

The Curious Incidence of Individual Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

The literature on Autism has been considered marginal but developing. Various writers and critics in the field have tried to set forth a more palpable attitude of this form of disability while missing and/or escaping one crucial question: does Autism make possible an advantageous ground for the autistic person? In other words, what is the semantic role of the slash in dis/ability? This study directs this question through a literary case of the novel “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time” by Mark Haddon. The process and result of such analysis is directive in both providing us with a new paradigm of autism, as well as exemplifying strategies through which the autistic person performs progressively. In this respect, the concept of individual empowerment, theorised by Elisheva Sadan, holds the axle of analysis. In the scope of this research, Haddon’s novel proves to be a formative ground for redefining autism in its current manipulation, a source of self-reliance and inner-outer evaluator which processes socio-communal inputs given to it in order to systematise the action/reactions of the autistic person. Meanwhile, this study concludes with suggestions on how an autistic person can filter and organise his environment to perform distinctly and productively.

Keywords: Autism, critical consciousness, Elisheva Sadan, empowerment, Mark Haddon, practitioner

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INTRODUCTION

”We live today in what I call a ‘runaway world’, a world marked by new risks and uncertainties [...] but we should place the notion of trust alongside that of risk” (Giddens, 2009, p. 99).

Rather than sparkling a perceptive consciousness of the dynamic world

surrounding each individual, Giddens' theory can operate as an impetus for Christopher Boone, the protagonist-narrator of Haddon's novel, to reflect on the exigency and possibility of building trust. Having encountered such equivocal of sociology, a normal¹ participant starts searching for the proper partner/agent with whom the trust is established. However, considering ASD, Christopher's character breaks through the presuppositions around the susceptibility of interpersonal communication prior to his acceptance of any partner/agent².

Since autistic studies are controversial, articles in this research invites readers to actively participate in the horizon of the disclosure that this analysis addresses. The readers' flexibility in adopting contextual positions is recommended: first, to activate a mode of subjectivity parallel to that of Christopher's; second, to facilitate reading

in an ethnographical view which (re)situates projections of ability or disability, and ends in giving an affiliated definition of norm/al (Muller, 2006). Experiences of environment, limited by estimations of autism, have undermined Christopher's behavioural assumptions to a state of ephemeral cognitive relations and decisions (Freißmann, 2008). His subordinate realisation is identical with the genre of detective novel which reinforces a condition of scepticism, fortified by features of ASD as another reason for suspecting normalised ideas of trust, social value and, in a large scale, communal obedience (Ciocia, 2009). Third, to criticise Christopher of having a narrow prospect of social conducts is a response developed by a surface reading of the novel, although an ethical reading encourages the presence of a more responsive reader who is less likely to misread symptoms of disability (Wooden, 2011). Another verifier of Christopher's deficiency in associating with environmental frames is the absence of any tendency for expressing partnership; the adamant inclination of the pronoun "I" extends the existing gap between him and others (Semino, 2011). Eventually, the isolated image of Christopher is marked to be a consequence of his attempt to penetrate the internalised social norms, in maintaining independence from the rigid forums of social life (Blackford, 2013). The semi-delusional aspect of autism amplifies the improbability of the establishment of certitude and/or a reciprocal relationship through separating the affected person from the culturally presumed facts.

¹The terms *norm* and *normal* in this article deal with Foucault's theory in "Truth and Power". The triad of "normalization, sexuality, and power" is inclusively presented as the contingent sequel of "ideology" and "repression" anticipated by Marx and Freud, respectively, which is dominant through all aspects of interpersonal and/or communal relationships (Foucault, 1980, p.117)

²Communication-crisis is a pivotal concern in major discussions of ASD. The insistence on sameness, resistance to change, and behavioral inflexibility have been defining characteristics of ASD and linked to social impairment (Cotugno, 2009). Nevertheless, the emphasis on augmentative communication suggests that the agent of communication is more fundamental than the termination (Perry & Condillac, 2003)

