

## War, Delusion Of Progress And Religious Confusion: Critical Metaphor Analysis Of Doerr's All The Light We Cannot See

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p>Received: August 16, 2020</p> <p>Accepted: October 07, 2020</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords</b> Critical Metaphor Analysis, Ideology, Metanarrative, Delusion of progress, religion, war.</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.5281/zenodo.5745896</p>	<p><i>The aim of this paper is to analyze the delusion of scientific progress and religious confusion during war in Doerr's work 'All the Light We Cannot See' (2014). With the theoretical perspective of postmodernism the metanarratives regarding scientific and religious progress are studied in the context of war. The analytical model of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) by Jonathan Charteris-Black (2004) is selected for analysis of the selected metaphors in the text. War is typically the event in which religious, moral and ethical values of civilized culture are diluted and thus leads to the mental confusion of individuals going through the atrocities of war. The situation of progressive delusion and religious confusion at war time leads to total destruction of human norms of morality and social understanding apart from the physical trauma and horror of destruction and death. Thus the ideological conditions at the time of war become a crucial factor in the normative pattern of so called civilized and progressive social life. This paper concludes that the psychological and ethical effects of war are crucial to the ideological position of individuals in society resulting not just in physical trauma but also the socio-cultural trauma of lost values and norms of civilization.</i></p>

### 1. Introduction

This research incorporates the postmodern philosophy that meanings are not fixed and socially constructed meanings differ from one centre to another with changing circumstances. The ideological, moral and religious development of individuals gets confused in uncertain situations like war where, meanings shift and hence affect people's lives and challenge the rational notion of life leading to severe mental health issues (Callahan, 2010). As religion, moral and ethics preach not to hurt other people but war counters the same lesson and people fail to assimilate the new ideological shift that comes with war. This leads to mental confusion and in many cases total destruction of human norms of morality and rational social understanding (Gillespie, 1942). The grand narratives of „science“ and „religion“ are thus challenged under the circumstances of war. The present research tends to analyse the ideological confusion of individuals in the selected text and evaluates how social and religious values that define the tenets of morality and compassion get shattered during war and result in mental/moral breakdown of those who survive the trauma of physical destruction and death. This research paper also tends to explore how social institutions and the grand discourses behind these institutions shape the ideologies of individuals under the influence of war.

The novel *All the Light We Cannot See* (2014) revolves around the time of Second World War when Germany is all set to attack France. Doerr novel tells the story of two teenagers at the time of World War II. A blind girl named Marie-Laure from Nazi occupied France and an orphan boy Werner who is forcefully pushed into Nazi's military service. Marie-Laure lives with her father Daniel LeBlanc. She gets blind at the age of six year because of cataracts. With the growing rumours about the German attack with the purpose of occupation in France, the museum hands over a valuable, expensive diamond stone *Sea of Flames* to Marie's father. Marie-Laure along with her father leaves Paris to deliver the stone at the desired destination. Werner with her sister Jutta lives in an orphanage house which runs by an old lady Frau Elena. Werner is a young boy who is gifted with the extraordinary ability in science and mechanism. In the orphanage he finds an old radio with broken transistors. He locates the issue in the transistor and fixes them. Werner and his sister Jutta listen to the live broadcast of a French professor about science. After listening to science lectures from the French professor, Werner develops his interest in science and wants to become a scientist. He gets a seat at school „Schulpforta“. Werner has faced the harsh environment at *schulpforta* and becomes the ideological victim of the *Schulpforta* authorities.

### WAR AND THE IDEOLOGICAL/SPIRITUAL DELUSIONS OF A PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL LIFE

The disturbing notions of war expand from internal terrorism to nuclear bogging of atom and individual baffling in wartime. The theory of postmodernism, the primitive history, the arcana of high technology weapons are all the different ways of mapping the tale of war. One of the most terrible forms of violence which human beings suffer from is war. Its effects are not only limited to the physical destruction of humans and their world, but also psychological devastation. In his research paper, *Children Exposed to War/ Terrorism*, Shaw (2003, p. 244) defines war as “War by definition implies a chronic and enduring exposure to trauma-related events with marked disruption in the contextual and social fabric within which one lives.”

