

The Representation of Illness in the Fault in Our Stars Directed by Josh Boone: A Psychological Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of illness in *The Fault in Our Stars* directed by Josh Boone through a psychological perspective. Illness in popular media is often portrayed in a sentimental or stereotypical way, focusing on tragedy or victimhood. This research aims to show how the film frames illness as a meaningful and transformative human experience. The study applies a descriptive qualitative method by conducting close reading of film scenes and dialogues. The analysis is based on Arthur W. Frank's typology of illness narratives, namely restitution, chaos, and quest. The findings indicate that illness in the film is not only depicted as a medical condition but also as a narrative that shapes identity, relationships, and philosophical views. The quest narrative appears most dominantly, reflecting how the main characters, Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters, find meaning, agency, and emotional growth in the midst of suffering. In conclusion, the film resists stereotypical depictions of illness by presenting resilience, introspection, and authenticity in facing mortality. The novelty of this study lies in applying Frank's illness narrative theory to film analysis, highlighting how cinematic storytelling can redefine illness as a source of meaning and personal growth.

Keywords: *Illness Narrative, Identity, Quest Narrative, Terminal Illness, Psychological Approach*

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INTRODUCTION

Illness narratives in films matter not only as artistic storytelling but also as powerful reflections of how societies perceive suffering, mortality, and resilience. Cinema functions as a cultural mirror: it shapes public attitudes toward health and illness while simultaneously offering audiences a way to empathize with experiences they may never personally endure. Films that portray characters grappling with chronic or terminal illness therefore carry significant social, cultural, and psychological weight, as they influence how illness is understood beyond medical contexts.

The representation of illness in film has long attracted scholarly attention across disciplines such as media studies, psychology, and medical anthropology. As cultural products, films serve not only as entertainment but also as narratives that negotiate the meaning of pain and survival. Perciaccante et al. (2019) report that over 18% of films nominated for the Academy Awards' Best Picture category contained medical themes, with psychiatric, neurological, and cancer-related conditions being the most prevalent. This statistic highlights how illness is not a peripheral topic in cinema but often central to the exploration of human vulnerability and existential struggle.

To analyze these representations, a psychological approach is crucial in capturing the emotional and cognitive dimensions of living with illness. Arthur W. Frank (1995) proposes three narrative patterns through which sufferers frame their experiences: restitution, chaos, and quest. Restitution emphasizes recovery and normalcy; chaos reflects loss of coherence and control; while quest narratives involve transforming suffering into meaning and growth. Together, these frameworks illuminate illness as more than a medical condition – showing it instead as an existential and narrative experience. Similarly, Charon (2001) stresses the

importance of narrative empathy, arguing that illness must be understood through the personal stories of those who endure it.

Against this backdrop, it is vital to examine the representation of illness in *The Fault in Our Stars* (2014), directed by Josh Boone, through a psychological lens. This film, which centers on two adolescents living with cancer, dramatizes not only the physical challenges of illness but also the emotional, relational, and philosophical struggles that accompany it. The present study seeks to analyze how illness is depicted through the characters' emotional dynamics, identity formation, and search for meaning. In doing so, it aims to demonstrate that illness in film is represented not simply as a biological condition but as a complex and transformative human experience.

Review of literature

Arthur W. Frank (1995) categorized illness narratives into three types: restitution, chaos, and quest. The restitution narrative focuses on recovery and returning to a pre-illness state, while the chaos narrative emphasizes disorder and lack of control. The quest narrative, which is most relevant to this study, involves the patient finding meaning through their suffering. Hazel and Augustus, the main characters in *The Fault in Our Stars*, exemplify this quest narrative by embracing their experiences and transforming suffering into emotional and philosophical insight. Their narratives reflect agency, introspection, and an active engagement with life, even in the face of death.

Frank's typology is valuable in interpreting the text because it centers the patient as a storyteller, rather than a passive recipient of treatment. In Hazel's narration, the reader encounters the subjective experience of illness, which includes both physical suffering and existential questioning. This aligns with Frank's emphasis on narrative as a way to reclaim control over one's body and future. Hazel's obsession with the fictional novel *An Imperial Affliction* further underscores her need for a coherent story in a world of uncertainty, a hallmark of the quest narrative.

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory (1968) also provides a useful framework, particularly his concept of identity versus role confusion, which defines adolescence as a critical period for self-definition. When terminal illness intersects with adolescence, this developmental task becomes more complex. Adolescents like Hazel and Augustus must navigate typical questions of identity and purpose while simultaneously dealing with the reality of their limited lifespan. The novel portrays how both characters, despite their illness, strive to find meaning, love, and a sense of self beyond their diagnoses. Their journey reflects Erikson's idea that identity can still be forged under extraordinary and adverse circumstances.

In addition to theoretical frameworks, this study is supported by previous literary research. Foley (2014) highlights the emotional realism of *The Fault in Our Stars*, particularly in its portrayal of teenage relationships and internal conflict. She argues that Green's characters avoid melodramatic tropes by engaging with illness in ways that are honest, reflective, and grounded in lived experience. Blake (2016) extends this view by critiquing the "sick-lit" genre, which often reduces ill characters to mere symbols of suffering or inspiration. In contrast, Hazel and Augustus are presented as complex individuals whose cancer is only one part of their identity.

Furthermore, the novel challenges dominant cultural narratives that often marginalize or romanticize terminally ill youth. It resists portraying them as heroes or victims and instead presents them as teenagers who seek connection, understanding, and agency. This subversion of stereotypes aligns with recent scholarly interest in humanizing portrayals of illness in literature and film. By embedding character development, dark humor, and philosophical depth into the storyline, Green elevates the genre and invites readers to engage with serious themes without resorting to sentimentality.

The inclusion of literature in character education, as emphasized by Widyahening & Wardhani (2016), further affirms the role of narrative in shaping moral understanding and empathy. Literature that deals with moral complexity, like *The Fault in Our Stars*, can cultivate readers' ability to reflect critically on human experiences, such as illness and mortality. As

such, this novel is not only an artistic expression but also a valuable educational resource that supports emotional and ethical development among young readers.

In sum, the literature reviewed offers both theoretical depth and contextual relevance to the analysis of *The Fault in Our Stars*. By drawing from illness narrative theory, psychosocial development, and previous literary critiques, this study situates Green's novel within a broader discourse on youth, identity, and illness. It reveals how the novel contributes meaningfully to ongoing conversations about adolescence, mortality, and the transformative power of storytelling.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative method through library research. The primary data source is John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, analyzed using close reading strategies to examine characters, narrative structure, dialogue, and thematic content. Supporting data include scholarly books, articles, and theoretical texts on illness narratives, psychology, and literary criticism.

The analysis applies Arthur W. Frank's (1995) typology of illness narratives (restitution, chaos, and quest) to interpret how characters narrate and experience illness. This framework guided the identification of narrative patterns across the text.

