Physical Education, Health and Social Sciences

https://journal-of-social-education.org

E-ISSN: 2958-5996

P-ISSN: 2958-5988

Spatial Marginalization of the Disabled in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais

Haseeb Ul Hassan [1], Dr. Fasih Ur Rehman [2], Sana Iltaf [3]

[1] Visiting Lecturer, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak
[2] Lecturer, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak
[3] Department of English, Visiting Lecturer, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak
Corresponding author email: Haseebkattak799@gmail.com

DOI: https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v3i4.956

Abstract

Disabled individuals often experience forms of spatial marginalization shaped by ableist geographies. This study examines how such marginalization is depicted in Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See (2014) and Alison Gervais's The Silence Between Us (2019), with a particular focus on how disabled protagonists spatially marginalized in space and place where they lived. Using a close textual analysis, the research explores how these characters spatially excluded in ableist geography. The theoretical framework draws on Chouinard's work on disabling geographies, Imrie's conceptualizations of disability and the notion of ableism and ableist geography. The findings demonstrate that ableist geographies not only impose physical barriers but also reinforce discriminatory attitudes, thereby limiting disabled individuals' access to social inclusion and spatial autonomy. By foregrounding these ableist attitude, the study underscores the urgent need to challenge the structures that perpetuate spatial injustice for disabled individuals.

Keywords: Ableist Geography, Spatial marginalization, Disability, Space and Place, Ableism,

Introduction:

The concept of ableism refers to the unique privilege of having an able body. The concept involves discrimination, injustice, and prejudice based on disability. It is the construction of society favoring abled or "normal" people. Ableism is the discriminatory behavior and negative attitude of non-disabled people towards the disabled. The places and spaces built through ableism are known as "ableist geography." Ableist geography refers to the construction of environments or places in which disabled people (special people) have no place and are devalued.

Lennard J. Davis (2006) states, "We live in a world of norms" (Davis, p.3). This statement suggests that disability is not a problem with people but with the norms and standards constructed by society. These norms and standards are created by non-disabled people, highlighting the marginalized position of disabled individuals.

The present study investigates how disabled individuals are spatially marginalized due to their disability in ableist geography in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais.

Disabled people are often spatially marginalized and labeled as "others" in ableist societies. Within the framework of ableist geography, this marginalization becomes even more pronounced. This study investigates how disabled individuals are spatially marginalized by the abled people in the places where the disabled protagonists lived in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais. Although the selected novels have been previously examined through various critical lenses, such as disability discourse,

Neorealism, and psychoanalysis. The researchers have not yet been analyzed the selected texts from the combined perspectives of Disability Studies and Spatiality. This study aims to fill that gap by examines the nature of spatial marginalization of the disabled characters in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais.

Research Objectives:

The present study has the following objective:

- To analyze the nature of spatial marginalization experienced by disabled protagonists in All the Light We Cannot See (2014) by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us (2019) by Alison Gervais.

Research Questions:

The present study has the following question:

- What is the nature of spatial marginalization experienced by disabled protagonists in All the Light We Cannot See (2014) by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us (2019) by Alison Gervais?

The current study is significant because it focuses on how disabled individuals are spatially marginalized in Ableist space and place All the Light We Cannot See (2014) by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us (2019) by Alison Gervais. The study is also significant because it offers a new paradigm to investigate the literary representation of disabled spatial marginalization within the ableist geography.

Theoretical Framework:

There are certain discourses in which disabled people are marginalized, but through ableist geography, disabled individuals are spatially marginalized. The theoretical formulation of the present study is informed through multiple discourses. The present study is based on the theoretical foundations of Making Space for Disabling Differences: Challenging Ableist Geographies, Space, Place and Disability, and The Body, Disability, and Le Corbusier's Conception of the Radiant Environment, as discussed by Chouinard and Rob Imrie, respectively.

The term ableism is defined by Chouinard as the discrimination, preconceptions, and attitudes of society towards disabled individuals that marginalize, suppress, and categorize them as "others" (Chouinard, 1997, p.380). Ableism consists of the rules and regulations in which able-bodied individuals are considered the standard, while disabled bodies are marginalized. Further, Chouinard explains that a society built on the foundation of able-bodiedness tends to diminish the identity of disabled people (Chouinard, 1997, p.380). According to Chouinard (1997), ableist geography refers to those places built on the rules and regulations of normal/able people, favoring those who have no physical disabilities while creating obstacles and barriers for those with disabilities (Chouinard, 1997, p.381).

Imrie further explains that spaces and places are often unfriendly, exclusive, and unfair to disabled people (Imrie 26). "Exclusive" means limited or ignored; "unfair" means inequality; and "unfriendly" means hostile. In this context, spaces and places are often built in such a way that makes disabled people marginalized, limiting their participation and doing injustice to them. For example, exclusivity in the sense that there are no facilities for disabled people in the building makes it hostile for them; injustice in the sense that disabled individuals do not actively participate in the space; and hostility in terms of physical barriers, lacking basic facilities for disabled people. Thus, this kind of geography is known as ableist geography.

Literature Reviews

Ponam Pandit (2019), in her research "A Study of Trauma and Transformation in Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See" (2019), explores the devastating result of World War II that badly affected every aspect of the character's life. The research aims to identify how the gender, age, physical, mental, intellectual, and socio-economic status of a character changed due to the adverse effects of WWII. The significance of the study is that it does not point to any specific community or country. Still, it presents the experience of two child protagonists (Marie-Laure) a French girl, and (Werner Fennig) a German boy. According to the researcher, both the characters experienced war differently because the girl is blind and looks into the war in her memories, and the boy is an orphan who becomes the victim of his circumstances. The research suggests that war creates horrific traumas in the lives of the people.

