

## Depression as a Trigger of Personality Alteration in *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green

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### **Abstract:**

*The research focuses on the forms of depression that happens and the effect to personality alteration in The Fault in Our Stars by John Green. The aim of this research is to find the forms of depression and effect to personality alteration. The theory used in this research is Psychoanalysis theory by Carl Jung and Aaron Beck theory of depression to find the forms of depression. The methodology employed is qualitative research in which the researcher presents the issue descriptively. As for the data, they were collected from the text of the novel. The novel is the primary data. Based on the results of this study, the researcher found that depression have more effects on extrovert personality alteration and emotional of depression is the greatest effects.*

**Keywords:** *psychoanalysis, depression, personality alteration*

## INTRODUCTION

Literature generally refers to the work that tells something in fiction and imaginary. Wellek and Warren (1985) mention that as one of the imaginary works, literature performs various problems of humans and humanity and life. They propose their literary work based on the

experience and observation of the life of society. In other words, literature portrays life. Literature can also be classified based on the fiction or non-fiction and whether it is poetry or prose. However, in conveying, the author is often packaged with different styles and moral message for human life. In this research, novel is used to express the author's feelings by creating a fictional event and fictional characters. The novel is built by characters created by the author to bring life and give soul to their literary work and belief that the character is the real person inside the story that copy an image of the real person in the environment. According to Abrams (1953, p.190), the term novel is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of fiction written in prose.

The researcher chooses depression as the main problem in this research. Depression is one of the most common psychological problems, affecting nearly everyone through either personal experience or family involvement. According to James C. Johnson (1980), depression is a feeling tone of sadness, generally brought on by a loss of disappointment and frustration. From the definition, the researcher conclude that depression is psychological condition that changes people's feeling and thought, it can be understood that depression is one of human being's problem. Depression can affect all kinds of people, young and old, rich and poor, famous and unpopular people. It means everybody can suffer from depression. Depression is resentful pain, melancholy, vagueness feeling that pathological. It usually appears because of inferior feelings, deep hurt, blame itself, and psychologically traumatic. Depression was a wistfully feeling or sad that it was accompanied by slow-moving and body function. According to Lubis (2009, p.13) claimed that someone who has depression, mostly have interference that involves emotion condition, motivation motivational, functional, and behavior followed by cognition.

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Personality is the characteristic patterns of behavior, thought, emotion, that determine a person's adjustment to the environment. There are two aspects of personality that operate in conscious namely attitude introversion and extroversion (Alwisol 2004, p.59). The personality alteration found in the character of this novel appears after he is depressed. Personality is a pattern of thought, feeling, and relatively stable behavior, which distinguishes individuals from one another. Personality influences the occurrence of

depression in the character of this novel who has a high trait or neurotic personality, which tends to be easily depressed, frustrated, feels guilty, and has low self-esteem. Although she is depressed, she is supported by many friends to get out of the zone from which she is in. Initially she has an introvert personality, then she becomes depressed because of her cancer.

The focus of the problem is on the form depression of the main characters and the personality alteration. In this study, the researcher discovers how the form of depression has a positive effect on personality changes from introvert to extrovert and has a positive impact. The researcher analyzes the novel using the theory of Psychoanalysis by Carl G. Jung. Psychoanalysis by Carl G. Jung has an important point to explain the purpose of this research which is about personality alteration of the main character and theory depression by Aaron Beck is used in this study to find the forms of depression in the novel. The researcher uses two theories here because it correlates with each other also facilitates the researcher to examine the research.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **DEPRESSION**

Depression is an ego experience that is drained of its self is useful for explaining the normal personality associated with the transformation process so that it becomes a form of depression. And it has also been expanded to explain depressed sufferers of depression through the concept of unconsciousness or introversion. The subsequent psychic energy accrual corrects the problem of depression, especially his insight into the relationship between normal depression and the process of transformation. According to (Beck and Alford 2009, p.93), depression is a psychological disorder characterized by feelings, cognitive impairments, and individual behavior. Individuals who experience depressive disorders can feel sadness, loneliness, decreased self-concept, and show behavior that withdraws from their environment. Beck proposes that those with depression develop cognitive distortions. People with depression will tend to quickly overlook their positive attributes and disqualify their accomplishments as being minor or meaningless. For example, depressed individuals tend to view themselves as helpless, worthless, and inadequate. The forms depression with theory depression by Aaron Beck (1985, p.157) Beck classified the forms of depression into four is namely emotional, cognitive, motivational, physical and vegetative.

