about that the suit he is wearing originally intended for his funeral. This shows how these two teenagers are waiting for death. Hazel too has planned for a death outfit which she brings it for her fifteenth birthday. During the dinner they talk about their belief in life after death. Augustus has a great belief in death. Augustus fear is that he is not having a meaningful life and is not doing something extraordinary. Hazel wants to know whether Augustus will be okay if she dies and also does not want to be a grenade in the life of the people whom she loved. Green also says about how sick people are taken care by the people and society.

Hazel wants to meet the author Peter Van Houten to know the ending of her favorite novel *An Imperial Affliction* and she relates her life with the novel. But the author does not answer properly and tells he does not think about any future for the characters and he says it is childish who believes there is a life after a novel. He also explains that life comes from life offers no insight about the meaning of life other than that it is meaningless. Augustus says that his cancer is like a civil war to him and he wants to win it.

There is no glory in dying because of their illness. The people who suffered from a disease and die in the society there is no honour for their death and it considers that there is no meaning in it. Augustus wishes he has a story worth telling since he believes that would mean his life is valuable. When Hazel finds Augustus at the gas station, it highlights the reality of life with the terminal cancer. Throughout the novel the cigarettes have been symbolized with the gesture of Augustus Waters. The word failure symbolizes his failure to control the death.

“All of them would touch the coffin instead of touching him, because no one wants to touch the dead” (268). The stabbing pain seen from this idea, she is suffering due to Augustus Waters’ death, but she is also going to cause pain by her own death. The suit work shows that their love existed in the duality between the life and death. The pain that Hazel Grace experiences through Augustus death allows her to develop new perspectives. Hazel unlike Augustus is not concerned with being remembered after death or entering the life after death, Hazel is concerned with whether life has a meaning. Augustus’ father has a belief that

Augustus is in heaven and still he can able to communicate, but it is difficult for Hazel to accept this kind of belief.

Hazel also comes to understand that death is an event that allows people to live and love to the fullest. Hazel demonstrates this understanding during Augustus' eulogy when she says "without pain, we would not know joy" (200). So the writer too insights through the novel that one has to learn to be joyous even in pain.

Work Cited:

John Green's *The Fault In Our Stars*. Dutton Books, 2012.