Jen Mengqi in his research "A Tragedy of War – A Neorealism Interpretation of All the Light We Cannot See" (2023), explores the agony of war in the selected novel. The study aims to show the impacts of war on the characters. It also shows that the characters depict the impacts of war at that time and common social problems during WWII, which are reflected in the novel. The researcher uses Neorealism as a theoretical framework to analyze the characters and themes of the novel. The researcher uses textual analysis and the artistic features of Neorealism as a methodological framework to analyze symbols and characters in the text to show the horrific impact of the war. The study explains that the novel is written using a combination of virtual and real techniques, including the symbol of the "Flame of the Sea." The study argues that the Flame of the Sea is a symbol of human desires that cause war and how people process it (Mengqi, 264). The study concludes that the ultimate result of war is the destruction that seizes the dreams, futures, and lives of people.

Qiyao Dai, in her research "All the Light We Cannot See- A Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," through the Lens of Horney's Anxiety theory, explores the themes of war, fate, hopes, resilience, and human connection. The researcher examines stylistic elements, especially narrative framework and symbolic uses of language in the selected work of Anthony Doer. The study adopted Karen Horney's anxiety theory as a theoretical framework to examine the mental, behavioral, and motivational aspects of the novel main character. This research obtains data from two sources, primary and secondary. The primary data is from the selected work, whereas the secondary data is collected from books, research journals, and Articles. The researcher uses textual analysis as a methodological framework of the study to analyze the community's emphatic behavior toward each other regardless of their gender, ideology, culture, and nationality. The study maintains that both external and internal factors lead to the anxiety of the main character. Anxiety is defined as a sentimental reply to danger followed by a physical response such as an increase in heartbeat, shivering, and sweltering, which may lead to death.

Erin M. Faeth, in her essay Agency, Power, and Disability: A Textual Analysis of The Silence Between Us (2021), investigates the struggle of the disabled character in Gervais's The Silence Between Us. The study foregrounds textual analysis as a research methodology to explore how disabled characters' sense of agency and power motivates them to shape their own personalities and lives. The research is based on the theoretical formulation of Critical Disability Theory to investigate the way that directs the primary character's interaction with abled peers (Faeth, 2). The study focuses on the notion that disability is merely a socially constructed phenomenon rather than the occurrence of a physical impairment. Faeth maintains that the character Maya is not disabled because of her impairment; instead, her disability results from her actions within a particular context (Faeth, 7). The study concludes that disability is a social construction of society, and the sense of agency and power helps in navigation.

Research Methodology:

The present study includes a qualitative research method. This study textually analyzes the selected texts; All the Light We Cannot See, and The Silence Between Us of Anthony Doerr and Alison Gervais to show how the disabled protagonist constitutes the sense of space and place through their senses in the selected texts. This study uses the textual analysis method of Allan McKee as a research methodology to interpret dialogues, scenes, paragraphs, and chapters in the selected texts to explore the spatial marginalization of the disabled protagonist in Anthony Doerr's The Silence Between Us and Alison Gervais' The Silence Between US. This research analyzes the selected writings of the novelists, focusing on the ableist geography of able-bodied people through a careful examination of Ableism of the selected texts All the Light We Cannot See (2014) by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between US (2019) by Alison Gervais, by identifying themes such as spatial marginalization.

Discussion:

This research foregrounds the analysis of spatial marginalization of the disabled characters in Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See (2014) and Alison Gervais's The Silence Between Us (2019). This study also does an analysis of the negative attitudes and discriminated behaviors of the abled characters towards the disabled protagonists in the selected texts. This section provides a detailed analysis of the disabled characters and how they are treated and spatially marginalized in Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See and Alision Gervais's The Silence Between Us. As in All the Light We Cannot See, the protagonist Marie-Laure is a Sixteen years old blind girl who lived in Paris during World War II. She is spatially marginalized by the abled people in Paris and Saint-Malo during her journey of life. Similarly, in The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais, the protagonist Maya is a young deaf girl who lost her hearing sense at a young age. She gets admission to the school where all the students are abled. So, she faces the consequence of being disabled and often discriminated, faces a negative attitude, and is spatially marginalized by the abled people in the school place.

Our society is often built in favor of normal people (i.e., people who do not have any disability), and the disabled have limited access to everything in society. Disabled people are often marginalized through various things, such as being treated unjustly and having negative attitudes toward them, but most probably, they have limited access to the spaces and places. They are often spatially marginalized. They are not allowed to certain spaces and places. The abled people have confined their boundaries, and they are allowed to only certain places.

Chouinard defines the term Ableism that refers to the discrimination, negative attitude, and injustice to the disabled by the abled people. (Chouinard, 380) In other sense, disabled people are often judgmental and considered as inferior to the people having no disability. This ableist attitude is rooted in the society that makes the abled people superior and treats unequally the disabled and marginalized people having some kind of disability. The abled people have an idea that normal people are the ideal form of human while the disabled are the disfigured normal state of humans. The ableist attitude of the abled creates obstacles for the people having disability due to which they are not fully actively engaged in the society and not actively participated in the society. So, society having abled people are powerful and have a negative attitude toward the disabled and make the decisions about the disabled; they often construct the infrastructure, buildings, spaces, and places in favor of the people having no disability. Therefore, the geography or places that are constructed in favor or give benefits to the abled people are known as Ableist geography or ableist places. In other sense, ableist geography is the construction of the environment or place in which disabled people are neglected, and spatially marginalized. In ableist geography, disabled people are often spatially sidelined, and they are often given no value. They are excluded from the society and have no access to certain places. In ableist geography, the