The process of data collection consisted of three steps: (1) intensive reading of the transcription of the film adaptation, (2) note-taking of significant passages and scenes, and (3) categorizing evidence into thematic patterns such as mortality, resilience, identity, and agency. To ensure analytical focus, scenes and dialogues were selected based on two main criteria:

Direct relevance to illness representation, such as moments showing medical treatment, physical symptoms, or emotional responses to illness (for example, Hazel's hospitalization at 00:30:00–00:35:00 representing the chaos narrative).

Contribution to psychological and existential meaning-making, where characters articulate fears, hopes, or identity struggles shaped by illness (for example, Augustus's declaration of his fear of oblivion at 01:11:00 illustrating the quest narrative).

Accordingly, selected data included scenes from support group meetings, hospitalizations, intimate conversations, and reflective monologues. These were chosen because they exemplify Frank's illness narrative categories and reveal the protagonists' shifting emotional states. Tables 1–45 in the Findings section document each selected scene, including time stamp, dialogue, and the corresponding illness narrative type.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model: (1) data collection, (2) data reduction by filtering meaningful textual evidence, (3) data display through thematic tables, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification to ensure coherence with Frank's framework.

To enhance credibility, this study employed data triangulation by cross-checking the novel and film adaptation, and theory triangulation by using Frank's typology alongside broader psychological perspectives. Following Widyahening & Wardhani (2016) and Widyahening & Handini (2023), these strategies ensured grounded and reliable interpretations of illness representation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Frank (1995:75), representation of illness can be displaying into three methods, there were quest narrative, chaos narrative and restitution narrative. In this film the representation of illness and adolescence focuses on Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters.

Restitution Narrative

Restitution narrative is a type of narrative that describes the experience of pain as temporary, with hope and a primary focus on recovery or healing. Hazel was emotionally engaged and willing to communicate, demonstrating openness and emotional healing. Teens use texting as an emotional outlet and form of intimacy. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, Hazel's

initial resistance to a relationship begins to shift as she opens up to Augustus. Through their conversations-both in person and through text-they build a bond that reflects the hope and desire to live a normal life despite their diagnosis. This is in line with the restitution narrative, where illness is seen as a temporary obstacle that can be managed or overcome through relationships, medication and emotional resilience. Hazel's participation in support group meetings and her trip to Amsterdam signaled her movement towards healing and restoring emotional balance, although her physical condition remained uncertain.

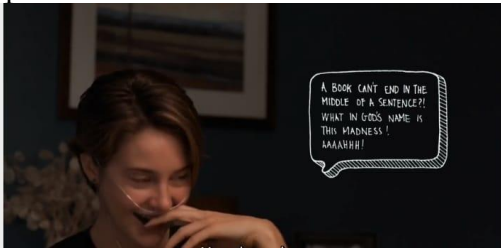
Restution Narrative in illness

In the restitution narrative, there are several scenes that represent illness including:

Table 1. Hazel texted Augustus late at night.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:29:30	Hazel engages emotionally and willingly communicates, showing openness and emotional healing.	HAZEL : Tell me my copy is missing the last ten pages or something." "A BOOK CAN'T END IN THE MIDDLE OF A SENTENCE?! WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS THIS MADNESS! AAAAHHHH!" Hazel then calls Augustus, and he answers: GUS (on phone): "Hazel Grace." <i>(This marks the beginning of emotional intimacy and openness – a step toward healing.)</i>

In the scene where Hazel texts Augustus late at night (Table 1), it is clear that Hazel is still trying to maintain her social relationships and role as an active and connected teenager. This demonstrates her efforts to maintain her normal identity and social role, which are important in the psychological adaptation process to illness. The interactions between Hazel and Augustus, such as their intense text messaging, demonstrate the emotional support they provide each other to maintain hope and optimism. This resilience provides a crucial foundation for them to face medical challenges and maintain psychological balance. Hazel and Augustus don't just wait for a cure, but begin to reflect on their experiences and seek meaning in their suffering. Through dialogue and interactions that demonstrate awareness of their condition, they begin to construct personal narratives that integrate their illness into their identities without losing hope.



Picture 1. Hazel (received Augustus' texts)

Table 2. Scene where Hazel told Augustus "Okay" meant "Always"

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:35:00	Hazel accepts the brief but deep nature of their love, showing emotional restoration.	GUS: "Perhaps 'okay' will be our 'always.'" HAZEL: (smiling) "Okay." <i>(Simple, symbolic, deeply adolescent and meaningful. This exchange affirms their commitment in their own terms – part of their emotional healing.)</i>

By using the word "Okay" as a symbol of commitment and permanence, Hazel and Augustus build a shared identity that transcends their physical limitations and illness. This symbol reinforces their sense of connection and identity as individuals who support each other in the face of the uncertainties of life and death. The symbol "Okay," meaning "Always," reflects the strong emotional resilience shared by Hazel and Augustus. Despite their awareness of the limitations of time imposed by their illness, they choose to express their undying hope and love. This scene is rich in meaning-making. The simple word "Okay" is transformed into a profound promise and existential symbol, helping both characters give meaning to their painful experiences.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
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00:51:00	Their playful conversation and excitement about flying create a sense of normalcy and adventure.	GUS (teasing): "You're clutching the armrest like it's the hand of God." HAZEL (laughing) : "I'm not nervous." GUS : "Look, Hazel Grace. Clouds. Actual clouds." <i>(A playful, joyful interaction that marks a return to life beyond illness.)</i>
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Their playful conversation and shared excitement about flying contribute to a sense of normalcy amidst their challenging circumstances. This lighthearted interaction not only highlights their ability to find joy in the moment but also introduces a spirit of adventure that contrasts with the heaviness of their realities. In doing so, it emphasizes the strength of their bond and their desire to embrace life despite its uncertainties.



Picture 2. Hazel and Augustus Were on the Airplane.

Table 3. Hazel’s internal monologue when she read Augustus’s obituary draft

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:31:00	She understands Augustus’s desire to be remembered and feels emotionally restored by his words.	GUS : "You don’t get to choose if you get hurt in this world... but you do have some say in who hurts you." GUS : "I like my choices. I hope she likes hers." HAZEL (softly) : "I do, Augustus. I do."

She understands Augustus’s desire to be remembered and feels emotionally restored by his words. His reflections on legacy and meaning resonate deeply with her, offering a sense of closure and renewed perspective on life and mortality. Through his vulnerability, Hazel is able to confront her own fears of oblivion and insignificance, ultimately finding comfort in the authenticity of their shared experiences. This emotional restoration marks a turning point in her character development, as she begins to embrace the value of meaningful human connection over the pursuit of grand, lasting recognition.

Table 4. Hazel reflected on how Augustus had written his eulogy for her

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:33:00	She feels seen and valued by someone who tried to immortalize her story.	GUS : "Hazel Grace, I want you to write a eulogy for me. A pre-funeral. I want to hear it <i>Later Hazel understands it wasn’t just for him – it was his way to honor her life. This recognition brings emotional healing.</i>

She feels truly seen and valued by someone who not only accepted her for who she is but also made a profound effort to immortalize her story. This act of recognition goes beyond mere affection—it affirms her existence, her struggles, and her significance in a world that often overlooks those living with terminal illness. By choosing to center Hazel in his final words and legacy, Augustus grants her a form of emotional validation that redefines her understanding of worth and memory. This moment reinforces the transformative power of being genuinely understood and remembered, offering Hazel a sense of peace and purpose that transcends her physical condition.

