



Troubles Troubled by the Visually Impaired : A Study of Anthony Doerr's

All The Light We Cannot See

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Abstract:

Disability is a long history of oppression, which can be seen in the ways in which the disabled people are treated. They are more likely to be the victims of rape and violence; since one of the body parts has become malfunctioned, it is difficult for the disabled people to protect themselves from the violence against them. The less legal protection given to them intensifies the threat and challenges their wellbeing. It is indeed true that disabled people are excluded from social institutions; Disabled children are excluded from the mainstream schools which may often lead to their ignorance. Similarly, disabled adults are barred from the leisure rendering activities and therefore, they lack sociability. Disability in general, and visual impairment in particular, captures a special attention in this millennium. It is because the lack of sight is a big deal of suffering and a stigmatic condition. People with visual impairment are more likely to suffer from physical barriers which often result in social exclusion and emotional trauma. The people with visual impairment face many troubles in their day-to-day activities like moving from one place to another, reading and writing, doing household chores and other entrepreneurship activities. The present article intends to bring out the challenges faced by the people with visual impairment as portrayed in Doerr's second novel, All the Light We Cannot See.

Keywords: Barriers, Disability, Exclusion, Marginalization, Visual Impairment.



I. INTRODUCTION

Disability is a long history of oppression, which can be seen in the ways in which the disabled people are treated. They are more likely to be the victims of rape and violence; since one of the body parts has become malfunctioned, it is difficult for the disabled people to protect themselves from the violence against them. The less legal protection given to them intensifies the threat and challenges their wellbeing. It is indeed true that disabled people are excluded from social institutions; Disabled children are excluded from the mainstream schools which may often lead to their ignorance. Similarly, disabled adults are barred from the leisure rendering activities and therefore, they lack sociability.

II. CHAIN OF TROUBLES FACED BY THE DISABLED

Disability creates an identity. The so-called non-disabled people treat the people with disabilities in two extreme ways; some consider them to be children blessed by God while others consider them as people cursed by God. Apart from these two sharp distinctions in treatment, they are treated in many different ways. Dan Goodley, while talking about their condition says: "People with impairments are ignored, pitied, patronised, objectified, hated, mocked and fetishised" [1]. Since people labelled as disabled are a part of the society, they have to tolerate all these different approaches in order to move with the society whether liked or loathed by them. The present article intends to bring out the challenges faced by the people with visual impairment as portrayed in Doerr's second novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*.

The sufferings of the disabled cannot be described easily. In the twenty-first century, there has been an increase in the physical, mental and sexual exploitation of the disabled communities. It can be witnessed through everyday newspapers and other social media. For instance, a fifteen year old child had been sexually abused by a man from the neighbourhood in Delhi in the month of October 2015. The reason behind these exploitations is the disabled people's inability to voice out. For example, a dumb person cannot call for help when he/she is physically or sexually abused. Similarly, people with intellectual disabilities are not aware of the fact that sexual abuse or rape is a criminal act. Therefore, they often become victims of these cruelties.

The word impairment refers to the limitation of a body part or mental illness. For instance, people with hearing impairment cannot hear. Similarly, people with visual impairment cannot see. In the same way, some people cannot learn as quickly as the others. They are labelled as slow learners or learning disabled. It is indeed true that impairment (any of the impairment for that matter) renders both physical and mental trauma. For example, a dumb person cannot communicate his thoughts and ideas to anyone. Generally, people would say that sharing of emotions will provide mental relief. But this provision is denied to the dumb people. Therefore, their emotions are shut up inside their hearts and this would result in mental stress. Similarly, the hearing impaired cannot listen to anyone or anything and this would ultimately prevent them from communicating with the society. The condition of the deaf (hearing impaired) and the dumb is extremely pathetic because they need



to face the challenges of both the deafness and the dumbness. In the same way, people with locomotor disability cannot walk and therefore, are unable to fulfill their physical needs by themselves; they need someone to support them even in their day-to-day activities.

