

Differently able but not a Disabled: A Study on Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

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Abstract

It's not our disabilities; it's our abilities that count with special care. The fiction taken for study is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, a mystery novel by Mark Haddon, a British writer and an illustrator. The novel brings out the nature of a fifteen-year-old boy with the disability of Asperger Syndrome. The protagonist is called to be a disabled based on the views of people, but he proves to be a multi-challenged one throughout the novel with his unique behaviours. He also proves his uniqueness in things were common people fear to interfere. This paper mainly focuses on showing the unique abilities of the disabled which doesn't have any clear attention among the people in the society.

Key words: Disability, Asperger Syndrome, Multi-challenged, Unique Ability

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time a British novel by Mark Haddon was famous during the year 2003. The author Mark Haddon is an English novelist and a best-known writer and an illustrator. He received many awards like the Dolly Gary Children's Literature Award, Whitbread Award, Guardian Prize and Commonwealth Writer's Prize for his works. Some of his notable works are *Gilbert's Gobstopper*, *Secret Agent Handbook*, *The Son of Tranquility*, *The Ice Bear's Cave* and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. He still continues his writing career.

As Haddon said reading is a conversation were all books talk, but a good book listens as well and this is obviously brought in his book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* written in 2003. This book has won more than 17 literary awards and had sold more than 10 million copies.

The novel clearly describes of how the author cracked the puzzle with the mysteries mixed in it and had finally bought out the behaviours of disabled mind in front of the people with Asperger's Syndrome and

the protagonist a fifteen year old boy proven the answer to all those mysteries in his own way, this remains the unique style throughout the novel with a perfect investigation.

The book portrays Christopher John Francis Boone's unique style in finding out the mystery by being a differently able person. Asperger syndrome is found in children who suffer from the characteristics such as speech problems, harmful psychological problems, poor social skills, intellectual and artistic interest, delaying off things and so on. These characteristics prove the logical quality of the protagonist which remains of less interest with common people. A differently able kid Christopher Francis Boone the narrator of the novel proves his individuality in most of the situations where he has a great memory power with a love for prime numbers which makes him fluent up to 7507. Christopher is a kind of person who dislikes crowd or people shouting at him. He can only think of things that remain to be real and it is hard for him to imagine something out of reality. In this way, he proves himself to be a person with a true soul and remains honest throughout the novel.

His thinking capacity is shown clearly when police keeps on asking questions to him and he compares that with bread factory where the bread keeps coming fast but the slicer or the worker doesn't which leads to blockage. It is of sure that the normal man doesn't have this kind of interest or capacity in thinking about things and his scientific knowledge is proven in his explanation towards the Milky Way and the stars in the sky while he was arrested by the police.

Christopher is an ardent lover of prime numbers which seems uncommon with normal people and his interest towards math scoring A1 level always in the examination shows his brilliance. Christopher's intelligence is shown in jail too through his calculations about the design of the prison with his ideologies to escape by telling that it is 2 meters wide and 2 meters high and the police were standing as guards in 2 meters and so on.

Christopher the differently able finds the usage of metaphor to be confusing and his interests' shows the weird liking towards life were the common people in society fails to notice such unique abilities of the blessed disabled individuals. Christopher's honesty is defined on his saying that when a particular thing takes place in particular place and time, there remains an infinity of possibilities that doesn't take place at the same moment, and this makes him hard to imagine things out of reality. In the world of people with lies, this shows the kid's maturity level of being an honest individual. At least for this aspect the Asperger's Syndrome doesn't prove to be a very great defect when compared to his differently able individuality.

As Christopher the protagonist loves finding new things, his only aim throughout the novel was to find out the mystery behind the death of his neighbour's dog Wellington. He does the finding by correlating things in process and finds the truth of his dead mother who happens to be alive which a truth was hid from Christopher by his own father.

The protagonist is shown with his own likes and dislikes in the novel, for example if he sees four red cars in a row it is a "Good Day" for him and if he sees a row of four yellow or brown colour cars, he considers it as a "Black Day". Likes and dislikes of a person need not be logical always as it can be like Christopher's at times.

His aim is to become an astronaut or scientist or something that has to do with math and science which shows his great interest for those subjects apart from being a disabled. He also aims to do his higher studies in a University and his interest towards science is shown in the explanation of heaven where his capacity of his thoughts was limitless and remains to be an astonishing as well as amazing for normal people like us.

His behaviour is determined such as a person who doesn't like others touching him, not eating the food touched by other people and not telling lies. The differently able protagonist has a great love for his pet rat Toby and he is also a believer of logical thinking rather than intuition in working out problems of life as his decisions are more clearly compared to ours. He has his true love towards reading books and his favourite one is the *Sherlock Holmes* series by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Christopher is a keen observer and his mind works like a DVD which makes him rewind or replay things again shows his unique ability he possess from the age of 4. This makes him to remain the honest as always. He tends to avoid moving to new places because he feels that his head is full and that he cannot take up the new things so he also feels like he is avoiding something.

When Christopher feels sick or giddy, he distracts himself by solving a math problem was no one will dare to do in such situations. He lives with a proper timetable by scheduling his routine properly. Christopher works in a way and learns not only by travelling but by seeing the Earth under a microscope.

The intelligence of Christopher in detecting things in a different way leads to a proper solution that completes the detective fiction and the plot of the novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. In the detective process he tends to find the truth of his mother and accomplishes to stay with her. Christopher's as usual A level scoring in studies made him feel glad about his power of excellence.

The significant note in the novel is that the parents of Christopher considered him as a pain and was totally fed up with his activities as it was something different from the usual and the society also has the same view in general. They kept telling that, “You are going to drive me into an early grave”. (Haddon 61) But the character Siobhan, a staff at his school remains to be his friend and helps him in each and every situation. Siobhan even helps him in understanding the human emotion by drawing faces and she also encouraged him to write novels. When Christopher paused it for some reason, she advised him to take in a positive way by telling that some detective stories or unanswerable at times. She remains to be very patient and motivating character throughout the novel. This shows how different people see things in differently and differ from others.

The excelling individuals like Christopher needs some carrying hands like Siobhan, apart from that children like Christopher are far better than common people. Only solution is that people in our society must get proper education on how to treat children with such syndrome by providing great care and without ignoring them.

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