

A Travel from Despair to Hope That Unravels Being Weird as
Individuality in the Light of Synesthesia in R.J. Anderson's Novel
Ultraviolet

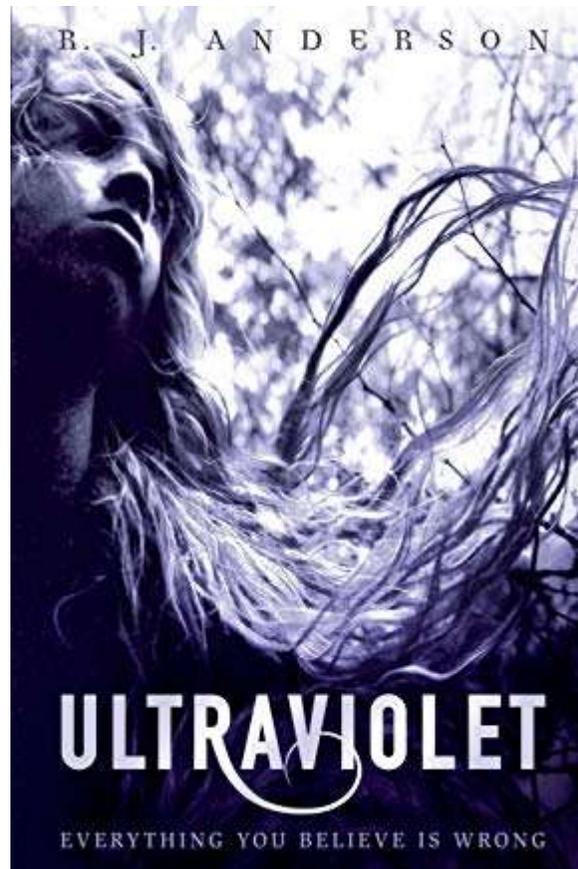
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Courtesy: https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Anderson%2C+R.J.+Ultraviolet&i=stripbooks-intl-ship&ref=nb_sb_noss

Abstract

Life gifts us all possible varieties, of which one cannot experience as perfectly as what others have experienced, even in the same context. Each one is unique from the other. It is not a

fault to experience things differently. Some realizes the worth of those differently experienced things but others fear that they are indifferent. The current research focuses on the concept of synesthesia, with reference to the novel ‘*Ultraviolet*’ by R.J Anderson. Synesthesia tends a person to perceive the world in a unique way (i.e.,) two or more senses merge or overlap when faced with only one sense or more senses. When people associated with synesthesia understands about what they are born with, they manage their lives with what they know. When it comes to teenagers, they lack proper guidance, so they tend to fear they are indifferent and confronted with dilemma of what to do with their condition.

Keywords: R.J. Anderson, *Ultraviolet*, Insane, synesthesia, crazy, different, ability, new perceptions, individuality.

The study focuses on the how a sixteen year old teen Alison, who feels indifferent of her ability to experience the world differently. Her mental ability to sense varied things when faced with one sense make her different from others. Alison, a synesthete feels the world different from others. She holds the secret of being a synesthete for two reasons. On one hand feeling that people might think that she is abnormal and on the other hand her fear of losing her beautiful private world.

Alison, introduced at St. Luke’s hospital, is unsure of what has happened and why she was there. She was in an extreme body pain and witnessed her grandmother’s ring, which she was wearing for five years was missing. It was a shock when she heard the nurse saying that she was admitted on June 7 and it was June 22 then. She thought her worst nightmare has become reality. She recollected her first encounter with synesthesia when she was four,

Cutlery clinked, filling the air with sparkling bursts of color
‘Do it again!’ I begged her, bouncing in my seat.....‘Make the stars’.....
‘There. Are. No. Stars’..... My mother slapped me across the face. (*Ultraviolet* 13, 14)

This first instance made her conceal her alien sensations with herself. She said to herself that she would never betray it again. The example vividly gives the condition of Alison who wants to live normal with her difference, but the lack of support from the normal crowd corners her with an alien feeling. She fears that something out of this sensation had made her admitted at St. Luke hospital.

Sir Robert Calliau, a world’s premier engineers and a developer of World Wide Web, in an interview with Maureen Seaberg that is published in the book *Tasting the Universe*, says that when he was about 10 or younger than that age, he had a mild form of seeing symbols in colors.

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When he told others about his perceptions people thought that he was crazy and that made him stop talking about it. He says it is a common phenomenon to hide those sensations because others don't believe the experiences of synesthete (68). This shows that synesthetes are concluded crazy, before people try to investigate the case. Synesthetes realize their sensations in their early childhood, but the reaction that the normal people give to their condition creates an alienated feeling for them. In this state, synesthetes cannot escape the condition, but hide their perceptions to live a normal life that others expect.