Table 5. Hazel and Augustus watched *V for Vendetta*.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:26:30	Shared pop culture moments provide escapism and emotional intimacy.	GUS : "So what’s your story?" HAZEL : "I already told you my story. I was diagnosed –" GUS : "Not your cancer story. Your story. Interests, hobbies, passions..." [They talk about <i>An Imperial Affliction</i> and their favorite books.] GUS : "Don’t tell me you’re one of those people who becomes their disease." HAZEL : "No. I’m just... I don’t know... un-extraordinary."

[He gives her a novelization of his favorite video game in exchange for her book.]

GUS: "I love it when you talk medical to me."

These moments not only offer lightness and distraction but also foster emotional intimacy, as the act of bonding over familiar cultural references creates a shared language through which they express affection, humor, and understanding. By engaging with stories and symbols that exist outside their immediate struggles, the characters are able to construct a space where they feel normal, connected, and momentarily free, highlighting the therapeutic and relational power of popular culture in contexts of emotional vulnerability.



Picture 3. Hazel and Gus Were Exchanging Novels.

Table 6. Hazel and Augustus flirted in the park.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:13:30	Light, joyful connection allows them to feel normal.	HAZEL: "Is this where you bring all your romantic conquests?" GUS: "Every last one. Probably why I'm still a virgin." [He draws a big circle in the dirt.] GUS: "This circle is virgins..." [He draws a smaller one inside.] GUS: "And this is 17 year old dudes with one leg." [They laugh and eat sandwiches, flirting naturally.]

In moments of laughter and playful interaction, they are momentarily freed from the identities imposed upon them by illness, able instead to engage as ordinary teenagers experiencing companionship and joy. This emotional reprieve not only strengthens their bond but also highlights the significance of everyday human connection in fostering psychological resilience and preserving a sense of self beyond suffering.



Picture 4. Hazel and Gus were on a picnic.

Table 7. Hazel's realization at the end about emotional closure and acceptance.: "I do."

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:58:00	Her final words affirm emotional closure and acceptance.	GUS: "She's funny without ever being mean." [Hazel lies in the grass, looks up at the stars.] GUS: "She's so beautiful. You don't get tired of looking at her..." Hazel reads: GUS: "I just held her hand and... I willed myself to imagine a world without us..." [She finishes reading and quietly says:] HAZEL: "I do."

This comes at the very end, when Hazel finishes reading Augustus's letter. This moment signifies a mature reconciliation with grief, love, and mortality, highlighting her emotional growth and the transformative impact of their relationship. Through this closing expression, she reclaims agency over her narrative and signals a quiet, profound acceptance of life's fragility.

Table 8. Hazel and Augustus laughed in the hotel bed

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Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:03:30	Intimate bonding moment reflects healing through connection.	GUS: "It's above my knee." HAZEL: "What?" GUS: "My leg... just so you're prepared –" HAZEL: "Oh get over yourself." [They fumble with her oxygen tube while kissing, and laugh together.] HAZEL: "I love you, Augustus Waters." GUS: "I love you too, Hazel."

As they open themselves to vulnerability and mutual understanding, their relationship becomes a space for psychological restoration and growth. This connection allows them to confront pain and uncertainty not in isolation, but with the comfort of shared experience. In this way, the moment underscores the therapeutic power of intimacy and the role of emotional closeness in navigating trauma and fostering resilience.

Table 9. Hazel read *An Imperial Affliction* again after the trip

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:15:00	She returns to the book with new perspective and understanding.	There's no direct line here, but a visual cue: after returning from Amsterdam and Gus's health declining, Hazel is seen reading the book again. This scene is an echo of how literature helps her reflect and process. It's likely embedded within her.

Hazel revisits the novel with a renewed perspective and deeper understanding, reflecting the transformative nature of personal experience on literary interpretation. Having endured profound emotional experiences, Hazel no longer seeks concrete answers from the text, but instead engages with it as a means of reflection on mortality, love, and the human condition.

Table 10. Hazel walked out of the funeral alone

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:50:30	She begins to walk forward alone, but stronger.	After the funeral, Hazel walks into the backyard, lays down on the grass, looking up at the stars mirroring the opening scene. GUS : "She didn't want a million admirers, she just wanted one. And she got it." [Hazel is quiet, reflective, but peaceful. Her strength is evident as she carries Gus's final words alone.

The intimate bonding moment between the characters reflects a deeper process of emotional healing facilitated through genuine human connection. As they open themselves to vulnerability and mutual understanding, their relationship becomes a space for psychological restoration and growth. This connection allows them to confront pain and uncertainty not in isolation, but with the comfort of shared experience. In this way, the moment underscores the therapeutic power of intimacy and the role of emotional closeness in navigating trauma and fostering resilience.



Picture 5. Hazel walked out of the funeral.

Table 11. Hazel looked at her oxygen tank before leaving.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:29:30	Her reliance on oxygen shows the ever-present burden of illness.	TSA AGENT : Miss, are you sure you are able to walk through without oxygen? HAZEL : I'm good. I got this. (Hazel unhooks the plastic nubbins from her nose. Gus helps place the oxygen tank on the conveyor belt. Hazel takes slow,

careful steps through the X-ray scanner. She refuses help from the agent. Upon reaching the other side...)
(She steadies herself, light-headed. As she puts the cannula back in...)

This scene depicts Hazel's struggle to maintain her identity as an independent and strong individual despite the physical limitations of her illness. By refusing assistance from the TSA officer and temporarily removing oxygen to walk on her own, Hazel demonstrates a desire not to be labeled or treated differently as a "patient" or "sick person." These actions reflect the adolescent struggle to establish and maintain a normal and empowered self-image. Hazel demonstrates significant emotional resilience in the face of physically and psychologically challenging situations. Despite feeling dizzy and weak after undergoing the screening, she persists in striving to be independent and independent. This attitude reflects courage and determination to overcome the obstacles presented by her illness, while asserting control over her body and the situation she finds herself in. This scene also encompasses the process of meaning-making related to experiences of limitation and dependence. Hazel symbolically "removes" oxygen to overcome obstacles, which can be interpreted as an attempt to overcome physical limitations and assert her abilities. This moment demonstrates how Hazel integrates the experience of illness into her life narrative as a challenge to be faced with courage and independence, rather than as a mere weakness.

Chaos Narrative

In Arthur W. Frank's (1995) typology of illness narratives, the chaos narrative represents the most disorienting and emotionally turbulent mode of storytelling. Chaos narrative is characterized by confusion, lack of control, and no clear path forward. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, this is represented through Hazel's constant confrontation with the reality of her illness. Her oxygen tube, frequent hospital visits, and the looming possibility of death create a sense of uncertainty in her life. Augustus also experiences turmoil when his cancer returns aggressively, shifting his role from a strong and supportive partner to someone who needs his own care. His deterioration happens quickly, leaving both characters overwhelmed and emotionally shaken. The narrative resists a neat conclusion-it illustrates how illness can disrupt plans, identities, and relationships, leaving the characters hanging in uncertainty and fear.