infrastructure of the places is designed in such a way due to which disabled people face difficulties in accessing those places. These barriers may be physical barriers that cause disabled people to be spatially constrained to limited places. In ableist geography, the disabled are constrained into limited places. In other sense, disabled people have no place in ableist geography. For instance, in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais, the authors show the spatial marginalization and the prejudiced attitude of the abled characters towards the disabled protagonists Marie-Laure and Maya in the selected text. In Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See, after the attack of Nazis on the Paris, Marie-Laure and her father migrated to Saint-Malo, where they lived. In Saint-Malo Marie-Laure is spatially restricted by her father to one room, not because of anything else but due to the ableist attitude of the abled person as her father was a normal person having no disability. He has a fear that if she goes outside, she will be harmed by the Nazi's forces. She wanted to go to the Sea by telling her father, "When Can I go to the Sea." And her father told her, "Not today." After that, she asked him, "Can't we go for a walk around the block?" and He said, "It's too dangerous". (Doerr, 2014, p. 145). It shows Mari-Laure's spatial marginalization, as she is limited to a single bedroom by her father. Further, this explores the limited access of the Marie-Laure to the outside places. Here, in these lines, the father of Marie-Laure has a prejudiced perception about the disabled that it will be harmful and will be difficult for Marie-Laure to go out of the room in an ableist place.

Further, as in ableist geography, there is no facility for disabled people, and the disabled are spatially marginalized and do not fully participate in society (Warf, 2006, p. 110). For instance, Marie-Laure was not allowed to go outside because there was no space for her to participate in the community and interact with the people. She was spatially marginalized as she asked her father, "Please, Papa, Can't I go out." (Doerr, 2014, p. 150). It also shows her dependency on the abled father in this place because she cannot go outside without the permission of her father until and unless her father readies her dummy model. She was totally dependent on the model. In the next chapter, Time of the Ostriches, she was still spatially marginalized and was restricted in her Great Aunt Etienne's House until and unless she goes back to Paris as the author describes, "Still she does not go outside" (Doerr, 2014, p. 166). In these lines, Marie-Laure is restrained into Etienne's house because Saint-Malo is a new place for her, and She doesn't navigate the environment, and the structure of the building is made in such a way that she cannot navigate the environment. The Saint-Malo city is new for her. In addition, Marie-Laure always refused to go outside by her father because the abled Nazis had a prejudiced and negative attitude toward disabled people. As she is disabled, her father has a fear that she will probably be "taking the blind girl" by the German force as they have a negative attitude towards disabled people by calling them "gimps' (Doerr, 2014, p. 167). The "gimps" is a slang term refers to the person with limp disability, that is used by the people of the Nazis towards the people having disability. This line shows the spatial position of the blind Marie-Laure in the society because the Nazis have an ideology to take and kill the blind people before the people who are limp by the leg. It shows that Marie-Laure was discriminated on the basis of her blindness. Further, when Marie-Laure's father wanted to go back to Paris for his work, then Marie-Laure wanted to get permission to go outside by asking "Can I go out while you are gone? Papa.?" But her father said that you will go outside "Once I back." (Doerr, 2014, p. 190). This statement suggests that Marie-Laure is spatially marginalized as she was restricted in Ettienne's house and was not allowed to the public spaces, although she spent three months in the Saint-Malo but still, she was spatially marginalized and couldn't actively participate in the place. These dialogues also show the dependency of the disabled on the abled people because without her father's back, she didn't go outside. It means that she wasn't allowed by her father alone in the Saint-Malo. Moreover, when the Great Grandmother of the Marie-Laure died, She was again restricted to the house and spatially marginalized by Uncle Etienne who prohibited her from the beach as Etienne says "You mustn't go anywhere else. You mustn't go to

the beaches." (Doerr, 2014, p. 323). These lines show the dependent and spatially marginalized position of Marie-Laure in Saint-Malo because she always goes outside with the great-grandmother, Madame Manec. When she died, Marie-Laure was again restricted to the house and spatially marginalized and refrained into the house. Etienne limits the geographical boundary of Marie-Laure by not allowing her into the beaches. It also shows the dependency of the disabled on the abled people because Marie-Laure is not allowed to go to the beaches alone. These lines also show the ableist attitude of Etienne towards Marie-Laure because Etienne believed that she was blind and would be harmed by the Nazi's forces.

Similarly, in Alison Gervais's novel The Silence Between Us, the protagonist Maya, who is a deaf girl, taking admission to a hearing school. She studied in a school where all the students were normal, having no disability or impairment. She has faced a lot of difficulties in experiencing the ableist place. During her study years in the hearing school, she faces spatial marginalization and is considered as inferior and devalued; it's like she has no place in the hearing school.

According to Rob Imrie, the ableist geography or place is structured in such a way that limits the boundaries of disabled people and often makes them spatially marginalized by not having any aural or visual signs due to which they are unable to interact with the people in that ableist normative geography. (Imrie, 18). This statement illustrates that visual and aural cues play an important role for disabled people in the place in which they live. Disabled people are always dependent on these signs and indicators to actively participate in the space and place. However, in ableist geography, space and place have no such clues, which makes disabled people spatially marginalized, and they are unable to access certain spaces. It impacts their lives, and they don't interact with the people in the society in which they live. It rendered the accessibility of disabled people to things, spaces, and places. In the novel The Silence Between US, the hearing school is a place that is built only for the people having no aural impairment. It is a place where Maya, a deaf girl, is marginalized and treated differently and dependent on others. When Maya, a deaf girl taking admission in hearing school, she came to hearing school with her mother. She had not stepped foot in hearing school for almost five years. She thinks that she will be a new, strange girl who is dependent on the "interpreter all the day" (Gervais, 2019, p. 1). It shows Maya's dependent position that she will always be dependent on the interpreter, the abled person, whenever she studies in the hearing school because the hearing school is an ableist place where all the students are hearing and have no aural impairment. So, whenever she studies in the hearing school, she will be dependent on the normal people. Further, in hearing school, she thinks that she will face difficulties in interacting with the other students in the school as she thinks, "and now I was going to have to resort to lipreading and struggling to follow basic conversation" (Gervais, 2019, p. 2). It shows that in the hearing school, it will be difficult for her to actively participate in the events that will occur in the hearing school and will be hard to get involved in the interaction with other fellows in the hearing school as the hearing school is a place where all the staffs and students are abled people.