Despite the supposed discernment of ASD which is destined to enclose the volition and practice of an autistic person, Haddon's novel conceives potential interpretations of disability beyond the naturalised surveillances of society. Indeed to violate a simplistic understanding of the work, it is vital to bring up the question whether Christopher is an amenable social figure with no intentions or authority or a mutant, but distinct participant? Consequently, the answer would direct us toward a more practical concept of disabled people that exceeds the prevailing attitudes about disablement. The current paper benefits from theoretical grounds signified by Elisheva Sadan through proficiencies of empowerment, since her explanation sets forth the idea of social functioning and political connectedness of all individuals: "Since empowerment is not a particular quality of a person, but an important condition for his existence, its realization must correspond to the most diverse (theoretically, at least, the infinite) number of human variations" (Sadan, 2004, p. 79).

Subsequently, the objective of the current discussion is to highlight those manifest comportments and character-descriptions in the novel that elucidate supersessions of Christopher's ASD as an advantageous condition through which he actualises forms of individual empowerment within a self-developed agency. Here, it is discussed that Christopher relies on his supposed difference and exalts its favourable attributes to extricate himself from exclusive dispositions of trust-in-communal-norms/

normalisations³ rather than focusing on stigmatising emblems of autism that force the person to be dependent on mediums of communication.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Transcribing the Social Environment: Christopher's Role-Structuration

The inclination of social environment, as milieu for bringing up and schematising individuals, has obtained instructive and irrefutable significations. The environmental trend is prone to suppress individual discrepancies, in order to adjust and control interpersonal relationship, and replace them with conceptualisations of unison. In Mannheim's view: "Every individual is therefore in a two-fold sense predetermined by the fact of growing up in a society: on the one hand he finds a ready-made situation and on the other he finds in that situation performed patterns of thought and conduct" (Mannheim, 1954, p. 3). Societal administrations of interpersonal performances are established on the presumption that people are supposedly

³Opposition to socially approved alignments, argued within Christopher's character, resembles common configurations of isolated individuals in gender studies. In textual projections of "hegemonic" gender (masculinity/femininity) most adolescent members question and criticise normalised provisions of the hegemonic group (Gill, 2008). Repugnancies of this kind are the main causes of seclusion and bewilderment that lead in "reshaping of identity", applied by the individual him/herself (Malaby & Esh, 2012, p. 40)

obliged to act analogously to regain or consolidate order. This form of adaptability is declared by Giddens through the term “socialization”:

The process whereby the helpless human infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which he or she was born. All societies have characteristics that endure over long stretches of time, even though their existing members die and new ones are born. (Giddens, 2009, p. 284)

Each person is thrown into a labyrinth of prescribed formulations that regulate his behaviour and frame his future decisions and pertaining attitudes. Meanwhile, Corbett’s (1965) analysis of this function of social life sheds light on the notion of generalisation wherewith behavioural anticipation is activated: “We cannot act in the world or think about it without implicitly relying on the validity of some generalizations; it is largely on their rationality that the rationality of my life depends. But, what supports a generalization? Experience” (p. 158).

Christopher’s initial experience of social environment is pictured in finding the dead Wellington. His camera-like description of the murder scene followed by the struggle with the two officers and other swift occurrences evoke Christopher’s latent, though fixed, rationalisation of

his surroundings; a type of self-reflexive conduct that ends in the confirmation of the first introspective I-statement: “I like dogs. You always know what a dog is thinking. It has four moods. Happy, sad, cross and concentrating” (Haddon, 2003, p. 4). While empathising with the dog, Christopher implicitly expresses further angles of communal practice: firstly, his readiness for building up social rapport with an external element, Wellington, and second, his demand for a cohesive relationship which is reflected by the insistence on predictability. No matter how radical the choice of a dead dog seems in the evaluations of more normalised practitioners, the realisation illuminates a hidden potency in Christopher to leave his isolation, even though it is done through a non-human entity. This mode of unification with the other exemplifies the ironic point in Sadan’s (2004) study of both the primary step toward empowerment as well as its ultimate goal: “Empowerment means coming out of the limited boundaries of the *I* into the expanse of possibilities of *we*” (p. 81).

