



Search For Meaning of Life and Horrors of World War In "*All the Light We Cannot See*" By Anthony Doerr

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ABSTRACT:

In Anthony Doerr's *All the Light, We Cannot See*, the story revolves around a blind French girl and a German orphan boy conscripted into the Nazi army. They are shown as young people during World War II (WWII).

Marie-Laure LeBlanc and her father flee Paris after their father is given the Sea of Flames, a priceless diamond. In Saint-Malo, her father is taken into custody, and they flee to her great-uncle Etienne's house. Marie-Laure gets drafted into the ranks of the French underground. She and Etienne use Etienne's illegal radio to communicate with the Allies.

Werner Pfennig, a talented German boy, appears destined to spend the rest of his life working in a coal mine but instead receives an invitation to attend a Nazi preparatory school in Germany. Werner loses everything he holds dear to pursue his dream of becoming a scientist, leaving behind his sister. A team of soldiers tasked with finding and eradicating anti-German radio broadcasts draughts, Werner, into military service. The novel explores the tragedy of war and individuals' fight to survive in that devastating environment. It also shadows the shared humanity and the will to live.

KEYWORDS:

Meaning of Life, World War, Will to survive, Destiny.

INTRODUCTION

Anthony Doerr's novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*, was released on May 6th, 2014, and is a work of fiction. The Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction were awarded to the work in 2015. World War II inspired this fascinating and intricate novel about human nature and radio's conflicting potential as a means of communication during that time. The author examines the search for meaning in life during the worst moment of despair, World War II, by focusing on the content of human nature.

This novel is a bit of a tricky one to introduce. Since World War II, which is widely considered one of the darkest times in human history, there has been a lot of writing about it in a variety of genres, from novelists and articles to academic books and papers on history. Children and their families whose lives were shattered by the war are frequently discussed. In certain respects, Doerr is a similar author. Individualism and collective national stupidity are juxtaposed in his work, which tries to find an innocuous side to war's brutality.

The way Doerr has done this makes it difficult to explain this novel; he investigates how both youngsters on opposite sides of the war struggle with identity, morality, and optimism in their manner. Bombing Saint-Malo connects the two narratives because war may target anyone, regardless of their guilt or innocence, and it doesn't care if they're French or German. It also shows the humanity that resides within every one of us, no matter how deep we may have dug.

Toward a Right (to) Touch – Irving Goh

Anthony Doerr has written some of the most profound writings about touch in our century. Short tales' collection *The Shell Collector* was a clear indication of his interest in the literary question of touch in terms of literary expression. Throughout *All the Light We Cannot See*, Doerr explores this subject on a large, novelistic scale. It's easy to assume that *All the Light We Cannot See* is a standard novel, with a strong focus on people and a compelling narrative to follow. When Hitler rose to power and World War II began, two youngsters from different parts of Europe were living seemingly distinct lives, but their stories are intertwined in this novel. Marie-Laure LeBlanc, the primary character, and a blind child, is a Paris. Another, Werner Pfennig, lives in Zollverein, Germany, with his sister Jutta at a children's shelter for the homeless. The legend of the Sea of Flames diamond, which is said to offer immortality to the holder while delivering destruction and death to all around it, is woven into the stories of these two children. If true, Paris' Natural History Museum is said to be its owner. The museum director knows that the Germans will come for it, so he orders three copies to be made to divert their attention. For security reasons, the museum keeps one of them while the other two are given to trusted individuals who have been summoned across the country to take the supposed real one with them. Daniel LeBlanc, Marie-Laure's father, Laure's is likely to be carrying the real diamond. To fulfil their obligation to their masters, the Third Reich sends Sergeant Reinhold von Rumpel, a devoted soldier who is aware that he has cancerous tumours spreading in his body.

When Marie-Laure, Werner, and von Rumpel cross paths in *All the Light We Cannot See*, it is because of the Sea of Flames adventure. However, a more attentive reading would reveal how touch is fundamental to the story. Marie-Laure and Werner will be linked by physical contact, and Werner will be able to save Marie-Laure from von Rumpel's clutches. Detecting the Sea of Flames by touch would likewise appear to be possible for von Rumpel, However, he would require a more delicate touch to open the puzzle box housing the diamond, which he lacks, unlike Marie-Laure and Werner. Touch is not only used to convey the imminence of death at a time of conflict, but it also serves as a means of survival for the blind Marie-Laure, who must navigate a war-torn world with the help of touch to stay alive. The current epidemic, in which many state powers have not shied away from using war vocabulary to encourage their populace to fight it, may not be a time of world war right now, but *All the Light We Cannot See* nonetheless symbolizes our collective urgency as a species. We should be reminded of the importance we place on touch in our lives by reading *All the Light We Cannot See* today. Touch teaches us to live in the community and for others. It also teaches us about death. It also helps us to define our sense of self, which is derived from our interactions with others. According to the philosopher of touch Jean-Luc Nancy, proper touching is all about tact, which is knowing when to let go or not touch, and this novel might even lead us to think of a right to touch alongside the right to live or exist.