In ableist geography, disabled people are excluded by the normal people in a place, and they are often ignored and devalued, as Warf stated that they are excluded and devalued in mainstream society (Warf, 2006, p. 110). In The Silence Between Us, Maya is ignored by Nina and Beau, who are the class fellows in the Pratt hearing school, when they are on the way to the AP US history class as Maya narrates "I could read the lips, but because neither of them included me in the conversation." (Gervais, 2019, p. 16). It shows the prejudiced and ableist attitude of the Nina and Beaue towards them that they are talking to each other and ignoring the Mays because she is not hearing to them. Here, Maya only sees that they are talking to each other but is ignored by Nina and Beaue. It portrays that she was excluded from the conversation and difficult to interact with the people in the hearing school by "not included me in the conversation" (Gervais, 2019, p. 16). Maya felt exhausted from the biasing attitude of other students. At first, other students have

a strange reaction to her when they know about her deafness. As she assumes that Nina told Beaue that she is deaf and Beau mocks that "You can talk" (Gervais, 2019, p. 20). It shows the biasing attitude of the Beaue towards Maya because they believe that hearing school is only for hearing students and has no place for Maya, who is a deaf girl. After that, she is fierce because of her strange reaction to Beau and says "Of course I can talk! A lot of deaf are oral, but it's our choice whether we want to use our voices." (Gervais, 2019, p. 20). These lines by Maya portray the predetermining attitude of the abled people. Beau and another student, Jackson, mocked her with her voice as she was unable to hear them, and they behaved strangely. Therefore, Maya was angry with them and tended to justify her disability by saying that many people who are deaf can also talk. It does not mean that she is deaf, so she can't talk. She further illustrates her argument here that deaf people also have the freedom of choice of whether they can use their sound or not. After experiencing their first day at Pratt Hearing School, she knows the negative behavior of the students towards her because of her deafness. The next day, when Kathleen signed her that tomorrow was the new day at school and she signed her back that I knew, but she forgot the differently treated attitude of the hearing people in the school as she thinks, "BUT I FORGET HEARING PEOPLE WEIRD WITH DEAF." (Gervais, 2019, p. 22). Here, Maya is frustrated and knows the negative attitude of the abled people in society. She knew that people who have no hearing impairment have a very strange and uncanny attitude towards deaf people, as she experienced that on the first day of the hearing school. This line by Maya shows the gap between the deaf communities and the hearing people in the society. She experienced that the hearing people considered the deaf as "others' and treated them "differently." In a nutshell, it shows the inferior position of the Maya and the biasing attitude of the hearing people towards the deaf. After two weeks in the hearing school, Maya wanted to be admitted to Cartwright College, which is near her home, and she would be able to help her mom at home. But this college is also for the hearing people. Maya, after experiencing in the Pratt school has doubted and internalized that hearing people will not accept her because of her deafness. As there is a gap between hearing and deaf people, it will be difficult for her to communicate at the Cartwright college. As she applied for the Cartwright College, Kathleen signed that "NEED NOT TO WORRY, BELIEVE THEY ACCEPT YOU". (Gervais, 2019, p. 32). It shows that in the ableist place, people with a disability, like Maya, who is deaf, have no place and are excluded from the society in which they live. The phrase shows the spatially marginalized position of the Maya that she doesn't know whether Cartwright College will accept her admission or not. It means that Maya is doubting about the acceptance of her identity that whether the hearing people will accept her as deaf or not.

In a place where hearing people are considered as standard and prioritized by others. Maya was spatially marginalized due to her hearing loss, and she was treated differently by the other students, and no one wanted to establish a connection with her. After one month in the hearing school, only Nina had communication with Maya as she narrates, "Nobody apart from Nina is interested in getting to know me" (Gervais, 2019, p. 45). it illustrates that Maya was ignored and neglected by the other fellows in the school. It shows the spatial identity of Maya that no one wanted to know her in hearing school, and nobody gave any importance to her because the fellows treated her differently because of her deafness. This line also shows Maya's inferior position in hearing school as she was given no attention by the other students in hearing school. Further, She narrates that she has faced communication barriers when she talks to the other students as she can't hear and speak. Also, she was spatially marginalized by the other fellows in the school by "kept their distance" (Gervais, 2019, p. 45). It shows Maya's spatially marginalized position as she was always ignored and sidelined by others in the school. It makes her uncomfortable in the school and she feels that I didn't belong to that place. The hearing community and the deaf community are two different worlds, and the deaf people are treated as inferior and tagged as other. Maya has internalized this thing in her mind that Beau, who is a normal person, has a

different world than her due to her deafness, as she thought that “his world and my own belonged to the two different solar systems” (Gervais, 2019, p. 46). This line shows the positionality of Maya. Maya has in her mind that Beaue and she have a different world because she is deaf. She also knew that hearing people treated deaf people not as well as she thought. So, she didn’t want to establish a relationship because she thought that they belonged to two different places in the world; one is a place for deaf people, and the other is for hearing people.