Chaos Narrative of illness

In the chaos narrative, there are several scenes that represent illness including:

Table 12. Support Group Scene

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:05:30-00:09:00	Hazel feels forced to "find hope" in the support group even though she doesn't feel the need for it.	Hazel: "I believe we have a choice in this world about how to tell sad stories. On the one hand, you can sugarcoat it... or, like, tell it straight."

Hazel's statement reflects self-awareness and critical reflection on how experiences of suffering and illness can be narrated. Hazel asserts her identity as an authentic individual and bravely confronts harsh realities without sugarcoating them. This attitude demonstrates the process of developing a mature and realistic identity in the face of illness and death.



Picture 6. Hazel In the support group.

Table 13. Hazel visited her doctor.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:01:10-00:03:00	Hazel's mother constantly worries about her oxygen levels.	FRANNIE: "...she eats like a bird. She barely leaves the house..." HAZEL: "I'm not depressed."

DR. MARIA: "She's depressed."

HAZEL: "I'm not depressed!"

(...)

DR. MARIA: "Have you been going to that support group I suggested?"

HAZEL: (*eye roll*) "I'm not sure it's for me."

DR. MARIA: "Just give it a chance. Who knows? You might even find it... enlightening."

This dialogue depicts Hazel's internal conflict in accepting her identity as someone who may be experiencing depression due to her illness and life circumstances. Hazel's rejection of the label "depression" demonstrates her efforts to maintain a strong and independent self-image, while simultaneously rejecting the negative stigma often attached to mental health conditions. This reflects the complex process of identity formation, in which Hazel struggles to balance acknowledging her emotional difficulties with the desire to appear "normal" and empowered.

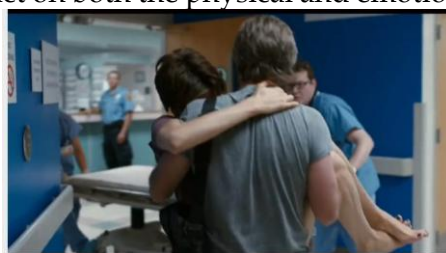


Picture 7. Hazel and her mother went to Dr. Maria

Table 14. Hazel Emergency hospitalization.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:30:00-00:35:00	Hazel struggles to breathe, reinforcing how fragile her health is.	HAZEL : "People talk about the courage of cancer patients. And I do not deny that courage... but make no mistake... In that moment I would have been very, very happy to die."

Hazel's struggle to breathe serves as a poignant and constant reminder of the fragility of her health. This physical difficulty not only underscores the severity of her medical condition but also symbolizes the precariousness of her existence, where each breath is both a necessity and a challenge. The recurring nature of this struggle highlights the limitations imposed by her illness, reinforcing the ever-present tension between life and vulnerability. Through this depiction, the narrative draws attention to the embodied experience of chronic illness and its profound impact on both the physical and emotional dimensions of Hazel's life.

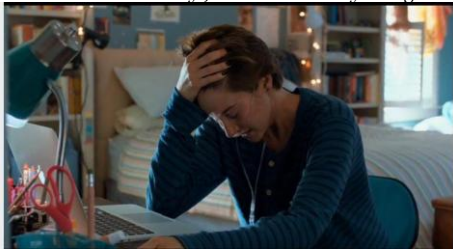


Picture 8. Hazel was in the hospital

Table 15. Hazel's parents were concerned about the trip to Amsterdam

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:45:00-00:49:00	Hazel's condition makes travel risky, forcing constant medical considerations.	HAZEL: "I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!!" (<i>after learning the trip is back on</i>) HAZEL (to her lungs): "One week, lungs. Keep your shit together one more week..."

This constant vigilance highlights the limitations imposed by her illness, as well as the ways in which it constrains her autonomy and spontaneity. The need to manage her health meticulously during travel underscores the broader theme of navigating life within the confines of chronic illness, where even ordinary activities become fraught with potential danger. This dynamic not only shapes Hazel's physical experience but also informs her emotional landscape, reflecting the pervasive impact of illness on her sense of freedom and possibility.



Picture 9. Hazel monologues

Table 16. Hazel and Augustus met Peter Van Houten

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:56:00-01:00:00	Hazel hoped for closure but is met with hostility.	HAZEL: "Thank you. For writing back to us." VAN HOUTEN: "Clearly an error in judgment. Yours are the first missives to which I've replied and look where that got me." (Later) HAZEL: "Can we please, maybe, talk about Anna for a sec?" VAN HOUTEN: "I'm not interested in talking about that book." (Hazel getting upset) HAZEL: "You promised!" HAZEL: "Listen douchepants. You're not gonna tell me anything I don't already know about illness. I need one thing and one thing only from you before I walk out of your life and that's for you to tell me what happens to your goddamn characters!"

Hazel's angry and frustrated emotional reactions toward Van Houten indicate complex emotional resilience. Although she felt disappointed and hurt by Van Houten's cynical attitude and refusal to discuss important topics, Hazel still bravely expressed her feelings openly. This demonstrates that emotional resilience doesn't necessarily mean calmness, but also the ability to confront and express negative emotions constructively. This dialogue showcases Hazel's struggle to assert her identity as an individual who bravely confronts the reality of illness and death head-on. Hazel's insistence on demanding answers from Van Houten demonstrates courage and independence in the face of uncertainty. She refuses to be treated as a passive figure who simply accepts narratives of suffering without critical inquiry, reflecting the development of a strong and independent identity.



Picture 10. Hazel and Augustus met Peter Van Houten.

Table 17. Augustus revealed that his cancer had returned.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:18:00-01:21:00	The sudden shift from strength to vulnerability highlights illness' unpredictability.	Augustus: "I lit up like a Christmas tree, Hazel Grace. The PET scan lit up... everything."

The metaphor "lit up like a Christmas tree" demonstrates how his illness defines him physically and existentially. However, this expression also contains elements of humor and honesty, indicating that Augustus is trying to maintain a strong identity and not be completely trapped in the role of "the sick person." By using lighthearted and visual metaphors, he manages anxiety and fear through humor and openness. This is an adaptive form of coping, helping Augustus maintain psychological balance amidst the uncertainty of his illness.



Picture 11. Augustus told Hazel that his cancer had returned

Table 18. Augustus called Hazel during his breakdown.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:23:00-01:26:30	Augustus feels humiliated by his own body's betrayal.	Augustus (on the phone, crying): "Hazel, I messed up. I lit myself up like a fireball and I couldn't stop it. I need you."