War, therefore, is not only an armed conflict between different groups of people; instead it is a series of inhumane, traumatic events which result only in destruction and devastation. The present day armed conflicts are no more a series of man to man fight; instead it has become a massacre of the civilian population by bombings and drone attacks merely to serve political motives of the elite and to maintain the status quo (Calhoun, 2013). The worst victims of war are children who suffer from severe physical and psychological injuries as a result of being directly involved in war or by being indirect victims (Freh, 2015). More than the physical injuries caused to people in war, it is the psychological trauma that has a drastic effect on their personalities, their understanding of self and the world, cognitive skill and normal development of a physically and psychologically nourished human being (Benedek, 1946).

Gray (2008) describes a number of wars around the world are considered to be the part of struggle for future of civilization in the world. But the tribal conflicts, brutal repressions, extremists religious and ideological terror, the war on oil, fertilizers bombs and religious strife shows the multiple dimensions of the cracked level of religious contention in the individuals. According to Huntington (1997) the late twentieth century witnesses the global resurgence of religion. Consequently this resurgence of religion reflects a prominent shift of away from religion. The emergence of scientific technology, industrial empowerment and the hunger for resources made change the religious belongings into a secularized state action.

The brutality of World Wars made philosophers conscious about the grand narratives that are fashioned by the modernists so they question the reliability of the grand institutions of the society. The German philosopher and cultural critic Nietzsche (1887) said that:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives; who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? (181)

Nietzsche in his philosophical stance questions the uncertainty of science. Whereas for philosopher like Lyotard postmodernism is a divergence from modernist philosophy. For Lyotard (1984) the term „modern“ refer to any science that legitimates itself with any meta-discourse. For modernism the term grand narratives, metanarratives and meta-discourses generally consider as hermeneutics of meaning, liberation of rational subject and scientific reason. While for Lyotard postmodernism is an “incredulity towards metanarrative” (Lyotard, 1984, xxiv). This incredulity towards metanarratives for Lyotard is a defined progress in science. Lyotard criticizes the university institutions which were relied in the past.

Stokesbury (1980) describes the loss of human life was doubled in number during Second World War in comparison with the First World War from 1914 – 1918. The causalities“ caused by Second World War via military combats and localities were vastly greater in number as compared to First World War. The contemporaries of earlier times were so disturbed and confuse by the social and physical destructiveness of life and property that they start calling it „The Great War“ instead of World War.

Hodges (2011) explains the sacrifices made during the time of war go unnoticed and fade away with the passage of time. The fears and doubts that are once so acute lose their worth over time. Hence the empty space in family circles generates disappointment and disillusionment. This feeling of disenchantment leads to the disgust of war, and its aftermaths creates disequilibrium in social ideologies. The great disaster of war is also a distress call for the ideal living situation of peace. Despite the overwhelming concern to stop the nuclear war, violence continues in different shapes and forms.

Morgan & Evans (2005) explore that the world is facing a disaster of non-measurable magnitude. A flood of blood is continuously spreading over the world from one nation to another. The whole world is in continuous threat of a dreadful nuclear war. The dreadful anticipation about the new war is that it could be horrendous or may even worsen then the World Wars. The despair and deprivation of ordinary people are at extreme during and after the war years. During war times it becomes significant that the sacrifices and endurance of the working class are as important as the bravery of soldiers under fire. Orwell (1968) in his contemporary writings including his war time essays and weekly tribune column mentions the war time courage and strength of the common people. Orwell in his writing makes account of the deprivation and misfortune of personal and public life of common people. All this violence and unjust massacre of humans reflects to the delusion of scientific and moral progress of humanity. (Chomat, 2008).

For Vlahos (2006) the war narratives are essential for the citizens so they can understand the events of war and assimilate themselves into original scenarios of war. Subsequently a war narrative generates a bipolar division. Either it would be the dichotomous illustration of an international scenario, or it would be a clash of two global antagonist forces that unalterably carry a moral lesson with them.