### **TYPE OF PERSONALITY**

Personality is arranged by a number of systems that operate in three levels of consciousness, ego operates in conscious level, complexes operate to personality unconscious level and archetype operate to collective unconscious level. According to (Jung in Alwisol, 2004, p.59) there are two aspects of personality that operate at a conscious level namely attitude (introvert and extrovert) and function (thinking, feeling, sensing intuiting). An introvert is a person whose attention directs toward his own feelings and thoughts, in contrast to an extrovert, whose attention directs toward other people and the outside world. The typical introvert is shy, contemplative, reserved, and tends to have

difficulty adjusting to social situations. Extraversion is characterized by an interest in the external object, responsiveness, and a ready acceptance of external happenings, a desire to influence and be influenced by events, a need to join in and get “with it”, the capacity to endure bustle and noise of every kind, and find them enjoyable, constant attention to the surrounding world, the cultivation of friends and acquaintances, none too carefully selected, and finally by the great importance attached to the figure one cuts. The earliest sign of extraversion in a child is his quick adaptation to the environment, and the extraordinary attention he gives to objects and especially to the effects he has on them

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher uses qualitative method because qualitative method refers to research that uses data and correlation supporting theories for the course of a study. In the research, there are two sources of data that are used by the researcher. The first is primary data and the second is secondary data. The primary data is the main data used as the source in the research. The primary data of this research is the novel with the title *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green. The researcher chooses this novel due to the reflection of the psychological problem of character that is found appropriate to the research. The secondary data is the data used to support the primary data such as the data supporting references that appropriate the research. The data could be taken from the web, books, journals, or other relevant information. This data must support the topic of the research. In the data collection procedures, the researcher does several steps. The aim is to know the depression as a trigger of personality alteration that the author presented through in the novel. There are several methods of qualitative research. First, the researcher reads the novel repeatedly. Second, identify the problems in the novel and after that looking for relevant theories that match with the object of the study. Third, selecting the proper theories that match with the object of the study, and then classification used data.

Then, the researcher does the data analysis. Firstly, the researcher categorizes the data by understanding the meaning of data about depression. Secondly, to affirm that the data classifications are really to indicate depression affects personality alteration. Thirdly, the researcher describes and explains the context of the selected sentences. Fourthly, the researcher analyzes the data based on a few categories of depression are found. To make sure the trustworthiness in the data analysis, this research uses theory triangulation to support this research and should conduct a more profound and detailed observation on an ongoing basis against prominent factors.

## **FINDINGS**

### **THE FORMS OF DEPRESSION**

Based on the novel, the researcher finds the forms of depression based on the forms of depression by Aaron Beck. Beck divides depression into four parts there are emotional,

cognitive, motivational, physical and vegetative. This will be explained in detail in the following Discussion section.

## **THE EFFECTS OF DEPRESSION TO PERSONALITY ALTERATION**

This section contains information about the effects of personality alteration in the novel. There are two personalities that are found, first is introvert and the second is extrovert. Those forms of depression can lead to personality alteration. In this study, the researcher found two effects of personality alteration. This section discusses the effects of depression on personality alteration in the novel using the psychoanalysis theory by Carl Jung. This personality alteration is from an introvert personality to an extrovert personality, and will be explained in detail in the following Discussion section.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **THE FORMS OF DEPRESSION**

#### **Emotional**

##### **1. Anxiety**

Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was depressed, because, I rarely left the house, spent quite a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate infrequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death. Whenever you read a cancer booklet or website or whatever, they always list depression among the side effects of cancer. But in fact, depression is not a side effect of cancer. Depression is a side effect dying. (Green, 2012, p.3.)

The researcher states that analyzed is emotional that is caused anxiety as an effect of cancer. Hazel feels depressed and spends her time only in bed because of her illness. Hazel is 16 years old and has been dealing for three years with thyroid cancer that spread to her lungs. She is very close with her mother and father and has largely left behind the friendship she had before she is diagnosed with cancer. Hazel as a cancer patient, feels depressed too because of the illness.

##### **2. Loss of Excitement Response**

I called Isaac, who cursed life and the universe and God himself and who said where are the goddamned trophies to break when you need them, and then I realized there was no one else to call, which was the saddest thing. The only person I really wanted to talk to about Augustus Waters's death was Augustus Waters. My parents stayed in my room forever until it was morning and finally Dad said, "Do you want to be alone?" and I nodded and Mom said, "We'll be right outside door." (Green, 2012, p.262)

In the excerpt above, the researcher describes that there is an emotional in the forms of depression namely loss of excitement response. This situation occurs when Augustus dies, Hazel and Isaac feel devastated. Hazel calls Isaac to confirm Isaac's condition of the news.