As a result of war's savagery, individuals' destiny is shaped, and their principles are trampled. All three Marie-Laure, Werner, and Daniel Leblanc had ambitions and dreams for their futures that they were willing to work hard for. Innocent bystanders, were swept up in the flood of a massive and brutal war, and just one of them has made it out unscathed. All their futures are intertwined with the course of a world war they did not start and will not be able to end. As a result of the horrors of the First World War, Etienne has been unable to leave his house for more than twenty years. Military conflict has a profound effect on both soldiers and non-combatants alike, as demonstrated by these characters' physical and psychological scars from the conflict. Werner is a testament to the fact that even someone with a good heart and protective instinct can become

complicit in the deaths of others when confronted with the horror of war. He would never intentionally harm an innocent woman or child, but once Werner is forced to join the fight, he has no option.

Despite her sight, Marie-Laure is determined to continue reading and studying the natural world. As a result of her perseverance, she becomes a scientist who travels to new places and discovers new creatures. Marie-Laure may have given up if she hadn't been spurred on by her passion for learning and books. Madame Manec brings Marie-Laure to the beach and lets her experience the noises and textures of the ocean, and this helps Marie-Laure come out of her sadness. Marie-eagerness Laure's learning about her new surroundings gives her optimism. Werner, on the other hand, is always striving to learn as much as he can about science and technology. There isn't much hope for him in the thick of the conflict, but he never loses up on the dream of learning more about the mystery radio program that offered him so much joy and knowledge.

The events of the past shape the characters in the narrative, and they can never truly escape them. At the first meeting, Marie-Laure is taken aback by her great-uncle Etienne's jittery and out-of-the-ordinary demeanour. It becomes clear over time that he continues to be affected by his experiences in World War I. Individuals cannot escape their pasts, especially if they have suffered in the past. Etienne is the first character to reveal this. Many characters survived World War II, and the novel shows that this is also true for them. They are confronted with their recollections of the war in the 1970s when Werner's personal belongings are found. Due to Volk Heimer's haunting memories of World War II, Jutta is haunted by the crimes committed by Germany and lives a lonely and solitary existence. The fact that Jutta is German leaves her with a sense of shame and guilt as she goes to France to find out what happened to Werner. Even though Marie-Laure has experienced less trauma, her memories of the past continue to impact her current and prospective experiences.

To discover meaning in life, one must have a strong desire for purpose. The existential background of the will to meaning is linked to a feature of human existence itself: consciousness. With their subconscious minds, people are wired to seek out and aspire to the things that are truly important in their lives. Meaningful existence depends on the presence of such specialised skills.

According to this theory, human beings are driven by a need to find meaning in their lives. Barnes defines "the will to meaning" as "our basic drive for a living and behaving, and it goes deeper than the will to pleasure and power" (1995: 9). A successful life, according to logotherapy, is no longer a matter of power or pleasure, but rather the meaning of existence itself. As a result of the will to meaning, human beings can accomplish a meaningful life, regardless of whether or not their lives are successful. That ambition is what motivates people to make a better life for themselves.

The quest to discover one's life's purpose is generally seen as a significant milestone. The duty cannot be outsourced to others and must be carried out by the individual. As a result, it is one of a kind and personal. Every human being aspires to discover their definition of what it means to live. Frankl argues that the meaning of life changes constantly, depending on the circumstances of the individual's experience at any given time. In addition, it is stated that each human has a unique meaning of existence and that each meaning of life is distinct from the other (1984: 114). According to Frankl's statement, it is clear how important the purpose of life is to the lives of humans.

Meaning in life comes from the experiences and events that people themselves identify as significant. Even a small percentage of life's events may have deeper significance. When it comes to the purpose of life, happiness, good fortune, and so on aren't the only factors to consider. As Frankl affirms, the meaning of life may be found in both good and unpleasant situations, whether it is a time of joy or sorrow (1985: 121). Even in the most tragic of circumstances, it is believed, that there is a purpose to everything that happens in our lives.

As stated in the theory, the purpose of life is a fundamental part of a human being's existence. Everyone can find significance in their own lives. Humans need to know where their purpose in life comes from to do this. Based on the notion of logotherapy, Frankl claims that the meaning of life can be found in three areas:

There are three ways in which we might discover the meaning of our lives, according to logotherapy: (1) by producing something, (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone, and (3) by the attitude we have regarding inescapable hardship (Frankl, 1984: 133).

Three values, namely experiential, attitudinal, and creative, reflect those aspects of life according to Marshall (2011: 61).

CONCLUSION

Identity, morality, and hope all play major roles in defining what it means to be a human being in the modern world. Characters often have to deal with all three of this ongoing information in *All the Light We Cannot See*. When things get tough for everyone else, they always manage to dig deep within themselves to discover a source of strength and morality. To put it another way, this novel isn't just another WWII story—it's a story about the things that bind us together, regardless of time or place. This research examines the novel's intrinsic and extrinsic features, focusing on Werner Pfennig's life's purpose through the concepts of free will, the desire for meaning, and the meaning of life.

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