### Methodology

Johnson & Lakoff (1980), along with a number of their followers assert that natural language is structured with the help of metaphors. According to their theory of cognitive metaphor, *metaphors* in language are generated in a process of phenomenological embodiment. The phenomenological metaphors are formed when sensory and perceptual experiences from embodied domain are used to represent the abstract entities in the target domain. Hence the metaphors used in ordinary language reveal the cognitive sphere of social groups. The cognitive theory of metaphor claims that the metaphor is the fundamental and indispensable structure of language and thought. The conventional metaphorical expressions are based on metaphorical prototypes that are referred as conceptual metaphors. Gatti & Catalano (2018) describe the distribution and circulation of metaphors in everyday language can reveal the construction of common sense among individuals and social groups.

Charteris-Black's (2004) discourse model for Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) consists of an interconnected set of categorized metaphors. According to Charteris-Black the structure of metaphor in discourse is interrelated with the dimension of cognitive hierarchy of metaphorical language use. The hierarchical dimensions of the cognitive discourse metaphors are conceptual keys which direct to the ideological framing of words. These hierarchical dimensions are further classified to get in depth of the metaphor choice in discourse. Metaphor choice in discourse is divided into two major domain resources.

Individual Resources; that are further sub-divided into three constituent parts:

1. Cognitive and affective
2. Pragmatics
3. Linguistics

1. Ideology
2. Culture
3. History

### CRITICAL METAPHOR ANALYSIS OF *ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE*

The novel *All the Light We Cannot See* (2014) is written by an American author Anthony Doerr in the context of World War II which is also called as Global War or Total War. The major reason behind to call it a global or total war was the amount of deaths produced during World War II. Before the Second World War the nations that fought against each other never massacres the citizens of countries intentionally and war exist between the military forces. While in Second World War the whole cities are sanctioned to painful deaths intentionally and willingly. Therefore it is consider as the deadliest conflict in human history. Eighty five million fatalities, genocide, holocaust, strategic bombing, deliberate deaths from starvation and diseases are the only left over of the scientific and technological progress at the period of war. These are the gifts that are presented to the world after the establishment of science in the form of nuclear bombs and nuclear weapons.

The present research explores the challenge to metanarratives in selected text with the help of metaphor choice in discourse. The metaphors are analyzed on the basis of Charteris-Black (2004) model of conceptual metaphors that is a two dimensional discourse model for metaphor choice in discourse. The collected metaphors from the text depict how the two proposed resources effect the ideological position of the individuals during wartime. The selected metaphors from the text illustrate the ideological manifestation of war and challenge to metanarratives during wartime. The selected metaphors from the novel *All the Light We Cannot See* (2014) are as follows:

1. Sea of Flames
2. Color Black
3. Schulpforta
4. Fountain of earth
5. Forest of dying sunflowers

This metaphor, *Sea of Flames* is used at the beginning of the novel to set an ambiance of war pain and sufferings. Marie-Laure father is a locksmith at the museum of Natural History. With the rumours of war approaching he is assigned with a duty to safely drop the precious diamond stone Sea of Flames to a person living in Saint-Malo. Marie Laure visits the museum with her school fellows, while the guard at the museum tells the children that a story of curse is attached with the Sea of flames. There was a prince who was attacked in a jungle but remains safe due to a stone clenched in his hands "the *stone* came to be known as the *Sea of Flames*" (Doerr, 2014, p. 21), but the curse attached with the stone is that the misfortune and bad luck fell upon

the loved ones of the keeper while he himself remains safe. Regardless of the curse attached with the stone everyone wants the ownership of the cursed stone. Major Rumpel is in search of the precious stone of Sea of Flames regardless of the curse that is attached with the stone. This shows the greed and lusts for the material possessions.

#### **Individual Resources**

*Sea of Flames* is a precious diamond which is compared with the *misfortune cursed stone*. The linguistic association of Sea of Flames creates a situation of devastation that shows the depth of immorality and disturbance in the lives of the individuals. The *Sea of Flames* shows the counter religious ideology that promotes hatred and killing in war situation. Marie-Laure went on a school trip with his fellows to the National Museum and saw the *Sea of Flames* in the museum. The guide at the museum tells children that a story of curse and misfortune is attached with the stone Sea of Flames. The curse attached to the stone is that the keeper would remain alive throughout his life while the misfortune fell upon the loved ones of the keeper. Regardless of the curse attached with the stone everyone wants the possession of the stone. The lust for materialism effects the ideological state of mind as individuals preached religious ideologies are countered by the brutal acts of war.