The dependence of the disabled people on others prevents them from participating in social activities like wedding. And this results in their social exclusion. Their dependence also bars them from taking decisions on their own in terms of family, finance, reproduction etc. In addition to this, people with disabilities should bear with the prejudices which the non-disabled people have upon them. Metaphors that are used to describe a disabled person include: sinister, lacking, ungodly, brave, evil, fragmented and unviable. These are the terms of prejudice created against by the non-disabled society. These metaphors in many times, decide the qualities of disabled people. Moreover, the prejudice against the disabled communities is passed on to generations and they, are excluded from the community activities.

People with disabilities are more likely to be restricted from mass education, employment opportunities, social gatherings, leisure settings and other community activities. Since they are excluded from the society, they are less likely to make friends and this results in their isolation. It would be apt to bring in the argument made by Karen Soldatic and Robert McRuer. According to them, “To get a sense of the impact of austerity upon human beings one only needs to examine what is happening to disabled people”. The sufferings of the disabled thus become a never ending pathetic story.

Disability in general, and visual impairment in particular, captures a special attention in this millennium. It is because the lack of sight is a big deal of suffering and a stigmatic condition. People with visual impairment are more likely to suffer from physical barriers which often result in social exclusion and emotional trauma. The people with visual impairment face many troubles in their day-to-day activities like moving from one place to another, reading and writing, doing household chores and other entrepreneurship activities.

Blindness attacks a person at two different times: one by birth and the other during the life time. Based on the attainment of blindness, people can be divided into two groups. The first is labelled as ‘Congenitally blind’: these are the people who have never experienced any visual concept because they are blind from their births. The second group is called as ‘Adventitiously blind’: these are the people who have developed blindness in their later lives due to injury, fever, or accidents. These people would have experienced visions of the world till they became blind. The former group could only imaginethings which exist in the world but the latter would have had the opportunities of visualising things. The condition of the adventitiously blind people is still worse when compared to the congenitally blind people. It is because, the congenitally blind would have adapted themselves to live as blind. But it is not the same with the adventitiously blind people. It is very difficult for them to learn how to live their lives as blind. They have to face the sudden changes and social exclusion and they are more likely to be offended emotionally due to the different treatment given to them. Apart from these two distinctions, the people with visual impairment can be divided into two groups based on the level of their



vision. The people with no vision are called totally blind and the people with partial vision are called partially blind. The totally blind people are unable to fulfill their personal and social expectations whereas, the partially blind people will be looked with suspicion by the others because sometimes they can see well and sometimes they cannot see. Due to their instable sight, they suffer both physically and emotionally. It is true that both the groups of people with visual impairment undergo a greater amount of trauma.

Education is an important platform for the development of knowledge and skills. In the ancient days, people with visual impairment were not allowed into the portals of education. Though the condition has changed a little, many institutions even now refuse to include people with visual impairment for various reasons viz: their lack of mobility skills, their inability to access the smart boards and other materials, their additional requirements of support etc., Though the governing agencies allow the visually impaired persons into the mainstream education with the recommendation of the government, they are still segregated from their normal peers mainly due to their physical barriers. Generally, people with visual impairment are conceptualised as 'unfriendly' and 'expressionless' creatures because of their inability to understand the other person's facial expressions and body gestures and their inability to reciprocate the emotions of the others through their gestures. This often results in their isolation and this ultimately leads to their emotional imbalance because they have no one to share their feelings.

Apart from these difficulties, people with visual impairment generally think that they are being watched by the others because they cannot see what is happening around. This makes them very self-conscious and bars them from being on their own. However, this makes them behave well also as they are being watched closely by the society. Since the physical difficulties and lack of locomotor skills delay their activities, the visually impaired people are unable to compete with the non-disabled persons and this results in their lack of self-confidence. Many researches have shown that the blind people maintain negative or lower self-esteem.