Another example from the novel The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais is of the ableist space and place where there is no facility for the disabled people. The hospital in Englemann, where there was no interpreter to interpret the sign language that Mays used. An incident happened when Connor, Maya's brother, couldn’t breathe when they were alone in the home. She takes Connor to the hospital. However, no one in the hospital seems to hear her, as she describes that “no one seemed to hear me” (Gervais, 2019, p. 112). It suggests that the hospital is built in the favor of hearing people, having no communication facility for the deaf people as Maya was ignored and no one noticed her because she was deaf and mute, and no one gave importance to her. In a hospital, there was a technological system called the VRI (Video Remote Interpreting) that was used for the people to communicate with deaf people, but it was broken as the nurse said, “Our VRI seems to be broken” (Gervais, 2019, p. 113). It shows the dependency of the Maya on technology and other people. As the VRI machine was broken, she was not able to communicate with the nurse to tell her about her brother. In the next few hours, she texted Beaue to come to the hospital as she was unable to communicate with the nurses and doctors. At this moment she was obsessed by her life with the deafness as she stated “ I just wanted to know what was going on without the stupid interpreter” (Gervais, 2019, p. 116). Maya is totally dependent on Beaue and technology in the hospital. All she knew about her brother's condition in the hospital through Beau. So, she doesn’t want to be dependent on the interpreter in the hospital, but the hospital is a place where there is no technology to assist her and establish communication. It shows that in an ableist place, Maya, the deaf girl, will always be dependent on abled people like Beaue. After the counseling of her brother Connor in the hospital, she imagines her dream to become R-T (Respiratory Therapist) in her child. As she was unable to communicate with the doctors when her brother almost died, she imagined how she would treat the kids when she was R-T as she narrates, “HOW I HELP KIDS WITH SAME PROBLEM IF I CAN’T COMMUNICATE.?” (Gervais, 2019, p. 121). It shows the hindrance in the path of her dream because of her deafness. She is living in an ableist place, and it will be difficult for her to help kids in the hospital where she can’t communicate because the hospital is established in favor of the abled people. So, she realized by imagining that her dream to become R-T has vanished because of her deafness as she is not helping her brother, then she will not treat kids in a better way because of her hearing impairment. In a nutshell, the hospital is a place where Maya is ignored, and it is difficult for her to communicate because of her deafness. It is the disability that comes in the way of her dream of becoming R-T. While studying Englemann at school, Maya is discriminated against and faces the prejudiced and negative attitude of the people in the school. Maya narrates her experience in Englemann that people in Englemann do not welcome her and have shown a weird attitude towards her as she says, “someone getting weirded out for some reason or another because of my lack of hearing” (Gervais, 2019, p. 173). After that, she says that most people do not say “Hello” or “Good morning” (Gervais, 2019, p. 173) to her on the first day of school. Some people at Englemann started staring when she was changing the “batteries” (Gervais, 2019, p. 173) of the hearing aids. It shows that Maya at Englemann was treated differently because of her disability of hearing, as she was not hearing. Here, Maya thinks about the first day of the hearing school in which she was treated as others and faced the strange attitudes of the people by not welcoming her. She also stated that outside the hearing school even in the market when she was helping her mom “grocery shopping” (Gervais, 2019, p. 173) the people have a pity look on her, which was

hated by Maya. This means that not only in the school but also outside the school, she faced the prejudiced looks of the people.

According to Tom Shakespeare, people having disability faced disadvantages in the areas of employment. (Shakespeare, 80). In other sense, Shakespeare meant that in the places of employment, disabled people are often ignored or given low wages to them. It means that disabled people often face discrimination and have negative attitudes because normal people have beliefs that people with disability have no value or benefit to society in employment. Shakespeare further illustrates this point by pointing out the statistical data that one-third of disabled people's ability to work is influenced by their physical impairment. In a nutshell, people having a physical disability are not only excluded in public places but are also excluded and devalued in the working places as well. Further, people having a disability are marginalized and given no importance to them. For instance, in the novel The Silence Between US, Maya also faces discrimination and is neglected by the people when it comes to finding jobs. She was rejected by the companies because she was deaf and needed an interpreter. When Maya applied for the Steaming Bean company and was enthusiastically waiting for their email, although she was dependent on the interpreter during an interview, but she hadn't yet hired an interpreter from the local agencies to help her in an interview. But she was judged on the basis of her deafness. as they excuse that "they'd filled the position because they didn't want pay for an interpreter" (Gervais, 2019, p. 169). This line explores that Maya was not hired by the Steaming Bean company because they were unable to pay for an interpreter as it was costly for them to hire an interpreter for Maya. It means she was judged on the basis of her deafness. The company has already hired another abled person because it is worth hiring an abled person rather than a deaf Maya. After rejected by the Steaming Bean, Maya was upset and was worried about herself as she was "not hire" and "deaf" (Gervais, 2019, p. 171). Maya believes that she was rejected not because of other reasons but because she was deaf. It may be because the abled people have low expectations from the disabled people in working place. So, Maya was not hired by Steaming Bean as she was deaf and could not meet the standards of the company.

Furthermore, in getting admission to Cartwright College, she faced the discrimination and biased attitude of the college because they could not give admission to the Maya without an interpreter. As her mom signed "COLLEGE NEED PROOF YOU DEAF" and she "slipped both my hearing aids off and set them on Nadine's desk signing, HERE" (Gervais, 2019, p. 179). The phrase indicates that the college needs proof of her disability; otherwise, they will not hire an interpreter for her. But the reaction of Maya is just symbolic to justify her identity as a deaf person. She was also facing marginalization at the college during the admission process as well because the college didn't hire an interpreter for her. In educational places, there is no facility for the deaf people to hire an interpreter because it will either be costly for them or they are considered as other and given less value to them as Nadine signed to Maya "BUT NOT A LOT O-F INTERPRETER HERE FOR EDUCATION" (Gervais, 2019, p. 179). It shows that the college hadn't hired an interpreter for her, and it also portrays the dependent position of Maya on the interpreter, who is an abled person. It reflects that in educational places the disabled Maya has no place in the college in which all the students are abled and hearing without an interpreter. As a result, she will not get admission in the college.

