

Discussion of the multiple intelligences of Christopher Boone

We have been asked to analyse the book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon, with special focus on perspective towards Howard Gardner's *Theory of multiple intelligences*, which describes that a person has 7 measures of intelligence, later expanded to 8, rather than a single one, as was previously thought, and applying it to the main character Christopher Boone, a young man with Asperger's Syndrome who wants to unravel a mystery.

Gardner describes the 8 intelligences as such:

1. Linguistic intelligence: Intelligence relating to languages and words. If you were, for example, an interpreter, this would be something you use a lot.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence: Intelligence relating to mathematics and other logic-based systems, such as programming. This is something that I, as a programmer, ofcourse use a lot.
3. Musical intelligence: Intelligence relating to understanding and creating music. If you were to be a musician, dancer or composer, you would use this.
4. Spatial/visual intelligence: Described as the ability to "think in pictures". This is something you would use as an artist, architect or a designer.
5. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: The intelligence of being able to move your body in a coordinated and controlled way. This is especially useful among sportsmen or actors.
6. Interpersonal intelligence: The intelligence of understanding other people's moods, desires and motivations. It is very important for people that need to "connect" with other people- or their audience, and is as such commonly used by politicians, teachers and therapists.
7. Intrapersonal intelligence: The intelligence of understanding your own moods, desires etc. This is important if you were to be a poet or writer, as they often write from their own experiences.
8. Naturalist intelligence: First added to the theory later, this is the intelligence described as being used for recognizing artifacts in nature and the difference between them, or cultural artifacts such as different sneakers or cars. This intelligence could be used by a horticulturist, for example.

For starters, I think Christopher, though it isn't as immediately obvious compared to his other intelligences, has a lot of linguistic intelligence. He has an understanding of complex words, and he paints a very good picture of what he sees and experiences

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due to his nature of being overly descriptive, despite his lacking interpersonal intelligence, such as him not understanding people's expressions¹, which I'd usually figure the two go somewhat hand in hand.

Christopher is also a savant at mathematics and physics, and it is described by his father as being "the one thing he is really good at"², as such he definitely possesses a lot of logical-mathematical intelligence. Additionally, throughout the book Christopher commonly mentions a lot of mathematical problems, which he solves, and does rather complex mathematics in his head for fun or to calm himself, such as squaring numbers in his head³, and has a great affinity for Sherlock Holmes, because of his problem-solving skills and logical thinking, which Christopher relates to, and conversely a dislike for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle⁴, the author of the Sherlock Holmes books, because his belief in the supernatural, which Christopher does not find logical.

Christopher also possesses photographic memory⁵, and as such likely has a great deal of spatial/visual intelligence, in addition, he observes a lot, often too much for his own good, as he ends up overwhelmed, especially if it's in a new situation or area⁶.

Christopher does not talk much about music, though he does mention he likes white noise⁷, as it helps him not think too much, so there's not much of a case on whether he would like music or not, and as such how much musical intelligence he possesses, much like there is not any mention of Christopher's body-kinesthetic intelligence, he also does not mention playing sports or anything of the sort, so it would be hard to judge.

He does however possess a great deal of intrapersonal intelligence, as he shows understanding for himself and his "system", such as how he has little tricks to overcome his own thoughts about colors, like getting someone to remove the food with the colors that upset him as "it doesn't matter if different sorts of food are touching before they are actually on your plate"⁸

¹ Page 2, "The Curious Incident of the dog in the Nighttime", Mark Haddon

² Page 57, Line 8-10, "And Father said 'Christopher is getting a crap enough deal already, don't you think, ... Jesus, this is the one thing he's really good at.'"

³ Page 149, Line 20-22 "I doubled 2s in my head because it made me feel calmer. I got to 33,554,432 which is 2²⁵, which was not very much because I've got to 2⁴⁵ before, ..."

⁴ Page 111, Line 1-4, "I like Sherlock Holmes, but I do not like Sir Athur Conan Doyle who was the author of the Sherlock Holmes stories. That is because he wasn't like Sherlock Holmes and he believed in the supernatural."

⁵ Page 96, Line 5-9, "And when people ask me to remember something I can simply press Rewind and Fast Forward and Pause like on a video recorder, but more like a DVD because I don't have to Rewind through everything in between to get to a memory of something a long time ago."

⁶ Page 180, Line 8-10, "... I tried to make a plan of what I should do in my head but there were too many things to look at and too many things to hear."

⁷ Page 10, Line 11-13, "... it is like hearing three different pieces of music at the same time which is uncomfortable and confusing and not nice like white noise."

⁸ Page 95, Line 14-19, "And for afters I had some blackberry and apple crumble, but not the crumble bit because that was yellow, .., and I got Mrs. Davis to take some of the crumble bit off before she put it onto my plate, because it doesn't matter if different sorts of food are touching

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Christopher has a sense for animals⁹. Although most of what he knows probably came from the sign on the cage, he is quite good at remembering the details of the animals, even the names in Latin. He also memorizes the locations of all the animals in the zoo. Naturalistic intelligence isn't all about animals, it's also about remembering artefacts. We see Christopher being good at this, when he counts the cars on his way to school¹⁰. But his Naturalistic intelligence isn't as strong as Logical-mathematical or Spatial/visual intelligence. And most of his naturalistic intelligence could boil down to the abilities he gains from the other two.

Christopher is a very logical person with a high amount of intelligence when it comes to logical and visual intelligence. He lacks intelligence relating to other people and personalities like interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

before they are actually on your plate."

⁹Page 108 "1. RANDYMAN, which is the name of the oldest Red-Faced Black Spider Monkey (*Ateles paniscus paniscus*) ever kept in captivity (...)"

¹⁰Page 31 "In the bus on the way to school next morning we passed 4 red cars in a row (...)"