

## **ABSTRACT**

The American YA novelist John Green frequently centres his books on characters that have been struck by the death of somebody close to them, by a traumatic event, or suffer from debilitating illness. Since adolescence is an important and impressionable period of life during which one's identity is firmly established for the first time, such experiences inevitably have a lasting impact on the person and their sense of self. This diploma thesis analyses how the teenage heroes in two selected works by Green – *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) and *Looking for Alaska* (2005) – construe their identity when simultaneously facing death and/or trauma. The analysis takes as its foundation the theories of (inter)subjectivity and of the Other by literary critics Robyn McCallum and Karen Coats, respectively, and is complemented by the outline of psychological development from James E. Marcia. Interpersonal relationships are at the crux of a stable adult identity, and are essential for successful integration into wider society. If these are missing, the individual is marginalised as a threat to others, possibly dying as a consequence of their status.

## **KEY WORDS**

John Green, young-adult literature, adolescence, maturation, identity, the Other, death, grief, terminal illness, *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Looking for Alaska*