Despite the fact that stages of self-presentation and self-stabilisation are interconnected with the actions of outside inductors, Christopher advances to set his personal conduct(s) aloof of expectations of social normalisation to confine his possible interpretation of the communal trust. While alluding to classifications of collective-loneliness, Christopher shows diverse products of communication once he

distinguishes himself from any other child at school reaffirming that, "I'm not a spazzer, which means spastic, not like Francis, who is a spazzer" (Haddon, 2003, p.15). Looking at illness innovatively, aspects of disability can be productive for disabled and/or abled bodies: "The world of illness provides a repertoire of constructs which can be employed in setting out our attitudes to other matters of social significance" (Billig, Condor & Edwards, 1988, p. 86). Thereupon, further specifications of prudence are carried out along with Christopher's generalisation on communicative discourse.

Another module for ascertaining order (ability to rationalise) is the procedure through which Christopher approbates members of his community. Christopher is withheld of the ability to perceive meanings in metonymic or imperative dialects due to constraints of autism. The research done by Milne and Griffiths on this autistic paradigm shows that children with ASD display a very literal, pragmatic understanding of the spoken word (Milne & Griffiths, 2007). Therefore, Christopher's choice of Siobhan as the trustee who understands the complexity of his situation introduces the first practitioner of his community. While planting the idea of writing about Wellington's case and encouraging Christopher all through the process, Siobhan performs correspondently to Sadan's description of advocate who "must not neglect her responsibility as a leader, and she must not incline in the opposite direction, of excessive directing and taking control of people" (Sadan, 2004, p. 123).

In addition to Siobhan's attempt for stimulating a ground of textual connection⁴ with Christopher's autism, the act of writing reveals tacit facts about the inadequacies of people in charge of Christopher. Among various instances of misunderstanding within social relationships, Christopher's experience with his father is crucial for having a more accurate analysis of the limits of communalisation in disability. Results connote to the theory of interactional vandalism which appears through lingual artefacts more persistently than physical violations (Giddens, 2009, p. 262). Bilateral failure of interaction results in Christopher's refusal of the father, as a factual medium, and invokes alternatives for his role. Since a more flexible member is needed to act based on restrictions of Christopher's community, Sadan's authorisation of sensitizer proves to be an adequate candidate, the inductor who performs "in a variety of methods of intervention, with the objective of providing people with the maximal opportunities of understanding themselves and their environment" (Sadan, 2004, p.122). The introverted, self-reliant attributions of Christopher while facing mysteries, on the one hand, and his formulation of facts and science(s), on the other, exhorts him toward choosing the fictional character of Sherlock

⁴Literature, and especially books directed to adolescent, establishes an atmosphere of mutual understanding between the abled and disabled parties of communication which broadens their attitudes of the concept of ability regardless of more normalised definitions (Curwood, 2013)

Holmes as the sensitiser. Christopher harmonises elements of the advocate and sensitiser as he merges them with his proficiency and expectation of the client. Regarding the tenets of empowerment, primary stages of change are conveyed through the client's emancipation from normalised constraints as he invalidates them and through the redefinition (recitation) of his preference(s) (Sadan, 2004, p.121). Representations of the client-role enables Christopher to express not only his discontent with the environment, but also possible incompetence in hegemonies of social conduct.

RESULTS

Awakened Critical Consciousness: Christopher's Performance in Community

Society is permanently alert and attentive toward utilising efficient mediums in order to acculturate and subjugate more marginalised individuals. The essence of *routine* implemented in this process protects it from being noticed (or criticised) easily by the mediums who are performing to its advantage. In other words, the persistency of cultural and national morals together with more universal depicts depend on the existence of such inductors who assist the formation and institutionalisation of social disciplines. But in his article, "Two Lectures", presented in January 1976, Foucault explains about the inherent opposition to the social configuration by emphasising the dual role of normalised codifications:

The disciplines have their own discourse. They engender [. . .] apparatuses of knowledge (savoir) and a multiplicity of new domains of understanding. They are extraordinarily inventive participants in the order of these knowledge-producing apparatuses. Disciplines are the bearers of a discourse, but this cannot be the discourse of right, the discourse of discipline has nothing in common with that of laws, rule, or sovereign will [...] The code they [disciplines] come to define is not that of law but that of normalization. Their reference is to a theoretical horizon which of necessity has nothing in common with the edifice of right. (Foucault, 1976, p. 106)

The father character as a representative of social components is a bearer of certain presumptions about how to behave through/with disability, albeit the fact that his establishment of familial disciplines is more affined to his desolate condition. Father's inconsistency in codifying productive modules of interpersonal relation with Christopher, and his mere focus on the subversive hypotheses of communication via discipline, ends in conflicts which threaten their existing interrelationship.

Some outcomes of physical tension between the two characters are caused by the incoherent manners conveyed by Father in his arguments; like the times he starts shouting at and interrupting Christopher,

ignorant of the false impact such behaviours have on an autistic child. Distortions of auditory-process and sensitivity to loud voices which are dominant among people with ASD have been discussed as influential stimulus for provoking extreme oppositions to environmental disturbances (Tomchek & Dunn, 2007). Having observed instances of environmental (familial) malfunctioning, Christopher engages in methods of re-evaluating his community by extending his reliability on roles of advocate and sensitiser. His first rebellious decision is pictured through re-starting to search and write about Wellington's death-mystery. With regard to Sadan's analysis of progressing individuals and communities, types of resistance to external strains prove to be inseparable from the frames of individual empowerment:

Empowerment is a process of internal and external change. The internal process is the person's sense of belief in her ability to make decisions and to solve her own problems. The external change finds expression in the ability to act and to implement the practical knowledge, the information, the skills, the capabilities and the other new resources acquired in the course of the process. (Sadan, 2004, p. 76)

Proven to be capable in solving puzzles (modelling after Sherlock Holms) and determined to act like a qualified detective, Christopher remains meticulous about any clues that might guide him to find

the killer. His persistence is accentuated with the father's confession: "I killed Wellington, Christopher" (Haddon, 2003, p. 69). Evidently, the exploration succeeds in discovering the truth about Wellington's death and the absence of his mother, as well as disjoining Christopher from the last strings of trust in external mediums.

Excessive unveiling of errors in communal factors surrounding Christopher negates the functioning of the supposed equilibrium necessary for his interaction. Grievous scenes of reinforced ASD is thus presented in his impotent attempt to regain balance. The expression "extreme autistic aloneness", as Sula Wolff defines, is allocated to this kind of disorder which is followed by indications such as "abnormal speech with echolalia, pronominal reversal, literalness and inability to use language for communication; and monotonous, repetitive behaviours with an 'anxiously' obsessive desire for the maintenance of sameness" (Sadan, 2004, p. 203). For Christopher to procure the former quiescence means to leave the source of tumult, his Father, and seek refuge in his personal code of security (balance). Since no other external element is qualified or permitted to enter his domain of re-establishing order, Christopher explicates a course of solace in his community, that is, observing the stars. This method of meditation also gives him the courage to criticise the culturally accepted opinion on one specific group of stars named Orion, which marks a man holding a bow and introduce other convenient alternatives for the same shape.

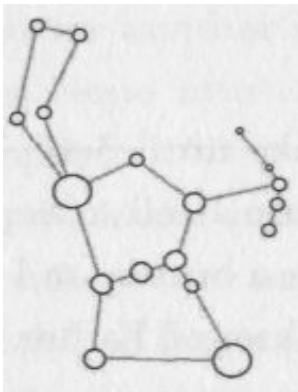


Figure 1. Constellation of stars as Orion

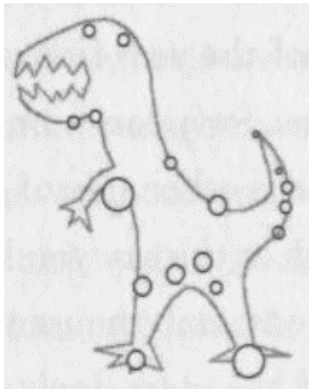


Figure 2. Christopher's constellation of stars as a dinosaur

But this is really silly because it is just stars, and you could join up the dots in any way you wanted, and you could make it look like a lady with an umbrella who is waving, or the coffeemaker which Mrs Shears has, which is from Italy, with a handle and steam coming out, or like a dinosaur (Haddon, 2004, p. 71).