People with visual impairment are generally considered to be good singers. Some have achieved great heights in the area of music like the popular female singer from the state of Kerala, Vaikkam Vijayalakshmi. There are many visually impaired who sing in the bus stands and railway stations to earn their livelihood. "In countries like Kenya, there have been reports of families setting up their disadvantaged at street corners to appeal to public sympathy and provision for the survival of the people with visual impairment. They were referred to as 'Wasiojiweja' meaning those unable to take care of themselves. (3) Music thus becomes a tool for achieving the basic needs of the visually impaired persons. Though many visually impaired personalities have achieved great heights like Dhinakaran who is a member of the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) and Beno Zafir who is a member of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), the sufferings and the prejudices of the visually impaired people still exist in the twenty-first century.

Set in France it depicted events occurred during World War II and was published in 2014. It received significant critical acclaim and was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction. The book was a New



York Times bestseller and was named by the newspaper as a notable book of 2014. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2015. It was runner-up for the 2015 Dayton Literary Peace Prize for Fiction and won the 2015 Ohioana Library Association Book Award for Fiction.

The summary of the novel goes thus. In 1934, Marie-Laure is a 6-year-old with a loving father, Daniel LeBlanc, who works in the Museum of Natural History in Paris. Marie-Laure begins to lose her eyesight, and goes blind. Adapting to this, Daniel teaches Marie-Laure Braille and makes beautiful models of the city of Paris, training her until she becomes gradually ready to navigate her way around the actual city. On each of Marie-Laure's birthdays, Daniel gives her a small "puzzle-box." Marie-Laure becomes adept at solving these puzzles. As the years go on, Marie-Laure also learns of a diamond called the Sea of Flames that is kept at the museum. The diamond is rumored to bring eternal life to its owner, but also to kill the owner's loved ones. Marie-Laure becomes concerned that her father will die from the curse, but Daniel assures her that the curse is a myth.

In 1934, Werner Pfennig is an 8-year-old boy who lives with his sister, Jutta, at an orphanage in Germany. Werner is an intelligent boy, though he fears that he will be sent to work in the mines when he turns fifteen. The head of the orphanage, a French woman named Frau Elena, teaches him to speak French as well as German, and encourages him to explore his interests in science. One day, Werner stumbles upon a radio. He and Jutta experiment with the radio, and are amazed to discover a broadcast coming from miles away. The broadcast consists of a series of fascinating lectures on science. Werner develops a reputation for being a great repairman. One day, he repairs the radio of a powerful official named Herr Siedler, who shows his gratitude by recommending him to a prestigious Nazi school, the National Institute. Werner passes his exams with flying colors. Around this time, Jutta begins to grow more distant from Werner.

In 1940, the Germans invade Paris, and Marie-Laure and her father decide to leave the city. Daniel LeBlanc has been tasked with hiding the Sea of Flames from the Nazi invaders. He and three other employees have been given diamonds (three of which are fake, one of which is real) and sent to different parts of the country. Daniel decides to travel to the coastal town of Saint-Malo, to live with his uncle, Etienne LeBlanc. Marie-Laure discovers that Etienne is an eccentric but highly likeable man. Although he is extremely reclusive, he charms Marie-Laure with his vast knowledge of science and radio.

Werner begins his time as a student at the National Institute, where he is taught Nazi ideology. He wins the favor of Dr. Hauptmann, a professor who gives him challenging physics assignments. Before long, Werner is working with Hauptmann to design a complex radar system that will one day be used to find enemy soldiers. He also befriends a thoughtful, gentle student named Frederick and learns that Frederick is only in the National Institute because his parents are rich.

In Saint-Malo, Daniel builds Marie-Laure a model of the city so that she can train herself to walk through the streets. Marie-Laure also befriends Etienne's cook and maid, Madame Manec. She eventually learns



that Etienne's brother, Henri LeBlanc, her own grandfather made a series of radio broadcasts on science (the same broadcasts that, that entertained Werner and Jutta as children) from the secret radio room in the attic of the house. One day, Daniel tells Marie-Laure that he has to leave immediately. He promises her that he will be back, but even after months, Daniel still has not returned. Occasionally, he sends Marie-Laure a letter, in which he claims that he is in a "good place." Meanwhile, the German presence in Saint-Malo becomes intolerable: food grows scarce, and the German soldiers arrest innocent people.