Unable to hold back the tears, Hazel never thinks that Augustus has left them too soon. The person who feels the biggest loss is Hazel. This situation makes Hazel sink into a painful excitement. This depression is a reaction to a sad situation with the sadness and the loss of Augustus.

### **Cognitive**

#### 1. Negative self-judgment

Everyone was holding hands, and I couldn't catch my breath, and my lungs were acting desperate, gasping, pulling me out of the bed trying to find a position that could get them air, and I was embarrassed by their desperation, disgusted that they wouldn't just let go, and I remember my mom telling me it was okay, that I was okay, that I wouldn't be okay, and my father was trying so hard not to sob that when he did, which was regularly, it was an earthquake. And I remember wanting not to be awake. (Green, 2012, p.25)

The quotation above explains about the Hazel's cognitive. Hazel tells Augustus the first time she was diagnosed with stage IV thyroid cancer is when she was thirteen. Hazel understands that the illness is incurable. Hazel undergoes radical neck surgery. Then the doctors try some kind of chemotherapy for all the tumors in Hazel's lungs. The situation causes Hazel to blame herself because she sees her parents crying and everyone holding hands and praying for Hazel. Hazel feels ashamed of her condition at the time. Hazel feels that this disease is shaking her life and Hazel does not want to wake up from her condition.

#### 2. Self-Blaming

It occurred to me that the reason my parents had no money was me. I'd sapped the family savings with Phalanxifor copays, and Mom couldn't work because she had taken on the full-time profession of Hovering Over Me. I didn't want to put them even further into debt. (Green, 2012, p.79)

In this quote, the researcher describes Hazel as feeling self-blaming. Hazel thought her parents had no money because they had to pay for cancer treatment. Hazel feels guilty because she feels she has used up her family's savings on Phalanxifor's regular payments. Phalanxifor is a drug for treating cancer. This drug puts Hazel's parents into a full-time floating profession and Hazel does not want to put them further in debt. This condition causes Hazel to blame herself for her illness.

### **Motivational**

#### Death Desire

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 is 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 sicker, the treatments and disease racing to kill her. (Green. 2012, p.49)

In the novel, Hazel loves reading a novel entitled *An Imperial Affliction* very much; in which Anna the main character suffers from cancer just like herself. Hazel reads the novel every day back-to-back. She becomes obsessed with death. This story explains how children with cancer are basically “the side effects of cancer”, making them always thinking about the disease and also death. This is one of the reasons why Hazel has the desire to die because everyone who has cancer sooner or later dies.

### **Physical and Vegetative**

#### 1. Withdrawing From Others

The other thing about Kaitlyn, I guess, was that it could never again feel natural to talk to her. 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, except maybe kids like Jackie who just didn't know any better. (Green, 2012, p.47)

The quotation provides evidence that showed the situation Hazel withdrawing from others of his life. Based on Beck's form of depression in physical and vegetative is a life that withdrawing from others. People with depression will also experience changes in social interaction. In this dialogue, Hazel shows that she experiences difficulties when she is with Kaitlyn, her school friend. Hazel feels unnatural when talking to her and she said she is forced to do social interaction and that makes Hazel feel very depressed.

#### 2. Disruption Sexual Activity

“I refuse to attend Support Group”

“One of in the symptoms of depression is disinterest in activities”

“Please just let me watch America's Next Top Model. It's activity.”

“Television is a passivity.”

“Ugh, Mom, please.”

“Hazel, you're teenager. You're not a little kid anymore. You need to make friends, get out of the house, and live your life.”

“If you want me to be a teenager, don't send me to Support Group. Buy me a fake ID so I can go to clubs, drinks vodka and take pot.”

“You're going to Support Group. Hazel, you deserve a life.”

“That shut me up, although I failed to see how attendance at Support Group met the definition of life. Still, I agreed to go after negotiating the right to record the 1.5 episodes ANTM I'd be missing.” (Green, 2012, p.7)

Disruption of sexual activity is the effect of cancer that makes people depressed and do not want to do other activities. Because of Hazel's condition, she dislikes support group meeting, she chooses to watch TV shows. As the quotation above shows, Hazel prefers

watching TV shows as an activity, compared to other forms of activities, especially sexual activities.