The community's ideological acceptance of this habit of naming-after-stars, its obedience to religion and perception of metaphysical concepts are objected by Christopher through his trust in science and genealogical thinking. The allusive usage of stars in this narrative highlights the fact that there is no absolute value incarnated in social representations, yet labelling stems from a national or ethnic relativism within that society.

Doubt in familial bonds blends with a re-evaluation of more general threads in the society; while providing Christopher with the opportunity to criticise the *worldview*⁵ of those exterior to his conduct. Sadan's appreciation of the indispensable and prominent criticism of interactional presuppositions gives credit to the configuration of critical consciousness, "[which] is the process by means of which people acquire an increasingly greater understanding of the cultural-social conditions that shape their lives, and of the context of their ability to change these conditions" (Sadan, 2004, p. 82). Immediately after Christopher liberates himself from the bondages of such cultural-social segments, his critical consciousness

⁵Worldview (Weltanschauung) that facilitates the way to create a unified view of the people within a society, those who share a common history and culture; a careful study of worldview may, also, lead us to criticise the false evaluation or devious perceptions of the social participants (Macrae, 1961, p. 64)

is awakened to tranquilise the condition for seeking a method of problem-solving appropriate to his current dilemma. Hence, when his gratification of the stars relieves him from the chaotic entrapments of the environment, Christopher works out the fear of being close to his father, now considered as the source of danger (insecurity) through his distinguished skill in mathematics⁶; the closure of this phase is noticed by Christopher's decisiveness to leave for his mother in London.

DISCUSSION

Relief in Praxis: Empowered Christopher

Pondering the scope of empowerment, the individual is destined to abolish his current social partialities and suspend weakening adherences of the cultural-social custom in order to reflect on the acquisitive schemes of his new community. However, each participant envisages a definite status for the maintenance and progress of his conduct together with organising a pattern to reach the ultimate objective. The efficacy of the performance of such regulation is maintained by Sadan in the manipulative idea of "Praxis": "[. . .] a way of learning that integrates activity and thinking about activity. In this method, the critical conscious is integrated into social activity, and is not separated from it" (Sadan, 2004,

p. 211). Accordingly, rather than being content with a shallow functionality of critical consciousness, each person is obliged to apply it within a progressive plan for transcending his empowered state. Attentive notifications on the synthesis of plan and practice render the centralisation of pragmatics essential for having a stratum of empowering-jargon. Pragmatic thinking and performance, in this sight, rises against the classical exacerbations of the individual's dependence on the presence(s) of external mediums which carry the credibility for activating and directing the impact(s) of planning through the process of empowerment. The differentiation Sadan makes between the already-existing role of external motivator and the newly-born idea of internal collaborator is understood through the contextual division she establishes by describing them as expert and reflective practitioner respectively:

The expert presents a total knowledge in planning and solutions despite his own uncertainty, while the reflective practitioner sees his uncertainty as a source of learning for himself and for others possessing relevant knowledge on the situation. While the expert keeps a professional distance and transmits warmth and sympathy in what he considers the requisite dosage, the reflective planner seeks an emotional and intellectual connection with people. (Sadan, 2004, p. 189)

⁶"**F**eartotal = **F**earnew place X **F**earnear
Father = constant" (Haddon, 2003, p. 77).

Sadan's empowerment offers an exposure to the practitioner-role in the sense that its subject-formation is realised by the individual's agreement in lieu of the official compromise. Performance of the reflective practitioner is, thus, circumscribed to the responsibilities assigned for the individual in his interaction with the collected knowledge/experience of the environment as well as his success in self-consolation.