When she was wondering what might have happened to her, she was shifted by Constable Dekard to Pine Hills Psychiatric Treatment Centre, Bringing hope to youth in crisis. When she was in the admission process she sensed a familiar taste of a name in the television news, "..... Tori Beaugrand, who disappeared on the afternoon of June 7th...." (*Ultraviolet* 25)

She realized that she was admitted in the hospital the same day Tori, her schoolmate, went missing. She was further questioned by Constable Deckard to reveal anything she knew about Tori. She tried to retrieve something from her memory but she could not. While all others were sleeping she couldn't sleep thinking of Tori's disappearance. Through several attempts she grabbed her memory where she was the last person who met Tori and she disintegrated her. Alison watched her disintegrate in front of her and her body has disappeared. She is isolated from her friends and family and she cannot relate to other kids in the facility.

Alison was under Dr. Minda for treatment in the psychiatric unit. Dr. Minda with his first few attempts to find out Alison's condition gave her only medicines that are not appropriate. Alison felt her beautiful private world would be ripped off through medications and also hated being there. She feared that if she could annihilate another human being as she disintegrating Tori and such power must be taken off from her. She wished she could run to the nearby hospital and beg them to take away such power. But her inner voice said, "Even if it meant losing your colors? asked a sly voice in my mind. Even if it meant never tasting a sound again?" (*Ultraviolet* 39)

This was unbearable to her. She loved her private world so much and on the other hand she was also doubtful that these unusual blending of senses had anything to do with her newly discovered power. Dr. Richard Cytowic, in one of his speeches says that synesthetes could have some emotional responses to their experiences and it is also usual for them to feel positive experiences. They doesn't feel them neutral or negative but feel curiosity, wonder, joy, excitement and pleasure during their synesthetic experiences(*Synesthesia, the Fascinating World of Blending Senses*, 39) This would be one of the reasons that synesthetes are afraid of removing their perceptions. Though they fear that their stimulations might affect others, it becomes intolerable for them to live without synesthesia.

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She thought that she could not fix up what has happened but be cautious that it never happened again. In order to get out of there and make believe the doctors that she was normal, she took the medicines and followed whatever instructed. Put in the mental institute she fills herself with the guilt of Tori being disintegrated and desperately pushing herself to find her way to go home. In addition to that in her private world she experienced more wonderful things such as judging people through letters of their names, tastes their words and even the lies people say. Her every act was cautious because she tries to prove the doctors that she was normal. Despite all her failed attempts to make them believe, she was still keen to get out of the institution.

Alison tried to recollect what happened to her on that day to Tori but for all she could remember is she disintegrated Tori and she disappeared. The first day when Alison met Tori she felt that she was looking different from all others and her arms with pink tattoo. She said,

Our eyes locked- and my head filled with faint, high- pitched buzz, as though a mosquito were hovering just outside my ear. Rusty spots splattered my vision, and a bitter taste spread across my tongue. I blinked, swallowed shook my head, but the noise refused to go away (*Ultraviolet* 43)

Alison experienced a kind of synesthesia that was intolerable when faced with Tori. For all others, Tori was normal but Alison sensed something wrong right from the beginning. She developed no hate for her though her best friend Melisa kept on complaining of her attitude. These complaints grew and she supported Melisa just because she was her friend. There were lot of misunderstandings that made Alison think Tori always wanted herself to be the leading figure in the school and nobody wanted to win her.

All the instances proved a weak relationship they have developed in their school and these turned against as strong evidence for the case of Tori's disappearance and the accusation of murder. She was afraid she would end up there and guessed that her grandmother's ring must be taken for testing because it was full of Tori's blood, the day she returned from school and Tori was missing. She wanted to share with someone about what happened that day, "Someone who would not only listen to my story but believe it, and help me decide what to do" (*Ultraviolet* 47)

Alison was in a condition that filled her with thoughts of complicating her case and the uncertainty of what might happen and what must be done further. The environment she was put in made her sicker that she wanted some kind of support. She wanted to go home and appealed for her status to be changed voluntary. If it is done she need not wanted to be at hospital, but take her medications from home. She was not trying to talk to her fellow young patients fearing that something might go wrong. When she was trying to sleep, the whispers in

her brain made her think of Tori. To shut those thoughts she went to the window and gazed the stars above. She felt less alone to their subtle warmth and their tinkling sounds that comforted her. She said,