#### **Social Resources**

Ideologically the metaphor *Sea of Flames* presents the notion of political concern of the two nations during war. The ideology behind Sea of Flames is lust for power. The strong political nature of the German gave them the privilege to destroy the world of French people. He became hungry and selfish for the stone and leaves humanity aside while searching for the stone. Hence the Sea of Flames illustrates the selfishness and materialism of the world.

The tear shaped stone demonstrates that the excessive use of power brings the misfortune and curse upon the nations. The political belief of Germans at the time of World War II is to destroy the opponent nation of France to gain the power and control over individuals. Major Rumpel desires for Sea of Flames makes him unaware of his inhuman act of killing. He warns the museum owner to harm his children in case he cannot handover the stone to him. The preached ideology of religion is something that totally opposes with the view of life before the starting of war. Religious teachings are forgotten during war and people generate their own meaning to harm and destroy one another.

The *metaphorical connotation of colour black* is highly significant in the text. The ideological shift in the text is shown with the help of metaphorical use of colours. The German officer Siedler offers Werner a seat in the technical school of German Nazi's "The lance corporal is gone. In the next room, Herr Siedler stands in the *pool of lamplight* talking into a *black telephone*" (Doerr, 2014, 82). The *lamplight* is compared with the *black telephone* in the text. This shows that the lamplight of knowledge is generating destruction on earth with the help of science.

#### **Individual Resources**

The linguistic use of black color creates a scenario of the gloominess of war and the sufferings of the French and German nations which are created in the world with the use of science. The black color represents the sadness and depression that hover around world of French and German nation during war. The colour black demonstrate that the scientific knowledge is used to leads the world in a hole of darkness. Werner is a young boy living in an orphanage in the city of Zollverein Germany. When he starts working with his professor he realizes that every progress in the field of science eventually leads to the bleakness of the world.

Werner starts his research in the laboratory of the German professor. When he starts working on the line of the science he came to know that the knowledge of science and research in the field of science is pushing humans into darkness, he thought "He carries a lantern up in a winding staircase to a starlit observatory and looks through the eye-piece of a great telescope, its mouth pointed into the black" (Doerr, 2014, 54), no matter with how much efficiency and efforts are put in the scientific discovery, it only leads to the destruction and demolition of the world. The analytical progress in the field of science and other related areas bring darkness to world. So the metanarrative of science is questioned as the scientific inventions are leading this world into darkness.

#### **Social Resources**

The cultural association of the *black color* in the text represents the collective feelings of sorrow, sadness. The colour black demonstrate the cultural impurity and bloodshed at the time of war and the way people are discriminated on the basis of color. Werner joins the scientific institution schulpforta, the authorities discriminate the pupils on the basis of colours. The instructor in the class tells the students "White circles represent pure German blood. Circles with black indicate the proportion of foreign blood" (Doerr 138). This cultural discrimination leads to the hatred towards other people that eventually results in the situation of war. Religion teaches to dissimulate the discrimination among people on the basis of their colour but during war religious lessons are elapsed. The world of Saint-Malo is collapsed by the heavy air strikes by the German Nazi's. The cultural group identity of the French people is at stack during war because of the extreme massacres

of people associated with different cultural group identities. Thus war makes the world a bleak place which has fear, hunger, disease that leads to the permanent damage of the group identity to be continued in future generations too.

The metaphor of *Schulpfortain* the text is used as an amalgamation of two different and distinct key concepts of school and factory. With the instances of war approaching the Germans prepare a bulk of young technical minds that are fast in learning science and technology. The *Schulpfortais* compared with the *tidal wave* that makes the pupil dazzled and glazed in the forest of scientific world. The concept behind *Schulpforta* is the scientific knowledge that causes destruction and devastation to the world, while the concept behind the tidal wave is the removal of goodness from life and from the science. The knowledge of science is compared with the wave that makes the scientific knowledge an array of irregularities which are brought by the science in *Schulpforta*. The idea behind this metaphor in the text is to demonstrate that the wrong usage of science under the name of rightful knowledge results in affecting the religious norms and ideologies of the individual. The combination of two concepts of science and factory as one shows the institutionalization of the main pillars of society which in result challenge the metanarrative of science in the context of the text.