Madame Manec and her elderly friends work together to undermine the Nazis in small ways. Also, an old man named Harold Bazin gives Marie-Laure the key to a secret hiding place, a grotto in the city wall, at the edge of the sea. Madame Manec grows sick and dies. Inspired by her bravery, Etienne and Marie-Laure decide to fight the Germans together. Etienne launches a series of secret radio broadcasts, and every day, Marie-Laure buys a loaf of bread from the bakery, which contains a scroll with important resistance information.

At the National Institute, Werner begins to resent his teachers while also enjoying their sadistic games. One day, the teachers order all the students to torture a prisoner. Werner obliges, but Frederick refuses. Soon afterwards, Frederick is savagely beaten. It is not clear if the students or the teachers are responsible and he loses most of his mental faculties. Werner loses Dr. Hauptmann's favour when he asks leaving the school as punishment, Dr. Hauptmann tells the army that Werner is old enough for military service, and Werner is shipped off to fight. During his time in the army, Werner uses radios to track down enemy broadcasters in Russia, and his fellow soldiers then murder them.

It is now the early 1940s, and a greedy Nazi official named Sergeant Major Reinhold Von Rumpel tries to track down the Sea of Flames diamond. He determines that the real diamond is probably in Saint-Malo, where Daniel LeBlanc's family is staying. Von Rumpel arrives in Saint-Malo around the same time that Werner and his fellow troops are shipped there. Von Rumpel learns that Marie-Laure will know where the diamond is. At the same time, Werner is ordered to find the location of a resistance broadcast network. He determines that the network is located in Etienne's house, but when he realizes that it's the same broadcast he loved as a child, he decides to let it continue.

In 1944, the Allies prepare to bomb Saint-Malo. The German soldiers, including Werner and his superior, Frank Volkheimer, prepare for an air raid by hiding beneath a hotel. Etienne is arrested as a resistance fighter and sent to jail, leaving Marie-Laure alone in his house. In August, American airplanes drop leaflets ordering all French citizens to leave the town. Marie-Laure, blind, is unable to understand, and stays behind. Late at night, the airplanes bomb the city. Marie-Laure realizes that her father has been hiding something in the model of Saint-Malo: inside the model of Etienne's house, she finds the Sea of Flames. Marie-Laure is able to survive, but Werner and Volkheimer are trapped in a cellar under the hotel with only a radio. The Allies continue bombing Saint-Malo. While Werner and Volkheimer try to find a way out of the cellar, Von Rumpel goes to Etienne's house in search of the diamond. Afraid, Marie-Laure goes to hide in the secret radio room.



Von Rumpel searches the house but finds nothing. Marie-Laure has taken the diamond with her. In the radio room, Marie-Laure makes her own broadcasts, in which she reads aloud from her favorite book, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Werner hears the broadcast on his radio. He also hears Marie-Laure say that the man in her house is trying to kill her. Volkheimer and Werner decide to use a grenade to bomb their way out of the cellar. Amazingly, the plan works. Werner then goes to Etienne's house to save Marie-Laure. Inside, Von Rumpel tries to shoot Werner (wrongly assuming that he is trying to get the diamond for himself), but Werner manages to overpower and kill Von Rumpel. He then calls for Marie-Laure, saying that he has been listening to her broadcast. Marie-Laure decides to trust Werner, and climbs out. Werner, recognizing that Marie-Laure is blind, leads her to safety. In gratitude, Marie-Laure hides the diamond in Bazin's grotto, and gives Werner the model house with the key to the grotto hidden inside (Werner has no idea that the diamond exists).