Chouinard further elaborates the notion of ableism. Ableism consists of the rules and regulations in the society through which the abled bodies are considered as standards while the disabled are considered as others and marginalized in the ableist environment. (Chouinard, 380). In other words, in ableist geography the ableist considered normal people as superior and they are the ideal state of the human. From the statement above, from other, I meant the spatial others. In other sense, the disabled are treated differently than the people having no disability. Disabled in

ableist geography or ableist places are spatially marginalized and considered them as spatially others. In the novel, All the Light We Cannot See, Anthony Doerr's protagonist, Marie-Laure, is treated differently and spatially marginalized. She was not allowed by the abled characters in the text. For instance, when Marie-Laure goes to the seaside with Etienne but is not allowed to go to the beaches. Marie-Laure also endorsed her spatial position in the ableist place as well. She also recognized her geographical boundaries by "not allowed on the beaches." (Doerr, 2014, p. 415). It shows the restriction of Marie-Laure in Saint-Malo beaches because the beaches were controlled by the Nazis forces. The beaches also symbolize the expression of freedom, but she was not allowed to experience this freedom because of her disability, as Marie-Laure was also restrained in the house by her great Uncle Ettienne and was alienated by her blindness. This restriction of beaches also added a new layer of suppression, confined her physical movement, and restricted her from interacting with other people during the war. In the next few lines in the novel All the Light We Cannot See, Marie-Laure aligns her geographical boundaries and her spatial positionality in the place in which she resides as she says "I never should have gone outside." (Doerr, 2014, p.416). In this line, Marie-Laure talks about her spatial position during wartime in Saint-Malo, as she was restricted to her great uncle's house and not allowed to go to the beaches. She always lived inside the house because of her blindness and to keep herself safe and protected during the war. It also shows the "inferior" position of Marie-Laure as well because it was believed that due to her blindness, she would not do anything, and she had no value during the war.

Rob Imrie stated that disabled people faced challenges in finding their way in the place because the place is constructed on the norms of able people, and public and home spaces are built in such a way that disabled people have no access to it. (Imrie, 17). the statement suggests that our spaces and places are built in favor of able-bodied people without considering physically disabled people. For example, our public spaces, like streets, markets, etc., are not built to meet the needs of disabled people. In short, our built space and place cannot fulfill the needs of disabled people. For instance, In chapter Forty Minutes in the novel All the Light We Cannot See signifies the limitation of the Marie-Laure. The title suggests Marie-Laure's marginalized position and her dependency on others because of her blindness. In this Chapter, Anthony Doerr portrays that Marie-Laure was missing in Saint-Malo city during the occupation by Nazis Germani as Marie Laure was allowed to go outside on the permission of Etienne but in the allowing times of forty minutes. Etienne and Madame Ruelle become worried about her as Madame Ruelle asks about Marie-Laure from Etienne that "Vermilion spots open and close in his vision." Marie-Laure, she is not" (Doerr, 2014, p.421). she doesn't return to home after forty minutes as Etienne's questioned "Forty-One minutes.?" (Doerr, 2014, p.421). It shows the dependency and spatially marginalized position of the Marie-Laure. Marie-Laure was not permitted to go anywhere alone. Although, if she was allowed in a specific period of time, she would be counted because the space and places were built in favor of abled people in the city of Saint-Malo. It is difficult for Marie-Laure to find a way to navigate the space and places. Therefore, Marie-Laure faced the consequences and was missing in the city of Saint-Malo. It also shows the prejudiced attitude of Uncle Etienne and Madame Ruelle as well because they believe that she can't navigate the space and place in Saint-Malo and it will be harmful to her safety. It shows that due to her blindness, Marie-Laure was restricted and dependent on the abled people, such as Great Uncle Etienne and Madame Ruelle. So, their prejudice and protective attitude further limited the geographical boundaries and spatially marginalized the Marie-Laure. After the missing of Marie-Laure and finding her after searching for her in Saint-Malo, in the next chapter, due to her protective concerns, Etienne further restricts Marie-Laure and strictly restrains her in the house. As Etienne says "he never should have let her". "He says she can no longer go outside" (Doerr, 2014, p.427). These lines show the superior position of Etienne, who is an abled body, and Marie-Laure is inferior because the decision not to allow her into a public place was solely taken by Etienne. Because of her blindness, Etienne

restricts the physical movement and interaction of the Marie-Laure because she cannot navigate the sense of space and place in the ableist place of Saint-Malo. After the tragic incident of missing Marie-Laure in the city of Saint-Malo, Etienne is more concerned about her as "Never should have put her in danger" (Doerr, 2014, p.427). From these lines, I meant that Etienne is more concerned about Marie-Laure, but this protective behavior makes her restricted and even more spatially marginalized her. This also shows that Etienne's decision not to allow her into public places is in the hands of Etienne. This means that Marie-Laure's destiny is decided by the Great Uncle Etienne, who is not disabled.