Augustus experiences a deep sense of humiliation as his body begins to fail him, a betrayal that starkly contrasts with his desire to appear strong, heroic, and in control. This physical decline not only undermines his carefully constructed identity but also exposes his vulnerability in ways that are both painful and deeply personal. The loss of bodily autonomy becomes symbolic of a larger existential struggle, as Augustus grapples with the erosion of dignity and the emotional toll of confronting mortality. His humiliation reflects the harsh realities of terminal illness, where the body becomes an unpredictable force that can strip away the illusions of invincibility and self-determination.



Picture 12. Augustus in a chaotic situation

Table 19. Hazel lay on the grass, looking at the sky alone.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:16:30	Moments of solitude show Hazel's detachment and emotional fatigue.	Hazel : "You have a choice in this world, I believe, about how to tell sad stories... I like that way as much as the next girl, believe me. It's just not the truth."

Moments of solitude in Hazel's narrative underscore her emotional detachment and growing sense of fatigue, both physically and psychologically. These quiet, introspective scenes reveal her tendency to withdraw as a coping mechanism, reflecting the emotional toll of living with a terminal illness. Through these solitary moments, the narrative illustrates how chronic illness shapes not only the body but also the inner emotional landscape, often leading to a complex interplay of self-protection, disillusionment, and quiet endurance.



Picture 13. Hazel lies on the grass

Table 20. Hazel Emergency Hospitalisazion

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:17:30	She wakes to her mom's panic, feeling disoriented and fragile, facing the uncertainty of her health.	Frannie (tearfully): "You can let go, sweetie. Don't be afraid." (Hazel nods slightly. Michael cries by the bed.) Hazel : "That should have been the end. But it wasn't."

This scene depicts a crucial moment in Hazel's identity formation, involving the acceptance of death and loss. Frannie's tearful words, "You can let go, sweetie. Don't be afraid," serve as an emotional nudge for Hazel to confront her deepest fears. Hazel's reaction, a slight nod, demonstrates her inner struggle and the development of her identity, as she begins to accept the reality of death as part of her life. This moment perfectly illustrates the fragile yet strong emotional resilience. Frannie and Michael display profound sadness, while Hazel struggles to contain and manage her feelings. The line, "That should have been the end. But it wasn't," indicates that despite facing loss and death, Hazel's emotional and psychological journey is not over, signifying a resilience that continues to be tested and developed.



Picture 14. Hazel woke up after being in the ICU.

Table 21. Hazel overheard her parents discussing her future.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:17:30	Hazel feels like a burden and fears what will happen to her parents after her death.	Michael (from downstairs): "She'll want to keep up with you – she's that kind of girl – but the truth is, her lungs..." (Hazel listens quietly, affected by the realization of her parents' future) <i>Hazel at the gas station after Augustus's Infection</i>

Michael's statement revealing Hazel's physical limitations ("her lungs...") marks a crucial moment in Hazel's identity formation, as she becomes increasingly aware of her body's limitations. Hazel's silent and affected reaction demonstrates the process of internalizing the reality of her illness, which influences her self-perception. Hazel's identity begins to take shape with an awareness of her vulnerability, but also a desire to persevere and maintain relationships with those around her. This scene illustrates Hazel's emotional resilience, tested by the harsh reality of her health and Augustus's infection. Upon hearing Michael's statement, Hazel displays a calm yet clearly emotionally affected demeanor, indicating her ability to accept reality while simultaneously confronting the fear and grief that arise. This reflects complex coping mechanisms and psychological resilience in the face of a health crisis.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:24:00	She finds Augustus confused and sick, revealing how illness strips away control.	GUS: "I wanted to buy some cigarettes. I lost my pack... I wanted... to do it myself. Do one little thing myself." HAZEL: "I can't fix this. I have to call someone. I'm sorry." GUS(weeping): "No, Hazel, please!" HAZEL : "I wish I could say Augustus Waters kept his sense of humor till the end... but that is not what happened." GUS (shaking): "I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this..."

She encounters Augustus in a disoriented and deteriorated state, revealing the extent to which illness can erode both physical autonomy and personal dignity. His vulnerability in this moment exemplifies the destabilizing impact of terminal illness on one's sense of self, echoing Frank's (1995) concept of the 'chaos narrative,' in which the ill person experiences a loss of coherence, control, and identity. This scene poignantly illustrates how chronic illness not only weakens the body, but also challenges the emotional and existential stability of both the patient and their loved ones.



Picture 15. Hazel helped Augustus.

Table 22. Hazel described her fears.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:20:00	She believes she'll destroy everyone she loves when she's dies	Hazel: "I'm a grenade... I'm going to blow up, and I want to minimize the casualties, okay?"

This quote reflects Hazel's awareness of the impact her illness has on those around her and how it shapes her identity. By referring to herself as a "grenade," Hazel acknowledges that her presence carries emotional risks and consequences for others. This demonstrates the complex process of identity formation, in which Hazel struggles to understand her role and influence in interpersonal relationships while navigating physical and emotional limitations. This statement also indicates Hazel's emotional resilience, as she strives to control the situation and protect her loved ones from the pain her illness may cause. The desire to "minimize casualties" demonstrates Hazel's efforts to proactively manage the emotional impact, despite her awareness of the uncertainty and potential devastation that lies ahead.

Table 23. Augustus talked about being forgotten.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:11:00	He fears a meaningless life and death, exposing internal struggle.	Augustus: "I'm on a rollercoaster that only goes up. And I'm afraid of oblivion."

The situation encapsulates the tension between life and death, thereby revealing a profound internal struggle characterized by fear, confusion, and the search for meaning amid vulnerability.



Picture 16. Augustus cried and was afraid.

Table 24. Hazel resisted Van Houten's rudeness.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:58:00	He fears a meaningless life and death, exposing internal struggle.	HAZEL: "You said you would tell us what happens and that's why we're here... I need you to tell me." VAN HOUTEN: "Nothing happens to them! They're fictions. They cease to exist the moment the novel is over." HAZEL: "They can't! ... I mean, I understand. In a literary sense. But it's impossible NOT to imagine some future." VAN HOUTEN: "I won't indulge your childish whims. I refuse to pity you in the manner in which you're accustomed." HAZEL: "I don't want your pity –" HAZEL (later): "Listen, douchepants. You're not gonna tell me anything I don't already know about illness." VAN HOUTEN: "I can't tell you." HAZEL: "Bullshit! ... Make something up."

This dialogue showcases Hazel's struggle to assert her identity as an individual seeking understanding and control over the narrative of suffering and death. Hazel's assertiveness in demanding answers and rejecting Van Houten's cynicism demonstrates courage and independence in the face of the uncertainty of life and illness. Hazel refuses to be an object of

pity and demands recognition of the complexity of her experience. Hazel's angry and frustrated reaction to Van Houten reflects strong emotional resilience despite facing hurtful attitudes. Hazel's ability to openly express her anger and maintain a critical stance toward the narrative presented demonstrates an active and adaptive coping mechanism in the face of suffering and uncertainty.



