

How effectively do
the authors use the
narrative voice of
children in your
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In Mark Haddon's 'Curious Incident of The Dog' the narrative voice of volatile teenager, Christopher Boone is extremely influential in his quest to lead us through his turbulent relationship with not only his father, but also all those that are associated with him. Likewise, in Lloyd Jones's 'Mister Pip' the inclusion of the young island girl Matilda as the novel's narrator is instrumental in highlighting the obstacles faced by the young islander and stressing the contrast between the perceptions of Matilda and those of Christopher. Both narrators are provided with a first person perspective, which succeeds in gaining empathy from the readers, who are able to acknowledge the experiences of both narrators. The cultural differences between the narrative voices are effectively highlighted and are apparent for the readers to see, almost instantly.

The character of Christopher Boone is raised in Swindon and brought up to accommodate to the rules of the western society, while Matilda is forced to reside in the war-torn island of Bougainville, despite her aspirations to further herself. The effective portrayal of these cultural differences via both narrative voices is pivotal in highlighting the vast differences in the lifestyles of the respective narrators. Whilst, Matilda is accustomed to the noise of 'gunfire' and 'redskins', Christopher's biggest concern was whether it would be a 'super good day'. Christopher appears to almost be symbolic of the typical teenager, as essentially he is only concerned about himself. The use of the narrative voice succeeds in showing what triggers Christopher's breaking point, and even going a long way to explaining his unusual dislike for the colour 'yellow'. The contrast between both narrators is clear and the use of this cultural difference is effective for an array of reasons.

This enables the reader to be aware of the varied environments that both narrators have been brought up in and the extent of Christopher's alleged social deficit. Ultimately, the use of the narrative voice to explore the differences between Christopher and Matilda is extremely effective. The well-known debate involving nature Vs nurture springs to mind, as Christopher's mental incapacities are down to genetics, whereas Matilda's thirst toward Literature, an art which is so authentically western is purely down to her own attitude towards learning and education. Her reliance on Mr Watts' version of 'Great Expectations' is somewhat similar to Christopher's reliance on securing an 'A' grade in A-Level Mathematics.

The different content-wise between English and Mathematics is immense, and this is symbolic of the difference between Christopher and Matilda's perception of the world. This undoubtedly enables the reader to gain access to the diversity, which is rife amongst narrators and indicates that despite both narrators's flaws, they are worthy of praise for their achievements. Essentially, both child narrators possess an air of unpredictability, as their youth leaves questions marks hanging over the credibility of their account of events. If critic David Deeming's article 'the naïï½ve narrator and the worldly narrator is to be believed', the presence of the first person perspective is an essential tool in making Curious Incident of The Dog 'startlingly original and linguistically fresh'. Many critics share Deeming's view. Christopher's lack of emotion becomes distinctly evident through the use of basic language.

The repetition of simple adjectives such as 'warm', 'small' emphasis

Christopher's inability to adapt to the subjective nature of life. It is clear that <https://assignbuster.com/how-effectively-do-the-authors-use-the-narrative-voice-of-children-in-your-chosen-text-essay/>

he, can only seek solace in matters of absolute certainty, such as the fact that 'the garden fork sticking out of the dead dog' similarly, to Christopher, Matilda is also a child narrator, but one who possesses the social and figurative skills that Christopher lacks. Also, in 'Curious Incident of The Dog', Mark Haddon succeeds in maintaining a literacy tradition, through the use of the narrative voice of protagonist Christopher. Similarly, to 'Huckleberry Finn' by Mark Twain, the use of confusion and misinterpretation surrounding the narrator is prominent in Curious Incident of The Dog.

Both Christopher and Matilda embark on a journey, which requires them to describe events, with contrasting results. Christopher is often unable to comprehend his experience, while Matilda possesses an unerring level of self-assurance. Haddon's decision to implement this within Christopher's narrative voice is extremely influential in regards to the success of the novel. This technique evokes a sense of uncharted territory within the world. Nevertheless, the narrative role of Christopher portrays the world in another light and prompts the readers to empathise with the teen and encourages them to understand how different people view the world. In comparison, in Lloyd Jones's 'Mister Pip' the narrative voice of Matilda describes an environment, which is one which many readers would simply fail to identify, as their experience of similar situations are highly likely to be limited.

The war-ridden Bougainville is an area in disarray, and Matilda's narration of events is often disturbing. The presence of 'redskin' is one, which is inconceivable for many. The contrast between both narrators here is clear. In 'Curious Incident of the Dog' Christopher is the one suffering from confusion, and often seeking guidance, whereas in 'Mister Pip' Matilda succeeds in

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enlightening the reader, on the unknown. The use of contrast involving the narrative voices succeeds in maximising the impact of using child narrators. Despite, their tender ages, the use of the narrative tool enables the reader to delve into the thoughts and feelings of the youth.

The narrative voice of children is extremely effective here, because, it provides an insight into the difficulties facing two children, who are faced with obstacles, which are a hindrance to their success. Feminist Dr Elizabeth Blackwell's interpretation may well be that Matilda's plight is as a result of gender inequality, and if she had been born male, her thirst for knowledge is likely to have been well rewarded. Nevertheless, this view would dismiss Matilda's achievements, as despite her less than fortunate upbringing, she was able to educate herself sufficiently. Essentially, both narrators are effectively portrayed as the 'moral conscience' of their respective novels.