Moreover, as Chouinard explores, disabled people in society are often alienated in the society. (Chouinard, 1997, p.380). This statement suggests that people having a disability are often excluded from society, and they become isolated. They are not even recognized in the society. for instance, Doerr explores in the novel All the Light We Cannot See that people with disability become homeless and no one supports them, as Marie-Laure is a "disabled girl with no home and no parents." (Doerr, 2014, p.493). This line reflects Marie-Laure's thoughts of Marie-Laure about her being alienated and having no parents because of her blindness. All the consequences she faced in Saint-Malo and Paris by Marie-Laure due to her blindness, and she was alienated by restricted into a single house and were not allowed her and have limited access to the space and place that she wanted to go. When Marie-Laure becomes blind, and doesn't sense the space and place in Paris and Saint-Malo, her father in Paris builds a mini model of the city while her great uncle built a miniature dummy model of the city Saint-Malo which helps Marie-Laure in navigating the space and place, streets, houses, and buildings. This miniature model of the Paris City symbolizes her disability and the dependent position of the Marie-Laure. This miniature model of the city also symbolizes the spatial marginalization of Marie-Laure because her father limits her access, and she can only navigate those spaces and places that her father wants. At the beginning of the novel All the Light We Cannot See, there is a low table "covered with a model." "The model is a miniature of the city and contains a scale replica of the hundreds of houses and shops and hotels within its walls" (Doerr, 2014, p.5). These lines show the dummy model of the city in which Marie-Laure lived with her father. This miniature model of the city contains houses, buildings, shops, and hotels so that Marie-Laure can use other senses to experience the place and navigate through various spaces and places in the city. This replica model of the city was built by her father, who is an abled person. Although this model can help Marie-Laure to navigate and experience different houses, streets, and shops but, it also imposes restrictions on the physical movement of the Marie-Laure. This model limits the geographical boundaries of the Marie-Laure as she can have only access to those spaces and places that her father wants as "it is unpainted, imperfect, striped with a half-dozen different types of woods, and missing details." (Doerr, 2014, p.187). It shows that the real place has more things, but the model does not include many streets and spaces. i.e., she is unable to access the spaces that are missing in the dummy model. It reflects the dependent position of Marie-Laure on her father's model of the city.

This model also symbolizes Marie-Laure's inferior position, as when VolkHeimer, the German sergeant, comes to her house in Saint-Malo, she hiding from her because she has a sea of flames, but when Volkheimer sees the miniature model of the city, he knows every movement of the Marie-Laure because her geographical boundaries are limited and she is not accessible to every place in the city such as, "Is it a Saint-Malo.?. The officer bends forward and looms over the miniature city" (Doerr, 2014, p.464). Further, Volkheimer looks into the mini model of the city, gazes on the model, and says "And only I know where it is. Which presents a problem for you. Is it here or here or here or here.?". (Doerr, 2014, p.464). These lines by Volkheimer suggest that the model portrays the subordinate position of Marie-Laure. Volkheimer, having no disability, can move anywhere in Saint-Malo, but Maire-Laure has only access to the places that are confined in the model. So, this model makes her inferior and does not have equal accessibility to every place

in Saint-Malo. It means that the physical movement of Marie-Laure is controlled by the ableist people in the selected text. Further, this miniature model of the city of Saint-Malo symbolizes the disability and the spatially marginalized position of the protagonist' Marie-Laure. After WWII, Maire-Laure came back to her hometown, Paris, and started working in the museum. Jutta's Pfennig Werner sister came to meet her to return the miniature model of the Saint-Malo city. As Marie-Laure sees the model again in Paris, it reminds her of the dependent, suppressed, and spatial marginalized position of the Marie-Laure as "it feels as if this woman has a dropped a molten kernel of memory into her hands." (Doerr, 2014, p. 514). This line metaphorically suggests their painful memories of her dependent position in Saint-Malo. It reflects the memory that shaped her life of her. After that, Jutta says to Marie-Laure, "I wanted you to have the little house. Better with you than me" (Doerr, 2014, p. 516). In this line, Jutta shows her the dependent and spatially marginalized position of her in the society. She was always triggered by the people to feel that she is disabled and have an inferior position. After World War II, she came back to Paris, but she was always recognized for her disability, that she is blind as Jutta told her that it is better that this model is with you. It also means that she has some geographical boundaries, into which she was allowed. It shows the limited space and place that were aligned by the abled people in the place.

Another spatial symbol is the place of the "Beach." It holds a symbolic meaning of freedom and desires of Marie-Laure, but she has no access to the beaches as it was in control of the Nazis, German forces, and the abled people. It is the place where Marie-Laure's visual impairment doesn't restrain the boundaries to interact. The openness of the beaches is opposite to Etienne's house restriction in which she lives. Therefore, she wanted to go to beaches to enjoy her life without any restrictions as she says, "You mustn't go to the beaches." (Doerr, 2014, p.283) This shows that she has no access to the beaches. In other words, she has no right to fully enjoy her life and freedom of her own choice because she is visually impaired.

The sea of Flame is another significant symbol that symbolizes the protagonist Marie-Laure's disability and the power she wants to hold. Whenever she holds the Sea of Flame in her hand, she is hiding it from other people so that no one can see the Sea of Flame. On one occasion, when German forces attacked her house in Saint-Malo, she hid it in her palm. Moreover, the Sea of Flames also signifies the power that she wanted to hold because, due to her blindness, she was always dependent on others such as her father, Great uncle, and Great grandmother. Her life is navigated by other people, and she is considered as inferior. Therefore, she wanted to hold her fate so that she could make decisions and make herself independent in the society in which she lives. Therefore, whenever she holds the Sea of Flames in her hand, she symbolically experiences the power and feelings that she has control over her life and feels she is superior.

Similarly, in The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais, When Maya got admission to the Englemann hearing school, she already knew that she would face the difficulties in the school. She meets with the principal, teachers, and interpreter in the school. The school district had arranged for an interpreter to navigate the school for Maya. As she narrates, "My interpreter will be the one introducing me to people, communicating with and voicing for me with teachers." It shows that Maya in the hearing school will be totally dependent on the interpreter. It portrays that Maya, a deaf girl, will always be dependent on the abled people in the school. She thoughts that whether she will go, the interpreter will be with her, and he/ she will introduce her to the others and help in communicating with others in the hearing school; otherwise, without an interpreter, she will be marginalized and will not actively participate in events that will occur in the school. In short, Maya is a deaf girl; she is dependent on the interpreter. This dependency on the interpreter' Kathleen, is further shown in chapter 16 as she has a presentation and she needs an interpreter to deliver her presentation to the audience as she narrates, "My Classmates might not be interested in the presentation, but Kathleen would be" (Gervais. 2019, p.96). Here, Maya thought that Kathleen is the only person who uses and understand her language. The other students

didn't understand sign language, so she thought that my presentation would be only understood by Kathleen. It shows that Maya doesn't belong to this hearing school because she has faced the difficulty of delivering her message to the audience. After that, Gervais explores the spatial identity of the Maya in a hearing school. When Maya was coloring her self-portrait, she questioned herself that, "Who am I right now.?" (Gervais, 2019, p.50). It shows that Maya doubts her identity in the hearing school. She feels a sense of identity crisis as she doesn't even know who she is. She has a positive view about the hearing community, but after living in it, she says she "didn't belong in anymore" (Gervais, 2019, p.50). It explores the blurred identity of the Maya in the hearing school by not recognizing and being not given importance by the people.