Picture 17. Hazel and Augustus visited Peter Van Houten’s house

Quest Narrative

The quest narrative views illness not just as a burden, but as a journey that brings meaning and transformation. In *The Fault in Our Stars*, Hazel and Augustus embark on a metaphorical and literal quest. Their journey to Amsterdam to meet Van Houten symbolizes their search for answers, purpose and completion. Despite disappointments, this journey strengthens their bond and deepens their understanding of life, love and heritage. Augustus, especially, embraced the idea of making his life meaningful despite its brevity. Hazel, in turn, learns to accept love and vulnerability. Through this narrative, illness becomes a part of their identity that promotes personal growth, emotional depth, and a redefinition of what life truly means.

Quest Narrative

In the quest narrative, there are several scenes that represent illness including:

Table 25. Hazel and Augustus met.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:09:00 – 00:14:30	Augustus has a prosthetic leg but refuses to be pitied; instead, he wants to be seen as strong.	GUS: "I'm Augustus Waters. Had a bout with osteosarcoma a year and a half ago-because of that, I lost this baby..." (showing prosthetic leg) GUS: "I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up, man." HAZEL: "There will come a time when we all die... Forgetfulness is inevitable, my friend. And if it scares you, I suggest you ignore it." (After exiting the building) GUS: "Because you're beautiful. I love seeing beautiful people and I decided a while ago not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of life."

The statement, "I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up," demonstrates optimism and affirmation of identity as someone who chooses to focus on the positive aspects of life despite facing physical limitations. This reflects the process of forming a strong and resilient identity amidst the challenges of illness. This dialogue demonstrates Gus's emotional resilience, characterized by his acceptance of death as an inevitable part of life, yet still choosing to enjoy the "pleasures of life." Gus encourages Hazel to ignore the fear of death and continue living with enthusiasm and an appreciation for beauty. This attitude demonstrates an adaptive and optimistic coping mechanism in the face of the realities of illness and death.



Picture 18. Hazel and Augustus met in the group.

Table 26. Hazel read *An Imperial Affliction*.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
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00:18:30-00:21:00	She relates to the unfinished nature of the book, mirroring the unpredictability of her illness.	HAZEL: "Reality shows. Doctor's appointments. Eight prescription drugs, three times a day... and worse worse worst of all... support group."
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She finds a deep connection with the unfinished nature of the book, as it symbolically mirrors the unpredictability and open-ended trajectory of her own illness, emphasizing the lack of closure and control that defines her lived experience.



Picture 19. *An Imperial Affliction*.

Table 27. Hazel and Augustus exchanged books.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:22:00-00:25:30	Augustus finds meaning in Hazel's favorite book and wants to explore it further.	HAZEL: "It's not that kind of book." GUS: "Does it have zombies?" HAZEL: "It's kind of my bible actually." GUS: "In that case... I am going to read this horrible book with the boring title..." GUS: "Hazel Grace... I love it when you talk medical to me."

This dialogue shows how Hazel expresses her identity through her attachment to a book that is meaningful to her, which she calls "my kind of bible." Gus's acceptance and even teasing of the book demonstrates an acceptance and appreciation of Hazel's identity, including her intellectual and emotional sides. This interaction reinforces Hazel's identity as a complex and empowered individual, not just a patient. This conversation reflects the emotional resilience of both characters in facing the reality of their illnesses. Using humor and intimacy, Hazel and Gus create a safe and nurturing emotional space that helps them cope with the stress and fear associated with their health conditions.



Picture 20. Hazel and Augustus exchanged books.

Table 28. Augustus and Isaac talked.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:26:00 – 00:29:00	Isaac, despite his impending blindness, refuses to be seen as weak.	GUS: "Pillows don't break." ISAAC: "She didn't want to break it off after the surgery. Said she couldn't handle it. I'm about to lose my eyesight and she can't handle it." HAZEL: "Sometimes people don't understand the promises they're making when they make them." ISAAC: "Love is keeping the promise anyway."

This dialogue illustrates how the characters in the film form their identities through experiences of love and commitment despite the limitations of illness. Isaac, who faces the loss of his sight and his complicated relationships, demonstrates how his identity is intertwined with the struggle to maintain relationships despite suffering. Hazel also emphasizes an awareness of the complexity of promises and commitments, which are part of her emotional identity. This conversation strongly highlights emotional resilience, particularly through the concept of love as a force that keeps promises despite great hardship. Isaac states that "Love is keeping the promise anyway," demonstrating a steadfast attitude and resilience in the face of suffering and uncertainty.



Picture 21. Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac talked.

Table 29. Augustus visited Hazel in the hospital.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:36:00-00:40:00	Augustus shows unwavering support, highlighting the emotional burden of loving someone ill.	FRANNIE: "This is just a thing, Hazel. It's a thing we can live with." (Hazel nods faintly.) Meanwhile, outside the ICU: GUS: "Mr. Lancaster! How's she doing?" (Gus is clearly anxious, showing his deep care for Hazel. He wants to be by her side, no matter what.)

Augustus demonstrates unwavering support for Hazel, underscoring the emotional complexity and burden that often accompany loving someone with a life-threatening illness, as he navigates the tension between compassion, fear, and the inevitability of loss.



Picture 22. Augustus visited Hazel in the hospital.

Table 30. Augustus surprised Hazel with the Amsterdam trip.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:44:30	Augustus uses his Wish to give Hazel a dream experience.	GUS: "Hazel Grace, I may have found a loophole." HAZEL: "A loophole?" GUS: "I talked to the Genies. They're granting my Wish." HAZEL: "You're kidding." GUS: "You deserve it, Hazel Grace. I wanted this for you."

Augustus selflessly uses his Genie Foundation Wish to create a dream experience for Hazel, reflecting both his deep affection and his desire to bring joy and meaning to her life despite the limitations imposed by their illnesses.

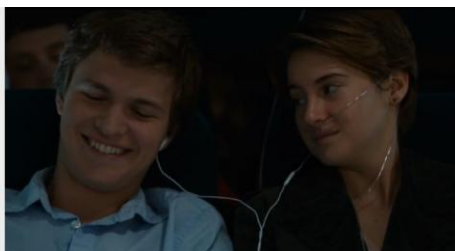


Picture 23. Hazel called Augustus.

Table 31. The trip to Amsterdam began.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:50:00-00:55:00	Hazel experiences temporary freedom from her medical routine.	GUS: "It's okay to be nervous." HAZEL: "I'm not nervous." GUS: "You're clutching the armrest like it's the hand of God." (di pesawat) GUS: "Look, Hazel Grace. Clouds. Actual clouds."

Hazel experiences a fleeting sense of liberation from the constraints of her medical routine, allowing her a brief moment of normalcy and emotional respite that contrasts sharply with the ongoing realities of her illness.



Picture 24. Hazel and Augustus boarded the plane.

Table 32. Hazel and Augustus explored Amsterdam.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:02:00-01:07:00	Both find joy in simple moments despite their medical limitations.	HAZEL: "Augustus –" GUS: "I'm not saying this to put you under pressure or to back. I just wanted you to know." HAZEL: "I love you too."

Despite the limitations imposed by their medical conditions, both Hazel and Augustus find genuine joy in simple, everyday moments, highlighting their ability to cultivate meaningful connections and emotional fulfillment amid adversity.