## **THE EFFECT TO PERSONALITY ALTERATION**

### **Being Extrovert**

#### 1. Open Minded

Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was depressed, because, I rarely left the house, spent quite a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate infrequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death. Whenever you read a cancer booklet or website or whatever, they always list depression among the side effects of cancer. But in fact, depression is not a side effect of cancer. Depression is a side effect dying. (Green, 2012, p.3)

The quotation above shows the character who finds it difficult to trust others. One of the reasons is because she is an introvert who prefers solitary and quiet activities. After Hazel meets Augustus, she gradually changes. In the situation when Hazel tries to show a part of her personality alteration, it is based on depression because her extrovert takes a role as the decision making of personality and it happens for a reason. Hazel tries to alteration her habits because she has reason to do something which is more important. The quote above explains the form of emotional depression that happened to Hazel which later became the effect of personality alteration into an extrovert.

#### 2. Optimistic and Positive thinking

And yet still I worried. I liked being a person. I wanted to keep it. Worry is yet another side effect of dying. I banished the thought as best I could. I had a PET scan scheduled in a couple weeks. If something was wrong, I'd find out soon enough. Nothing to be gained by worrying between now and then. (Green, 2012, p.65)

This condition is an effect of the personality alteration experienced by Hazel because in the quote it is explained that she tries to change her personality, which at first she always worries, and turning into a person who does not. This shows Hazel has turned herself into an extrovert. For people who were originally introverts, change is just what they're looking for. Extroverted personalities will be more receptive to and adapt to changes due to depressive experiences

#### 3. Interacting with others

“Sorry, I swear to God I am trying to be gentle. Right, so anyway, at the end of the test, totally thought I'd failed again, but the instructor was like, “your driving is unpleasant, but it isn't technically unsafe. I'm not sure agree, I said. I suspect Cancer Perk”. Cancer Perks are the title things cancer kids get that regular kids don't basketball signed by sports heroes, free passes on late homework, unearned driver's licenses. (Green, 2012, p.23)

This is one of the effects of depression as a trigger of personality alteration experienced by Hazel. This alteration made Hazel feel better and extroverted. Personality can gradually



change throughout life. A person's depression, inconsistent with their usual way of behaving in similar situations also demonstrates a personality alteration. Although gradual personality changes are not uncommon, sudden changes can be caused by a disease such as cancer that makes the sufferer experience depression. Extroverted are interested in engaging with their environment, and they feed off the responses of the people and events around them. They enjoy pushing limits and seeing what the world can do. This all depends on many other factors and life's natural limitations, but extraverted personalities lean toward taking the initiative and relying on the world around them for validation.

### **Being Introvert**

“For the longest time, I couldn’t figure out why something a stranger had written on the internet to a different and deceased stranger was bothering me so much and making me worry that there was something inside my brain-which really did hurt, although I knew from years of experiences that pain is a blunt and nonspecific diagnostic instrument. Because there had not been an earthquake in Papua New Guinea that day, my parents were all hyper focused on me, and so I could not hide this flash flood of anxiety.” (Green, 2012, p.23)

The excerpt shows one of the expressions of anxiety in the emotional form. After reading a stranger's comments on social media about the death of Caroline, then she tells her father and mother. Hazel shows her anxiety through the look on her face. This situation is showing that Hazel is an introvert. She is very afraid to tell others that she is very worried. This trait indicates that Hazel is introverted. Based statement of Carl Jung introverted is introverted personality invests psychic energy in one’s own private thoughts, feelings, and imaginations. People with introverted attitudes and dominant feeling functions are artists and writers, where they are express feelings only in the form of art. They may display harmony within themselves and self-efficacy, but their feelings can explode suddenly.

### **CONCLUSION**

The researcher concludes there are several forms of depression effect to personality alteration. There are emotional, cognitive, motivational, physical, and vegetative. The effect of depression on personality alteration that happened in the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* is an extrovert. Besides depression in terms of personality alteration, emotional, cognitive, motivational, and physical vegetative affect to personality alteration introvert and extrovert. First, the form of depression affecting extrovert personality changes is through anxiety, loss of excitement response, negative self-judgment, self-blaming, death desire, withdrawing from other, disruption of sexual activity and the effect of this form is changes in extrovert personality such as open-minded, optimistic and positive thinking, and interact with others. Second, the researcher found that the main character’s personality alteration to be extroverted. Depression has both positive effects on her personality. When viewed from an extroverted side, the positive effects that result in Hazel open-minded, optimistic and positive thinking, and interact with others. The positive effect is open with other people,

comfortable with groups or organizations, happy to meet people, flexible, and tends to easily discuss problems

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