Upon his decision to leave home, Christopher substitutes the client position with that of a practitioner; schemes of praxis are visible through his endeavour to find the Swindon train station and cope with the difficulties thereafter. While searching for the station, Christopher shows social intrusions through his interactional convulsion with the world outside. There, the influx of different sounds and the hurried crowd agitate impulses of nervous disorder in Christopher and cause him an intense feeling of environmental anxiety. In line with his experience of communicating with others, Christopher is incapable of building trust in other passengers. Hence, few scenes that escape Christopher's obsessed narrative provide us with images of people offering to help him, though all is rejected either through a sort of mind-blackout or by his emotional seclusion. Emotional impairment is studied and acknowledged by Happé's observation of ASD since she describes autistic applicants to be "rarely seeking and using other people for comfort and affection at times of stress or distress and/or offering comfort and affection to others when they

are showing distress or unhappiness" (Happé, 1994, p. 78).

With respect to the authorities of a practitioner, propagating knowledge proceeds other factors in order to restore a promising state for the actualisation of praxis. Managing to stabilise mental order over the turmoil of the status quo requires Christopher to probe and recollect his consciousness of the tactics of sociability. During the time Christopher reflects on his survey of the communicational knowledge, not only does he approve of the individual authentication within the environment, but also adopts proper codes transferred from his advocate/client principles. Concerning the first trial of praxis, Siobhan's advice is declared as a resort upon which Christopher starts disentangling himself from penetrative forces in the milieu. The following description traces Christopher's furtive manner of linking with and appreciating his advocate the moment he feels threatened by social interferences. "So I took lots of deep breaths like Siobhan says I have to do if someone hits me at school, and I counted 50 breaths and I concentrated very hard on the numbers and did their cubes as I said them. And that made the hurt less painful" (Haddon, 2003, p. 78). Intuitive examination of the self and others sets forth apparatuses of community, and results in Christopher's insistence on the disclosure of the available and valid paradigms which can assist him in tackling with the environmental stress.

Christopher adjusts the other module of praxis, concurrent to that of the

advocate's assertion, while displaying signs of being reconciled with the situation. The statement ends up by revealing the fact that the prerequisite task of the advocate is intertwined with the salient knowledge of numeration. The second agency of praxis, thus, emerges from the orientation of Christopher's ingenuity in simulating numerical metonyms so as to be displacements of/from the social burden. The absence of consistency in the comportment(s) of the external operant on the one hand, and the credence he grants to inner deductions on the other, invites Christopher to look for more subjective reliefs. The premium role of the subjective (self)-relief is activated once the individual applies it intelligently, as a strategy of confrontation against the nuisance of his environment. Ultimately, further registrations of math problems are given as codes of praxis wherewith Christopher claims control over his agonised mental state. It is through one such example that Christopher allows the reader to engage in a more precise analysis of what it means to solve a math problem, as he explains about the game, "Conway Soldier", a collaborative process is shaped through Christopher's narration. "It is a good maths problem to do in your head when you don't want to think about something else because you can make it as complicated as you need to fill your brain" (Haddon, 2003, p. 85).

The subsequent emprise of Christopher in order to finalise the course of praxis is to concentrate on the implementation of

visual aids. Environmental-observation is treated as a filtering custom in the quest for receiving intensive delegations of order. Therefore, absorbing replicas of stability conveys the alteration of what is perceived to a more eligible mediator which advances the liberation of the individual (client). The NCSE research contributes to the remedial supplementation of visual utterances elucidating that:

Studies employed visual techniques or video modelling procedures in interventions to facilitate play and/or social initiations and interactions [...] They build on current good practice in the field, promoting use of visual support and video modelling and taking into account the relative strength in visual skills of children with ASD. These approaches also recognize the importance of developing observation skills in children and that observation and imitation may be important avenues for learning. The studies indicate that video modelling can present different social situations in a predictable and controllable way, thereby allowing extraneous features to be filtered out and thus potentially making learning easier for the child with autism (Parson et al., 2009, p. 60).