Picture 25. Hazel and Augustus were on their trip in Amsterdam.

Table 33. Anne Frank's house scene.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:10:30-01:14:00	Hazel struggles but refuses to let her illness define her completely.	Anne Frank's voice from museum recording) ANNE FRANK : "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart." (above, Gus looks at Hazel) GUS: "You okay?" HAZEL: "Breathless." (then they kiss and the audience applauds)

Hazel endures significant physical and emotional challenges due to her illness, yet she resolutely refuses to let it wholly define her identity, striving instead to assert her individuality and live with purpose beyond the confines of her diagnosis.



Picture 26. Anne Franks house.

Table 34. Scene where Hazel was writing Augustus's eulogy.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:30:00-01:34:00	Hazel writes about how Augustus' life mattered, even if short.	HAZEL: "You gave me forever in a matter of days." HAZEL: "Some infinity is greater than other infinity. I can't tell you how grateful I am for our little infinity." (Gus cries silently)

Hazel articulates, with emotional depth and clarity, that Augustus' life held profound meaning and significance, despite its brevity. She emphasizes that the value of a life is not measured solely by its length but by the impact it has on others and the love it inspires.



Picture 27. Hazel wrote Augustus's eulogy.

Table 35. Augustus's funeral took place.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:45:00-01:50:00	Augustus' death represents the inescapability of illness.	HAZEL: "Augustus Waters was the great star-crossed love of my life. Ours was an epic love story... 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. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and for that I am eternally grateful. I love you."

Augustus' death represents the inescapability of illness, serving as a poignant reminder of the fragility of life and the harsh reality that not all battles with disease can be overcome. His passing underscores the emotional and existential weight carried by those living with terminal conditions, as well as the enduring impact left on those who love them.



Picture 28. Scene from Augustus's funeral.

Table 36. Hazel read Augustus's letter.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:52:00-01:55:00	Augustus leaves behind a final message of love and meaning.	GUS: "You can't choose if you get hurt in this world... but you can choose who will hurt you." GUS: "I like my choice. I hope she likes her choice too." (Hazel, with tears, smiles.) HAZEL: "Some infinities are bigger than other infinities. Thank you for our little infinity."

Augustus articulates a final message imbued with love and existential significance, positioning his narrative within what Frank (1995) identifies as the 'quest narrative,' where suffering is transformed into a meaningful legacy. His farewell transcends mere farewell – it serves as an affirmation of agency, emotional connection, and the enduring value of human relationships, even in the face of impending death. This act of leaving a purposeful message reflects the human desire for symbolic immortality

Picture 29. Hazel read Augustus's letter.

Table 37. Augustus talked about oblivion during the support group.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:11:30	Augustus's philosophical view of death contrasts with fear, marking his search for meaning.	In the first Support Group meeting, Gus revealed his biggest fear. PATRICK: "Perhaps you'd like to share your fears with the group, Augustus?" GUS: "Being forgotten." GUS: "I intend to live an extraordinary life. To be remembered. If I'm afraid of something, I won't do it."

Augustus's philosophical view of death contrasts sharply with conventional fear, illustrating his desire to confront mortality with dignity and purpose. His reflections reveal a deep yearning to leave a lasting legacy, suggesting that for him, the significance of life lies not in its duration, but in the meaning one creates through relationships, courage, and memory.



Picture 30. Augustus revealed his biggest fear.

Table 38. Hazel watched Isaac playing video games after his eye surgery.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00: 28:30	Isaac, newly blind, still engages in familiar activities, showing determination.	Isaac: "I just want to cry and play video games." (Hazel and Gus accompany him without judgment.) GUS: "Pain demands to be felt." Isaac: "Love keeps its promises."

Isaac, despite the recent onset of blindness, continues to participate in familiar activities, demonstrating resilience and a refusal to let his disability hinder his sense of identity. His perseverance reflects an inner strength and adaptability, emphasizing the human capacity to find continuity and purpose even in the face of profound physical change.

Table 39. Hazel's voice over reflections about pain and memory

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:57:00	Hazel contemplates how people are remembered and how love persists.	HAZEL: "You gave me a forever within the numbered days." "Some infinities are bigger than other infinities." "I do, Augustus. I do."

Hazel reflects deeply on the nature of remembrance and the enduring power of love, questioning what it means to leave a mark on the world. Her contemplation reveals a growing understanding that true legacy is not measured by fame or grand achievements, but by the lasting emotional connections and love shared with others—bonds that persist even after death.

Table 40. Scene where Hazel explained the ending of *An Imperial Affliction* to Augustus.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:22:30	Hazel expresses her need for answers and narrative closure.	HAZEL: "But that's part of what I like about it. It portrays death truthfully. You die in the middle of your life, in the middle of a sentence."

Hazel expresses a profound need for answers and narrative closure, particularly in relation to the unfinished novel that mirrors her own uncertain life. This longing reflects her desire for control and understanding in a world marked by unpredictability, as well as her struggle to make sense of suffering, loss, and the unresolved nature of her existence.

Table 41. Augustus asked Hazel to write his eulogy.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
	He consciously constructs his memory, framing his suffering as meaningful.	GUS: "Hazel Grace, I want you to write a eulogy for me. Not for my funeral. A prefuneral." "I want to hear it. I want to attend my own funeral."

By consciously constructing his memory, Augustus frames his suffering as meaningful, seeking to transform personal pain into a narrative of bravery and impact. This deliberate shaping of his legacy reflects his deep need to be remembered not as a victim of illness, but as someone who faced mortality with purpose and contributed to the lives of those he loved



Picture 31. Gus wanted Hazel to write his eulogy.

Table 42. Isaac and Hazel talked about pain and loss.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:29:30	Isaac speaks about heartbreak and blindness with acceptance and humor.	ISAAC: “I believe in love, you know? I don’t believe that everybody gets to keep their eyes or not get sick or whatever, but everybody should have true love.”

Isaac discusses his experiences of heartbreak and blindness with a blend of acceptance and humor, revealing his capacity to cope through emotional resilience and wit. His perspective highlights the power of humor as a coping mechanism and underscores a mature acknowledgment of loss, without allowing it to consume his identity or outlook on life.



Picture 32. Isaac and Hazel talked.

Table 43. Hazel scrolled through Augustus’s social media.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:29:30	She explores his past posts, trying to understand him deeply.	Dialogue (non-verbal scene,): (No dialog; just Hazel looking at the photo and status on Gus' profile.)

Hazel engages with Augustus’s digital footprints his social media posts as a means of reconstructing his inner world and preserving their emotional connection. Her reflective engagement illustrates the evolving role of digital media in contemporary mourning practices, offering a space for posthumous intimacy and meaning-making.

Table 44. Hazel and Augustus were in the fancy Amsterdam restaurant.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:01:00	Treated as adults, they experience a taste of freedom and romance.	GUS: “I’m in love with you, Hazel Grace. And I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable... and I’m in love with you.” HAZEL: “I love you too.”