In the following weeks, the American soldiers arrest Werner, and Marie-Laure is reunited with Etienne. Marie-Laure and Etienne move back to Paris, and over the next ten years they remain close. After Etienne dies, Marie-Laure becomes a noted scientist specializing in the study of mollusks and whelks. Werner is not so lucky: he is sent to prison, and dies when he inadvertently steps on a landmine planted by the German troops a few weeks earlier.

In the 1970s, Frank Volkheimer tracks down Jutta, now married with a young child. Volkheimer gives Jutta the tiny model house, in which Jutta finds the key to the grotto. Jutta then finds Marie-Laure, now a middle-aged scientist with a daughter, and gives her the model house. Before Etienne died, he hired a private investigator to know about the fate of Daniel: as it turns out, Daniel was arrested and died of influenza while he was in prison. It also becomes clear that Marie-Laure has left the Sea of Flames in the grotto.

In 2014, Marie-Laure is portrayed as an old woman with a distinguished career behind her. One day, she goes walking through Paris with her grandson, Michel. She thinks about the people in her life who have become spirits: Etienne, Manec, and above all, her father.

All the Light We Cannot See is a novel which brings out an optimistic approach to the people with visual impairment. Though the novel is written as an inspiration, it also brings out the trauma faced by the people with visual impairment. Here, one of the protagonists, Marie-Laure faces many physical and emotional challenges. She becomes blind when she is six years old, and it becomes very difficult for her to adopt herself to the blindness. Moving from one place to another becomes a great challenge to Marie-Laure. "What is blindness? Where there should be a wall, her hands find nothing. Where there should be nothing, a table's leg gauges her chin." [2]

Since the novel takes place during the World War II, Marie-Laure and her father move to various places for safety. The separation of Marie-Laure and her father intensifies her emotional trauma. In spite of these physical and emotional challenges, Marie-Laure becomes a successful scientist at the end of the novel.



All The Light We Cannot See is a novel which brings out the optimism of the people with visual impairment. Though the main focus of the novel is on World War II and the development of radio broadcasting, the sufferings and strivings of the visually impaired girl is efficiently constructed. Though the novel empathises with her pathetic life, the conclusion given at the end of the novel provides an inspiration to the people with visual impairment.

Marie-Laure Blanche, the French girl who resides in the city of Saint Malo with her father Daniel starts losing her eyesight gradually when she becomes six years old. When her father sends her on a children's tour to a museum, where he works, Marie-Laure realises that her eye sight is deteriorating. This leads to both physical and mental trauma. It is very difficult for a girl child who has already lost her mother at child birth to accept the fact that she has become blind. There is no doubt that Marie-Laure undergoes all the challenges and barriers faced by the adventitiously blind people. As discussed earlier, the challenges faced by the adventitiously blind people are comparatively higher than the people with congenital blindness.

The first challenge that lies in the way of Marie-Laure is that she being a six year old child should undergo the tests that are conducted by the doctors. From the tests it becomes evident that the things or objects that she had seen earlier are not visible to her now. This initially shatters the confidence of Marie-Laure, her father and her neighbours.

The second challenge that has to be faced by all the visually impaired people is the physical hurdles. Six years is the age in which a child would enjoy doing all sorts of activities – running, dancing, swinging and all other physical activities. Unfortunately, Marie-Laure is barred from these physical activities and this becomes the first social exclusion she faces due to her loss of eye sight. Since Marie-Laure cannot go out of her house and mingle with her friends, she is unable to develop friendship. This makes her feel lonely.

Moving from one place to another also becomes a great threat to Marie-Laure even inside the house. Though it is her house, she is unable to move freely due to the obstacles like chairs, tables and other objects that lie in her way. This could be understood from the following lines:

Spaces she once knew as familiar: the four room flat she shares with her father, the little tree lined the square at the end of their street – have become labyrinths bristling with hazards. Drawers are never where they should be. The toilet is an abyss. A glass of water is too near, too far, her fingers too big always too big. What is blindness? Where there should be a wall, her hands find nothing. Where there should be nothing, a table leg gauges her chin, cars growl in the streets. (27)

The above quotation explains the physical hurdles faced by the visually impaired people in general and Marie-Laure in particular. She needs time and energy to adapt herself to her blindness. Bumping into the things



that lie in her way prevents her from moving into the house too. This may be due to the fear of what the other people tell about her when she bumps into something or someone.