Furthermore, Maya falls in love with Beau, and she doesn't want to change herself for the hearing people. She always wanted Beau to accept her identity as a deaf girl. Therefore, Beau is struggling to understand sign language. But Maya and Beau both belong to different worlds. Maya belongs to the deaf community, while Beau belongs to the hearing community. So, there is always a difference between them because hearing people are considered superior and deaf people are inferior, and they always find struggle to establish a connection. It means that there is always a communication gap between them as Maya states "The communication barrier between us, no matter how hard Beau was working to pick up sign language," "but it had been struggling for both of us" (Gervais, 2019, p.124). These lines show the difference between the worlds of Maya and Beau. The phrase "struggle for both of us" means that it will be very hard for Beau to accept the identity of the Maya with her deafness. She always struggles to find herself in the hearing community and wants to be accepted by the hearing people. Similarly, for Beau, who belongs to the hearing community, it's very hard to accept the identity of the Maya.

The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais is full of symbols to portray Maya's disabled identity and shows her spatially marginalized position in the places where she lived and studied. In school, she is making a self-portrait, but because of her deafness and the use of hearing aids, she is unable to complete it. This incomplete self-portrait symbolizes the spatially marginalized position in the ableist geography. She also does not know what color should be added to her portrait because of the hearing aid in her ear; it shows her acceptance of the ableist geography. Overall, the self-portrait refers to her disability, spatially marginalized position, identity with a disability, and the acceptance of herself in the ableist geography. The neon blue colors hearing aids in the person's hands as she narrates "hand holding neon blue hearing aids" (Gervais, 2019, p.86) symbolizes her disability that she wanted to remove and also refers to that she wanted to hide her disability: deafness from the world in which she lives. In other sense, the hearing aids the person is holding in her hand refers to the identity of deafness that is always with her, and holding the hearing aids in her hand means that she wants to remove this identity and wants to experience her life in the ableist geography in which she is free and no limitation on her. "The messy outline" (Gervais, 2019, p. 86) portrays the imperfection and the marginalized position of herself in an ableist place. It means that Maya is not accepted by the abled people with her disability. Her identity is not complete, and she lives in a spatially marginalized position in ableist geography.

Maya was in love with Beau, and after spending time with Beau. But still, in her home, there is a self-portrait that she made from the homework for Ms. Philips's art class is hanging as she narrates, "My self-portrait from Ms. Philip's art class, still hanging in the living room" (Gervais, 2019, p. 194). This self-portrait at the entrance of her home shows the disability and marginalized position of her in the ableist place. Although she is living in a community of hearing people but, she has not been accepted by the abled people in the community and is spatially marginalized by them. Therefore, her self-portrait of her always reminds her that she is disabled and deaf. It shows the marginalized position of her in the ableist place of Colorado and the disabled identity that she always has with herself.

Conclusion

The present study is based upon the disability studies along with the theoretical framework of spatiality studies. The present research is set out to examines the analysis of the disabled protagonists' spatial position within the ableist geography in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais. The present study explores the spatial marginalization of the disabled characters Marie-Laure and Maya in the ableist space and place. Also, this study explores that in ableist spaces and places that are created in favor of abled people and spatially marginalized the disabled characters in the selected texts, due to which the disabled characters feel outsideness in the places where they are spatially marginalized. The present study began with the ableist space and places where the disabled characters Marie-Laure and Maya are spatially marginalized in All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr and The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais. This spatial marginalization of the disabled character in the ableist place leads to emotional detachment from the surrounding space and place where they live.

The future researches can also explores the existing texts in several meaningful directions such as, to comparative studies of the disability studies across the cultural and linguistics contexts. This study further recommends to explores the selected texts All the Light We Cannot See (2014) and The Silence Between Us (2019) from the intersection of gender and disability that whether the spatial exclusion of the disabled is also based on the gender identity.

WORK CITED

Chouinard, V. A. “Making Space for Disabling Differences: Challenging Ableist Geographies.” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vol. 15, no. 4, 1997, pp. 379–390.

Dai, Q. (2024). All the Light We Cannot See-A Community with a Shared Future for Mankind Through the Lens of Horney's Anxiety Theory. Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media, 59, 167-172.

Doerr, A. All the Light We Cannot See: A Novel. Scribner, 2014.

Davis, L. J. (Ed.). (2017). The disability studies reader (5th ed.). Routledge.

Faeth, E. M. “Agency, Power, and Disability: A Textual Analysis of The Silence Between Us.” Children’s Literature in Education, vol. 52, 2021, pp. 433–448.

Gervais, A. The Silence Between Us. Blink, 2019.

Imrie, R. “The Body, Disability and Le Corbusier's Conception of the Radiant Environment.” Mind and Body Spaces, edited by R. Butler and H. Parr, Routledge, 1999, pp. 45–67.

Mengqi, J. “The Tragedy of War: A Neorealism Interpretation of All the Light We Cannot See.” International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, vol. 8, no. 3, 2023, pp. 262.

Pandit, P. (2019). A study of trauma and transformation in Anthony Doerr’s All the Light We Cannot See. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, 6(5), 494–499.

Warf, B. (Ed.). (2006). Encyclopedia of human geography. Sage.