### Individual Resources

The term *Schulpforta* in the text illustrates the affective condition of individuals during war. It also establishes a position that portrays the feeling of discrimination in the text. The educational institutions are mistreated at the time of war. The pupil's ideologies in the text are formed distinct to their hailed ideologies in *schulpforta*. The logic of science is considered as the most accurate thing in the world. Thus science becomes a domain of objective truths. Etienne when deliver lectures on science he makes his pupils aware of the fact that science takes all the light from the lives of individuals. For him science is an enemy of humanity, he delivers that "So really children, mathematically, all of light is invisible" (Doerr, 2014, 370), science takes all the light from humans. Modernists advocate the path of science, for them by following the path of science one could achieve the highest position in the world. But in the text it is evident that science is leading world on path of destruction and devastation.

### Social Resources

The schools are designed to shape the pupils ideology in a positive way. In the context of the text the institution *Schulpforta* is producing the negativity in a specific technical group of individuals. The culture of *schulpforta* as an educational institution is challenging the notion of cultural identity during war. Educational institutions are created with an aim to create a better world by polishing their youth with education. The level of education is considered as a scale to measure the level of humanity. The major purpose of education in schools is to teach every child to become a better human being thus this particular group makes this world a better place for living. But during war the ideologies of the group of people at *Schulpforta* are dissimilated into explosive bombs. The fire lit rooms burned the lessons of humanity written in books. They pupils of *schulpforta* are designed as the sharp edges like sword which cut every object into pieces on the demand of its owner. The instructor in *schulpforta* proudly mentions to the selected candidates that "The fastest boys are greyhounds, harvested from all over the nation" (Doerr, 2014, 192).

*Fountain of Earth* is another important metaphor in the text. Werner studied in *Schulpforta* under the control of German Nazi's, where he excellence in the field of mechanics. Due to his extra genius in science he was sent to the war area by the school authorities where he use the nuclear weapons effectively so that maximum destruction is achieved by the scientific weapons during war. When Werner was on the duty during war he step the land mine trigger and died. The metaphor fountain of earth is compared with the rays. The concept behind the fountain of earth is the nuclear bombs that become a part of the earth and cause the painful deaths, while the imperturbable rays are the hope that become slow in the emergence of science. Werner's death is described by Doerr (2014);

But Werner has crossed the edge of the field, where he steps on a trigger land mine set there by his own army three months before, and disappears in a *fountain of earth* is what seems to Werner an impossibly slow, *imperturbable rays*. (p. 483)

### Individual Resources

The metaphor *Fountain of earth* represents the engulfing of human thoughts and desires through the fountain of dirt which is created by war situation. It also shows the way the good deeds are replaced by evils. The war starts and air strikes continue in the city of Saint-Malo where a vast number of materials and human resources are burned without any distinction. To stabilise the economy manpower is needed in the country for

the continuation of war. The citizens of Zollverein are called for work without the discrimination of age, health and education.

It depicts that everything gets down to inhumane, immoral rules and norms of a just civilization are shattered. The consumption of resources and human efforts are used to get more weapons to strengthen the military force merely for the destruction of the city of Saint-Malo. All these actions are against what religion preaches and the characters fail to comply with a just religious philosophy which aims at peace and justice. The reason behind this distorted vision of life is the approaching of war in the city of Saint-Malo that damages both countries equally. The individuals are trained to damage each other which thus results in the massive destruction of humans and mankind bringing humans down to the calibre of animals.

### **Social Resources**

The metaphor *Fountain of earth* ideologically presents the political rigidity and the imperialistic motives of the big powers during War. The basic fuel for the continuation of war is the hatred that grows in the nations which is the absolute opposite of love and kindness which religion preaches. The *Fountain of earth* spread the waves of disgust in whole nation. In the centre of the country the furnace of hatred and disgust burn in full bloom. The political hatred among nations becomes the central fuel for animosity of war. In the political hatred of the countries the heart of the nations is burned. Werner's death due to a mine explosive is the result of disgust between nations that engulf the innocent among all other good deeds.