Mister Pip was described as 'morally subtle' by Jonathan Beckman, of the Daily Mail. The narrative role of both narrators is incredibly effective in portraying the youth as truth personified. The character of Matilda is one, who fails to accept her mother's decision to steal Mr Watts's beloved Great Expectations novel or her mother's choice to sacrifice her life for her daughter. 'To do so would be to betray my mum' The dilemma faced by Matilda is clear, and despite her being aware of what is morally right, she is overcome by an obligation to stick by her mother.

Similarly, the narrative voice of protagonist Christopher is extremely effective, as it expresses the difficulties that Christopher faces with conflict. Whilst, Matilda felt a sense of loyalty towards her mother, Christopher

reliance on the truth prevented him doing so. Christopher's perception of events means his account of events is always biased, and this prevents him trying to understand his father's motives for his act of violence. In addition, in 'Curious Incident of The Dog' the child-like nature of narrator Christopher is clear for all to see via his drawings of facial expressions. This is a key aspect of Christopher's role as narrator along with his inability to use figurative language. Christopher's reliance on such images is significant in highlighting his dependence on obtaining the absolute 'truth'.

This implies to the reader, that Christopher's failings are due to his lack of emotional awareness. Christopher's inability to comprehend facial expressions is extremely effective, as it enables the reader to emphasise with Christopher's point of view. In comparison, Matilda's role as narrator in 'Mister Pip' is completely different. It would not be difficult to mistake the narrator, for one, who was considerably older than Matilda. The narrative voice of Matilda is extremely effective, as it raises question marks over adults who may question the intelligence of the youth. Nevertheless, the similarities between both narrators are present 'I didn't want to know.

Rather, I wanted to believe'. This quote of Matilda's is strikingly similar to one, which you would expect Christopher to say. Ultimately, the use of the narrative voice is effectively conveyed, as in this case, it emphasises that both children are more or less reliant on their imagination and often this can provide an escape from reality. The implications of this are that it becomes hard to differentiate between whether the differences between Christopher and Matilda is as large as previously thought. Moreover, a considerable amount of both narrators' success is due to the decision to set their

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narration in the past tense. Both narrators include the use of typical phrases associated with the past tense, such as ' was' ' then' and ' said'.

Ultimately, the use of the past tense is extremely effective in both novels. In ' Curious Incident of The Dog the use of past tense appears to be used to reassure the reader over the wellbeing of Christopher, despite his upheaval. Likewise, in Mister Pip, the importance of the past tense is far greater. The conflict in Bougainville was considerable, and this would have influenced Matilda's thoughts when narrating the novel, as its impact on her would be great. The first person perspective role of Matilda enhances the relationship between narrator and reader; as it is clear that she must have overcome her obstacles in order to be around to witness the events unfold. Similarly, the first person perspective role of narrator Christopher succeeds in ensuring that the reader is confident that Christopher's mental stability remains intact.

The use of the first person perspective narrator is extremely pivotal in the success of both narrators, as it provides a sense of closure for both reader and narrator. It is clear that both Matilda and Christopher were able to overcome their respective obstacles, yet it is clear that they were faced with the challenge of overcoming different obstacles. The role of the narrator in both novels succeeds in providing a clear account of events, e. g. the death of Wellington or Matilda's mother. This effectively provides the reader with an insight into Matilda and Christopher's feelings as; they are faced with sudden deaths.

The first person perspective role of both narrators is also extremely effective, as it expresses the relationships between themselves and those around them. In 'Mister Pip' the narrative voice of Matilda effectively possesses the ability to remain detached from the events of Bougainville. The tone used is identifiable with the university student Matilda, rather than the teenage Matilda, which enhances the effectiveness of Matilda's narration of events. Matilda fails to ever 'stretch the truth' and declares 'I have tried not to embellish' the lack of embellishment is instrumental in the narrator's success.

It succeeds in depicting the scarcity of the island, as a result of the blockade by the estranged government. Matilda fails to dwell on this, and through her narration, we can assume that it is something she has simply come to accept. There are suggestions from Sameer Rahim of the Telegraph, that despite the significance of Matilda, 'Mister Pip' is a book, which 'rarely moves beyond stereotypes' and one which portrays Matilda's mother as a typical 'superstitious black woman' and Mr Pip as the 'eccentric white man'. The narrative voice of Matilda appears to succeed in suggesting that Matilda may well possess the complexity, that her mother lacks, however she still has her limitations.

To conclude, this quote of Jack Nicholson 'I don't want to be a product of my environment' from the movie 'The Departed' I want my environment to be a product of me' is one, which is extremely relevant to this essay. The narrative voice depicts a young girl, who is eager not to sink into the depression and hopelessness of those around her. Instead, the novel climaxes with her immigrating to the UK in order to further her education. In <https://assignbuster.com/how-effectively-do-the-authors-use-the-narrative-voice-of-children-in-your-chosen-text-essay/>

Christopher's case the narrative voice of the Asperger's sufferer makes it evidently clear that Christopher is after consistency and is more than content with being ' a product of his environment.

Ultimately, this is where the significant differences lie between both characters, with the narrative voice of Matilda unprepared to settle for a life below the poverty line and mediocrity. Whilst, Christopher is one to shy away from upheaval and it is clear via the narrative voice that he seeks solace in stability and matters of absolute truth.