The sufferings of Marie-Laure's father, Daniel should also be noted here. In general, fathers face many difficulties to bring up their children without the support of the mothers. Here, the duty of bringing up a visually impaired girl child falls on the shoulders of Daniel. His responsibility increases as he has to look after the needs of his blind child, right from the beginning. It is true that Daniel has to play multiple roles in the life of Marie-Laure. He should act as her mother and should replace her friends because of her inability to move outside. In addition to this, he has to concentrate on his job at the natural museum in Paris.

Moreover, the World War intensifies the difficulties faced by Marie-Laure and her father. During the Second World War, it is announced that the people of Saint Malo are to vacate the city immediately because of the high chances of destruction of the city by the terrorists. As per the announcement, Marie-Laure and her father leave the city. Train tickets have been booked for the two of them and they have to meet a person by the museum where Daniel works. But due to the rising tension and threats, all the trains from Saint Malo have been stopped. Therefore, Daniel takes Marie-Laure to meet the person covering all the distance by walking. Unfortunately, the city Marie-Laure and her father are recommended for staying also has been evacuated due to the threat of terrorism. Hence, Marie-Laure and her father have to walk again to another city, where Etienne, Marie-Laure's uncle lives.

It is indeed a challenging task for Daniel to cross the cities in which the threats of terrorism are severe, all by walking along with a blind girl. Though he succeeds in his task, Marie-Laure has to undergo many difficulties and they affect Daniel as well. Marie-Laure could not continue walking after a certain period of time. Moreover, extreme hunger and the fear of terrorists haunt her and she becomes weak and ill. When she comes to know the fact that their recommended residence also has been destroyed by the terrorists, her fear intensifies to a great extent. Therefore, the journey towards Etienne's house becomes a great challenge to Marie-Laure and her father.

Etienne's house is indeed a new place to Marie-Laure. Since she is blind, she has to know the structure of the house and she has to adapt herself to the new place. The difficulties involved in moving from one place to another in Etienne's house could be understood through the following lines. "She sets her feet on the floor. The wounds on the back of her heels pulse. Where is her cane? She shuffles so she does not back her shins on something" (126). The barriers in the physical movements pave the way for her social exclusion.

It is a fact that the people with visual impairment depend on others due to various reasons. For example, they cannot see the photographs that are displayed on the albums or read the announcements or information that are pinned on the notice boards. In these cases, a visually impaired person needs the support from the sighted people. Similarly, Marie-Laure depends on her father both for the physical and emotional



support. From the beginning of the novel, one could understand the intimate attachment between Marie-Laure and her father. Even at the beginning of the novel, one could find Daniel creating a model of the city, Saint Malo, in order to help Marie-Laure to navigate the city easily. He also gifts her with a Braille book on her birthday every year. These incidences showcase the understanding that is established between blind Marie-Laure and her father.

During the war, Daniel has been arrested without the knowledge of Marie-Laure. The separation from her father creates a great mental trauma in Marie-Laure as she has no one to hold on to. Daniel has been the sole support to Marie-Laure, all these years. When she comes to know the fact that her sole support has to leave her, she feels completely lost, though for some time. This could be understood in Marie-Laure's sad tone, when her father tells her that he has to go to Saint Malo for an official work. "You are leaving. Aren't you?" he is glad, just now, she cannot see him" (189). Daniel's pain of leaving his only blind daughter alone in his relative's house should also be noted from the above quotation.