Although in their encounter with environmental fluctuations there is a great probability of invoking perplex responses,

autistic practitioners are predicted to, first, select visual segments of social coercion and, next, start rationalising upon the schema of images in eradicating a conflict by focalising their (practitioners') attention on something favorably organised.

Detestable circumstances within the prospect of Christopher compels him to employ visual designs in order to regulate and frame the environment. His vigilant choice of *patterned* pictures or objects fabricates a sovereign mode for assigning prototypes of cohesion. The binary impact of this selection leads in Christopher's disconnectedness, from the complaints inherent in lingual associations⁷, while setting a personalised dialect whereby therapeutic communication is validated. One unique projection of his switch from the immobilising constitutions of society into the tranquilised sphere of pictures is represented by Christopher on his way to Willesden Junction. Being unnerved under the chaotic bustle of people in the cabin, Christopher says:

And there were 11 people in the carriage and I didn't like being in a room with 11 people in a tunnel,

⁷Stefania Ciocia's article demonstrates the performance of visual aids within Christopher's manipulation of his surrounding(s), emphasising that "the text also relies on a variety of media and visual effects - charts, graphs, drawings, logos, photographs, etc., in what is perhaps its most immediate, if implicit, indictment of the representational limitations of conventional linguistic signs" (Cioca, 2009)

so I concentrated on things in the carriage [...] And there was a pattern on the walls which was like this:

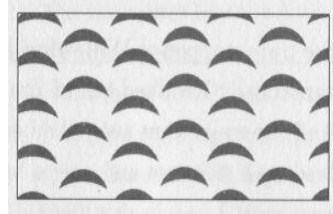


Figure 3. Patterns of walls in the train

And there was a pattern on the seats like this: (Haddon, 2003, p. 108-109)

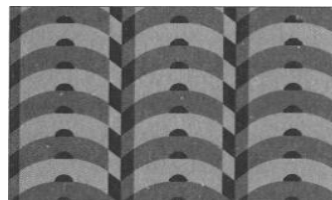


Figure 4. Patterns on seats in the train

Metonyms of order are visible through the organised layouts of these photos whose repeated patterns correspond to Christopher's urge for mental systematisation of the environment. As claimed by the meditative supervisions upon societal inputs, postulates of praxis are fulfilled in the instant Christopher manages to arrive at his mother's apartment in London. The triumphant feeling Christopher acquires through finding his mother in London is discussed as equivalent to a powerful authentication testifying to his merit in the community.

Stages following the accomplishment of praxis denote the construction of another quest invoked by the individual within his self to redefine and relocate his potencies and abilities. The individual, now, has achieved peculiar indicatives of capability that legitimise his imminent identity-formation. To this aim Sadan argues that affirmative and productive attachments of self are kindled along with the process of individual empowerment:

Individual empowerment is a process of personal development. The process involves both a development of skills and abilities, and a more positive self-definition. People testify to a better feeling about themselves, a sense of more self-respect and self-esteem. A new self-confidence and a feeling of self-efficacy are connected with a redefinition of the self, and the latter is closely linked with a real improvement in personal knowledge, abilities, skills, resources and life opportunities. A higher level of personal activity makes possible more effective inter-personal relations. (Sadan, 2004, p. 84)

Since the practitioner has exposed his success, he is certified to ascertain personal approvals, disciplines, concerns, as well as being discharged of the deterrent effects of self-condemnation. In short, the concluding grades of individual empowerment magnify and revolve around the flourishing of self-respect.

Whilst Christopher recalls one of his recurring dreams, the elegant conduct of self-respect is summoned by sophistications on the premises that celebrate his separation in the society. Indeed, the dream's content allegorises the superiority of self (Christopher) over normalised attendants whose performances and their very dissimilarities have been sources of anxiety. Thus through a widespread and deadly disease in his dream, Christopher's desire in the day-time turns into a comforting reality in the night-time. Here, the genuine disclosure of the dream reveals itself in Christopher's appreciation of the elimination of *otherness* as he recollects, "... and eventually there is no one left in the world except people who don't look at other people's faces and who don't know what these pictures mean" (Haddon, 2003, p. 117).