The metaphor *Fountain of earth* demonstrates the collective memory about war that for the sake of power gain the religious norms get deluded in an atmosphere of violence. Thus the metaphor generates the reminiscence of killing and barbarism during the time of war. The rays of hope are also engulfed by the fountain while leaving the world of French and German people into an awe of astonishment.

In the text the *Forest of dying sunflower* is compared with a *flock of blackbirds* to illustrate the way destruction is created in the world by using science in nuclear weapon inventions. The concept behind Forest of dying sunflowers is the dying of the religious teaching at the time of war. Killing is among the major sins in all religions across the world but during war the religion is forgotten and the religious teachings get defied. People start killing each other due to political motives and personal benefits. This distorted version of life during war is achieved with the massive inventions in science which is later use in the nuclear technology to cause destruction on the earth. Werner visualizes the bombing as "The goddess of History looked down to earth. Only through the hottest fire can purification be achieved. He sees a forest of dying sunflowers he sees a flock of blackbirds explodes out of the tree" (Doerr, 2014, p.15), the humanity is dying at the time of war and forests of humans are burning. Peoples are killing intentionally to show the material power through the help of science and nuclear weapons.

### **Individual Resources**

The metaphor *Forest of dying sunflowers* explicitly indicates the vast destruction of humans during World War II in general and in the city of Saint-Malo in particular. The presentation of holocaust in the text explains the manifestation of brutal ideology at the time of war. Werner is posted to the city of Saint-Malo when he is on duty of German Nazi's. There he sees the elimination and exploitation of life on earth. Peoples are killed mercilessly in abundance. The massive killing during war challenges the religious teachings and questions the basic pillars of scientific knowledge which is considered as a friend of humanity.

All the living creatures and non-living materials are the target of the nuclear bombers. The whole city is burning by the air bombing of Germans. The intentional burning of people in abundance portrays the hidden immoral ideology during war. As the war time generates its own pragmatic and contextual meaning so it disturbed the mental condition of the individuals. The „dying sunflowers“ show that the life is dying with every passing minute on the city of Saint-Malo. The description of dying sunflowers and exploding of blackbirds creates an image about the world where death is looming over the head of all creatures.

### **Social Resources**

The metaphor *Forest of dying sunflowers* in the text depicts the way world is exploited at the time of war. The humans are killed in abundance for the sake of massive killing on earth resulting in the violent deaths of innocent people. It challenges the metanarrative of religion that religious teachings are forgotten at the time of war; while religion expresses the need for a peaceful just society where people are respected and loved for who they are, war treats them like animals to be sacrificed so that the political motives of the elite are achieved. Weapons discharge not only the fire but also the ambience of hatred and fear among one another and among authorities. Werner was forced to join the Nazi force against his will. He wants peace, purity and love around him, but the constant use of power changes his peaceful ideology of mind. His thought shifts to the war efforts that burning the world may heal the world. Marie is hiding in his house when air bombing starts in Saint-Malo. She senses the intensity of nuclear war destruction. Doerr explains the intensity of air strikes as "A corner of the night sky, beyond a wall of trees, blooms red. The sky has become the sea, and the airplanes are hungry fish,

harrying their pray in the dark” (Doerr, 2014, p. 91). The painful and stressful condition of war is hovering over the minds of individuals.

### Conclusion

The massive destruction brought to earth during war not only destroys the material belongings and physical manpower, but also causes the drastic effects on the ideologies of its survivors. People are indulged in the brutal situation to harm one another without any prior consideration. The sufferings brought to the people of Saint-Malo in the text destroys their normative ideologies of a just world resulting in confusion as to what is right and what wrong. This ideological confusion is transferred to the future generations too who carry the legacy of the wounds from which their elders have suffered and hence challenge the scientific/ religious progress of humankind. Thus war challenges the grand institution of science and religion, as the underlying ideologies behind these two grand institutions are used negatively in the selected literary text. The metaphors from the selected text show the ideologies that are confused during War and show the formation of new ideologies that are contrasted with the previous religious and moral ideologies. It is this challenge to the delusion of progress that raises serious concerns regarding the irrational justification of war in the present age.

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