

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time is a novel written by Mark Haddon which illustrates the problems of someone who has ASD and the effect on the people around him after his parents break up. At the start of the story there is a violent scene in which Christopher finds a dead dog in his neighbour's garden. He seeks to find out who had killed the dog and encounters a lot of difficulties on his journey to solve the mystery. In this essay we will be looking at how Mark Haddon creates a realistic and convincing character in Christopher, who is the main character. In my opinion, the way Mark Haddon portrays the main character is slightly biased but in spite of this, the author has done a good job in creating a character that is realistic and that is an interesting person.

Christopher is generally portrayed as an unsocial character who can't handle extreme situations where he is put under a lot of pressure, and a character that enjoys systems, timetables and patterns, hence why it could be argued that his way of picturing Christopher is bias. For example, "I like timetables....going to happen" Certainly one could argue that it was bias and that Mark Haddon has done a bad job trying to make a character with ASD and many would agree but it seems to me that, considering he has worked with people who have been diagnosed with autism, it could be quite a fair representation of an autistic person. For this reason I think that Mark Haddon has created a good character, which has autism. Consequently, the book is quite interesting and has the person think what will happen next. However at times the book feels like it is dragging on because of Christopher's need to describe every detail in an almost religious way. I agree that it sets scene but it doesn't need to be as detailed as that. Nonetheless I think that the need of detail is used not only to set a scene, but to describe a character. Christopher has a photographic memory and this is why the author goes over the detail so often, because Christopher would remember every detail in real life as well as in the book, except when he is put under pressure, his memory doesn't work as well as usual and he "shuts down" as in he stops functioning correctly. The author sometimes makes us think that Christopher is like a computer and that this is how people on the autistic spectrum work, because they like patterns, order and they like to make sure everyone knows what they're doing but this is not always true and this could be considered bias.

The way Mark Haddon has made everyone around Christopher look normal and that Christopher looks different, this is one part of the book that I don't like. He makes his neighbours, his carer and his family seem "normal", but what really is normal? It isn't something you can measure or study. For all any of us know, people with autism could be normal and we are the unique ones. But in this novel that is not what it feels like, the book is almost discriminative at certain points. This is possibly the only obvious bad thing about this book, and even then it is not that bad. I think that Christopher's family and neighbours quite understand his ASD and they know that he can have trouble communicating with them, but I also think that some of his neighbours also see him in a strange way, like he is different to them completely and that he wouldn't even understand what they are talking about, which isn't true. As he is on the train and traveling to London to see his mum, he encounters a lot of people who condescend towards him and talk to him as if he's a toddler or a five year old. Conversely there are a lot of people who treat him like any other 16 year old and don't think to consider that he has autism. I don't know which would be better. At times, in the book, Christopher is not always sure whether people are being condescending or just being nice, thus people tend to see him as weird and they don't fully understand what Asperger's actually does to the person who has it, additionally, Christopher also can't always tell the difference between sarcasm and reality, therefore he can get into trouble and, people think he is very weird at times, when he takes things seriously and not as a joke, likewise with metaphors which he cannot

understand well either. In spite of the fact that he can't understand metaphors, he understand similes fine.

In my opinion Mark Haddon has created an incredibly complex, autistic character very well, even if it could be argued that it was bias, which I think it is not. The author sets a realistic scene and manages to make a character seem like it is a real story with people around him who are realistic and also help set a realistic scene.

→ Very good on style
+ personal responses

→ Characterization

→ ideas

→ Your style

↓
Examples of

detailed relationships?
(extra paragraph?)