Generally, people with visual impairment hesitate to mingle with others because of their lack of abilities to comprehend the other person's expressions and the fear of how the others will take them with their disability. The same situation occurs in the life of Marie-Laure. Generally, she gets all her works done with the help of her father. But after her father's departure, she is unable to mingle with others freely and get her works done. For some days, after Daniel's separation, she moves freely with the hope that her father will return soon. But when he fails to appear even after a few weeks, she begins to wonder what has become of her father. She writes many letters to her father to the city of Saint Malo, the place where her father told her that he is going. Since she does not get any reply from her father, she stops doing her day-to-day activities.

On the twentieth morning, without any word from her father, Marie-Laure does not get out of bed. She no longer cares that her great uncle put on an ancient neck tie and stood by the front door on two separate occasions and whisper weird rhymes to himself. . . . she no longer begs Madame Manec to take her to the train station to write another letter. She becomes unreachable, sullen. She does not bathe, she does not warm herself by the kitchen fire. She hardly eats (225).

The above quote examines the emotional instabilities of Marie-Laure. She feels isolated without her father and shuts up herself inside her room. Her self-imposed house arrest excludes her from the household and societal activities. Everything in the house scares her and she feels gloomy without her father. After a long time, she receives a letter from her father informing her that he has been arrested. Though it wounded her emotions, she feels relieved that her father is alive though in the prison. Daniel sends letters to Marie-Laure frequently and they cheer her feelings to some extent.

Madame Manec, the cook in Etienne's house plays a crucial role in Marie-Laure's life. After Daniel's separation from Marie-Laure, Madame Manec tries to fulfill the duties of Daniel in the life of Marie-Laure.



Every morning, she takes her for walking to the beach. Marie-Laure feels the cold breeze of the sea and tries to forget her worries about her father, at least for some time. But Marie-Laure is not fortunate enough to get the support of Madame Manec throughout her life because Madame Manec dies due to her old age. Marie-Laure's life rewinds to the stage when she has been separated from her father. She suffers physically without Madame Manec. Without her, Marie-Laure could not go to the beach and experience mental relief and therefore, she feels emotionally dejected.

Marie-Laure has become a great burden to uncle Etienne, who is not a mentally stable man. In spite of his mental illness, he takes care of Marie-Laure and helps her to lead her day-to-day activities. Marie-Laure feels sorry for the troubles given to him due to her stay there. "Etienne' Marie-Laure whispers, 'Are you ever sorry that we came here?' that I got dropped in your lap and you and Madame Manec had to look after me? did you ever feel that I brought a curse into your life?" (431) These emotionally moving words of Marie-Laure reveal her internal trauma. Moreover, uncle Etienne's arrest intensifies her trouble and she lives all alone in the house.

In the meantime, the German army tracks down the radio broadcasting and destroys the city. Though Marie-Laure is aware of the fact that the city is destroyed by the German soldiers, she is unable to move out of the city to a safer zone, due to the visual impairment. Von Rumpel, a greedy German soldier, enters into the house of Etienne, where Marie-Laure stays alone. Since she is blind, Marie-Laure is unable to find out who the stranger is. Therefore, she goes into the hiding room and broadcasts her situation through the radio. The time spent in the hiding room must be the toughest time in Marie-Laure's life. It is because, if the stranger who has entered into Etienne's house is a soldier, he will destroy the house. If he does so, Marie-Laure cannot survive any longer. Her thoughts about dying all alone in darkness would have amplified her fear and trauma. Fortunately, Werner, the German boy, after hearing Marie-Laure's radio broadcast, rescues her and helps her to get out of the city.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Though Marie-Laure has many good hearts like her father Daniel, her uncle Etienne, Madame Manec and Werner, nobody stays with her throughout her lifetime. She suffers after the separation of her father. Similarly, Madame Manec's death brings more misery. Etienne's arrest stretches her suffering. Thus, a chain of troubles follow Marie-Laure before she launches her successful career as a scientist. This is the case with most of the visually impaired people. It is indeed true that they have to face a chain of troubles throughout their lives. But as they grow, they learn the lessons life teaches them. Like Marie-Laure, people who are courageous and determined, overcome their troubles and become shooting stars leaving a trail of light behind.

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