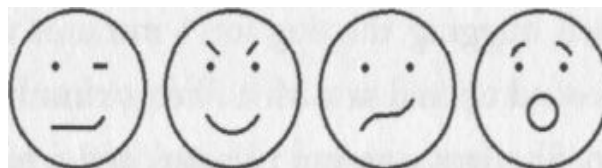


Figure 5. Simplified jargons of facial expressions communicated within a society

In this regard, validating personal distinctions and favoring his variant cognition are manifest within Christopher's satire of the ambiguity in/of social communication(s), which is taken for granted by its abundant usage and normative presumption upon interpersonal relations. Having reassessed attributions of self and environment, Christopher acknowledges his opportunity to dispense with figments of the exaggerated self and delve into a feeling of self-consent wherewith future arrangement is conceivable. One persuasive yield of this course is shown in Christopher's persistence on having math A-level exam.

The expedition of the individual empowerment motivates the decisive stabilisation of the client's efficacy for performing ex cathedra. Validation of the participant's empowered state is actualised through his inspection of the result. In Sadan's formulation, the ultimate practice of empowerment is proclaimed in the word "evaluation" as she clarifies, "This stage is supposed to be implemented at the conclusion of the project, and it examines whether, and to what extent, the community planning project has achieved its goals" (Sadan, 2004, p. 257). Thereby, it depends on the participant's(s') mark that the productivity of an empowering process is justified. For Christopher, the activation of the evaluating stage occurs as a consequence of his passing math A-level exams, which is both a verification of the competence within the agency and a support to his planning for objectives of further empowering processes. Through the following notes, not only are

we invited to take part in Christopher's satisfaction of his self and environment, but we can also picture his delight in the sequel of thriving for being empowered, "And I got the results of my maths A level and I got an A grade, which is the best result, and it made me feel like this" (Haddon, 2003, p. 128-129).



Figure 6. Christopher's expression after Math A-level exam

CONCLUSION

Upon its way to declare confrontation with environmental repressions, Haddon's novel offers unconventional techniques of change which represent peculiar methods of fidelity to Sadan's approach on the individual empowerment. Regarding the exceptional circumstances brought forth through the autistic character of Christopher, the current discussion has stepped beyond the prevalent studies of individual empowerment, more or less grounded on normal clients into the criteria of supposedly disordered characters. Thus saying, three fundamental structures of individual empowerment within ASD practitioners are framed as:

- a) **Concentrating on the specific capabilities of the autistic character** that provide the individual with an outlook of the things he is able to do without the interference or the force

of an outside medium. In the case of Christopher, this paradigm was shown by his meticulous analysis of the objects/places he observed along with his interest in science and logic. By focusing on how characters learn to explore their own efficacies, the threats of getting indulged in the dichotomies of disempowering conducts are removed since the character is encouraged to reason upon the world and posit himself accordingly.

- b) **Determining replacements for real advocates** is essential to ensure that the character's selection of the non-real advocate is justified based on his type of illness or disability. It is noteworthy that while being conscious about the complexities of choice, the practitioner can pick uncommon advocates in order to determine his convenience in the conduct. The examples provided by this novel introduce some fictional, or dead figures, who take part in Christopher's community and perform as proper models.
- c) **Assigning roles with definite responsibilities**; although the autistic individual is supposed to feel protected in the community, this is not the same as acting irresponsibly and reluctantly. Indeed, the autistic character who had found himself capable of building a community needs to support it with a variety of strategies and tactics. The very fact of being alert about the community's performance (capabilities)

makes the ASD character responsible for the survival of his conduct. Through these responsibilities, the client learns how to identify with irreplaceable competencies that cannot be transferred to any other participant. Thus, the character realises the need for remaining active in order to fulfil the procedure of change from the disempowered situation.

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