As she delves into his past posts, Hazel embarks on an intimate journey of understanding, seeking to piece together the nuances of Augustus’s inner world. This act of remembrance signifies her need to maintain a connection with him, revealing how memory and reflection serve as tools for processing grief and preserving emotional bonds beyond death.



Picture 33. Hazel and Augustus were at a fancy dinner.

Table 34. Hazel and Augustus slept after the trip.

The Representation of Illness in the Fault in Our Stars Directed by Josh Boone: A Psychological Perspective

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:16:30	Quiet reflection of love and fragility of time.	her is a silent at the moment scene in the film – no spoken dialogue, but highly emotional. Hazel watches Augustus as he sleeps, exhausted and weakened. Her expression shows love, fear, and grief all at once

In the quiet moments of reflection, Hazel contemplates the depth of their love and the fragility of time, recognizing how fleeting yet profound human connections can be. This introspection highlights the bittersweet nature of impermanence, where love is both a source of comfort and a reminder of life's delicate, transient beauty.

Table 45. Augustus joked in the doctor's office.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
00:12:00	Humor masks fear but empowers identity.	PATRICK: "Would anyone like to share their fears with the group, Augustus?" AUGUSTUS: "My fears? Oblivion." PATRICK: "Oblivion?" AUGUSTUS: "Yeah, see... I intend to live an extraordinary life. To be remembered. If I'm scared of anything it's... not doing that." (and earlier when introducing himself) AUGUSTUS: "I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up, my friend."

Humor, in the context of illness and adolescence, often serves as both a defense mechanism and a means of identity assertion. While it functions to mask underlying fear and emotional vulnerability, it simultaneously allows individuals to reclaim agency and resist being reduced to their medical condition. As Frank (1995) notes, in the face of chaos and suffering, the narrative self seeks ways to reassert coherence and control humor becomes one such strategy, offering momentary relief and a reclaiming of personal voice. For adolescents like Augustus in *The Fault in Our Stars*, ironic wit and playful dialogue are not merely coping tools but expressions of resilience and the refusal to be defined solely by illness

Table 46. Hazel had a conversation with her father about pain.

Time	Representation of illness	Dialogue
01:40:00	Her father offers gentle wisdom, helping Hazel move forward emotionally.	MICHAEL : I'm sorry, Hazel. (They sit in silence for a moment. Tears form in Michael's eyes.) HAZEL : You're not gonna say it? MICHAEL : What's that? HAZEL : The usual. "Everything happens for a reason..." (Michael shakes his head.) MICHAEL : I don't know, Haze. (beat) I always thought being an adult meant knowing what you believe... (beat)... that has not been my experience. (Hazel understands exactly.)



Picture 34. Scene where Hazel and her father had a conversation about pain

Her father's gentle wisdom provides Hazel with a sense of emotional grounding, offering comfort without denying the pain of her experience. His quiet support becomes a

crucial element in her healing process, guiding her toward acceptance and encouraging her to embrace life with openness, even in the face of loss.

The analysis of *The Fault in Our Stars* shows that the experiences of Hazel and Augustus are better understood thematically. Their journey reflects how illness influences identity development, fosters emotional resilience, and leads to meaning-making in the face of mortality. These three themes capture the psychological depth of the characters while demonstrating how narrative frameworks of illness are embodied in everyday struggles and reflections.

Identity Development

The representation of illness in *The Fault in Our Stars* reveals the characters' struggle to construct identity beyond the limitations of cancer. Hazel Grace resists being reduced to her medical condition, as reflected in her dialogue with Augustus:

"Not your cancer story. Your story. Interests, hobbies, passions..."
(00:26:30).

This moment illustrates her desire to be recognized as a person with individuality, not only as a patient. Similarly, Augustus refuses pity when he introduces himself during the support group:

"I'm on a roller coaster that only goes up, man" (00:09:00–00:14:30).

Through humor and self-assertion, Augustus claims a positive identity despite losing his leg to osteosarcoma. These scenes emphasize that both characters actively negotiate selfhood, seeking to maintain dignity, agency, and autonomy. Illness, therefore, becomes part of their identity, but it does not wholly define them.

Emotional Resilience

Another dominant theme is emotional resilience, which appears in the characters' ability to confront suffering while still embracing moments of joy, intimacy, and connection. For example, Hazel and Augustus share laughter during their airplane trip:

"You're clutching the armrest like it's the hand of God." (00:51:00).

Such moments show how humor and companionship allow them to reclaim a sense of normalcy. Their playful exchanges in the park (00:13:30) and their affectionate conversations, such as when Augustus tells Hazel "Perhaps 'okay' will be our 'always'" (01:35:00), demonstrate how emotional intimacy functions as a coping mechanism.

At the same time, the fragility of resilience is exposed in Augustus's breakdown phone call:

"Hazel, I messed up... I need you." (01:23:00–01:26:30).

This contrast reveals that resilience is not the absence of suffering but the willingness to confront vulnerability openly. Illness is shown to destabilize emotions, yet it also creates opportunities for deeper connections and mutual support.

3. Meaning-Making and Legacy

The most powerful representation of illness in the film is the characters' quest for meaning, which aligns with Arthur W. Frank's concept of the *quest narrative*. Augustus voices his fear of oblivion during the support group meeting:

"I intend to live an extraordinary life. To be remembered. If I'm afraid of anything, I won't do it." (00:11:30).

His words reflect the search for significance beyond the brevity of life. Hazel similarly finds meaning in her love for Augustus, particularly in her eulogy:

"You gave me a forever within the numbered days." (01:30:00–01:34:00).

Their trip to Amsterdam further symbolizes a literal and metaphorical quest, as both characters seek answers, closure, and purpose despite physical limitations. The final scenes, in which Hazel reads Augustus's letter and responds "I do" (01:52:00–01:55:00), signify acceptance and reconciliation with mortality.

These instances show how illness is transformed from a condition of loss into a narrative of growth, meaning, and emotional authenticity. Rather than portraying illness as pure tragedy, the film emphasizes human resilience and the enduring need to make life meaningful, even when faced with death.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that *The Fault in Our Stars* provides a humanizing lens on illness during adolescence, presenting it not as a purely medical issue but as a deeply narrative and existential experience. The analysis demonstrates that illness representation in the film carries broader implications for how audiences engage with themes of vulnerability, resilience, and mortality. The implications of this study extend beyond literary analysis. For cultural discourse, the film challenges conventional portrayals of terminal illness by resisting stereotypes and affirming the emotional depth of young patients. For pedagogy, it highlights the potential of literature and film to foster empathy, critical reflection, and ethical awareness among students when engaging with narratives of illness. For psychology and health humanities, the findings affirm the importance of narrative agency as a coping mechanism, suggesting that storytelling can serve as a therapeutic and identity-affirming practice for individuals living with chronic or terminal conditions. Future research may build on these insights by conducting comparative analyses of illness narratives across different works of young adult media, or by exploring interdisciplinary approaches that connect literary studies with medical humanities. Such investigations could deepen understanding of how cultural texts influence perceptions of illness, identity, and the human capacity to find meaning in suffering.

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