I tipped my head to one side and there they were: three stars, bright as a promise. But instead of giving off the crystal wind- chime noise that soothed me since childhood, they sang an eerie, piercing harmony unlike anything I heard before. And their colors were strange, too. The first star burned blue neon, the second electric green, and the third.....
(*Ultraviolet* 57, 58)

The above instances show that how she was enjoying her perceptions. Though she concealed her synesthetic experience from the outer world, she didn't hate it. She always gazed the stars above and this time they sang an eerie and their colors also was a surprise to her. She experiences chromesthesia in which qualities of sounds exposes colors. As she was naming the colors that each star represented, she suddenly jerked from the window telling herself she was not crazy. On the contrary, since she disintegrated Tori she hardly believed that she was crazy. Alison's synesthesia was the only relief to her in the unit and she always enjoyed those perceptions secretly. But this instance shows that the perceptions she enjoyed so far also made her think that she was crazy. In addition this proves, when people with unique traits are cornered for what they are, their most enjoyed things also turns to be curse. It's because normal people fail to recognize its worthiness and that reflects an unhelpfulness upon the entire life of the synesthetes, especially teens.

In his book *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, Robert T. Kiyasaki, an American businessman and author says, "The fear of being different prevents most of the people from seeking new ways to solve their problems" (45). It is real that when people fear their condition it would create a sense of inferiority complex and the inability to understand themselves increases. When a kind of encouragement is given to people with such unique condition at least they live peacefully. Contrastingly people with synesthesia, who hides their perception from normal crowd are not allowed to live peacefully and that creates an adverse feeling of understanding themselves.

Dr. Minda introduced Alison to her fellow young patient Kirk, who was surfing and while they moved. He also explained about the summer courses offered there such as sculpture, painting, drama and Music. Alison struck with the word 'music' and thought it was the first good news she heard since she was admitted there. She was a pianist and when she asked Dr. Minda whether she could ask her parents to bring her keyboard from home, he convincingly told that it is important to be careful about electrical cords and on her good progress in her treatment he might consider it. Alison thought, "But my keyboard was my heart, my brain, my extra limb.

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Playing it calmed me when nothing else could. Surely that ought to count for something, too?"
(*Ultraviolet* 62)

Alison was fond of music and the keys would stimulate colors and thus producing magic before her eyes. She thought at least its company could calm her. In the article, *Does Music has Healing Properties*, Elton John, a musician quotes, "Music has healing power. It has the ability to take people out of themselves for a few hours" (John Web). In this case, Alison also seeks a healing and she considers it could be achieved through music. Keyboard is not a mere instrument for her but it was her heart, brain and her limb. Filled with more confusion, Alison thought that when all others couldn't calm her, music would do. This example gives how synethetes, who are depressed because of lack of support seeks help from other sources.

Dr. Minda took Alison to cafeteria, visitors lounge, library and group therapy and education sessions. After two and half weeks of semi- isolation, Alison moved on to the cafeteria and there she met few of her other fellow patients who were having unique disorders and difference that made them indifferent.

It was the most expected day of Alison, the day her appeal to the Consent and Capacity Board had been convened and the meeting was arranged. Though she was accused to be continue in the hospital by Dr. Minda, the Board decided to accept her appeal to take voluntary treatment because of her lawyer's argument. Unfortunately Alison's mother ventured as Dr. Minda's witness and her appeal was rejected because Alison's mother refused to take her home. At this, Alison thought of the instance where her mother had given no little comfort when she was suffering with her perceptions. "Pillars of rust and ochre loomed across my vision, threatening to topple and crush me flat. I held my breath, my small body rigid with alar- but then the sound faded, taking the giant shapes with it" (*Ultraviolet* 120)

This example proves how her synesthesia made her experience delusions and hallucinations and how she suffered to distinguish between fantasy and reality. When she ran down out of fear, but conscious about not to deliver such weird sensations, told her mother the storm was very loud. The hands that must comfort and give hope instead provided a rosary and asked to pray for a while. Alison didn't pray that night but held it tightly and cried. This happens to most of the synethetes who has multiple synesthesia. Alison, a multiple synesthete felt the vision obstruction that threatened her and heard sounds that faded into giant shapes. As a teen it would be unbearable for her to comprehend her situation that was so threatening. Normal people encounter such experiences in books or films which might not be this torturous, but just as representation of untruth. In case of synesthetes, these are experienced truly and they seek some kind of a rescuer.

Fortunately for Alison comes Faraday, a graduate student of neuropsychology from the University of South Africa, to research about the workings of brain. At his first session with few of the patients in the psychiatric unit, he showed them some diagrams made of number symbols. He asked them what might be the shape that is hidden in the numbers. Alison found those shapes quicker than others which made Faraday astonished. He further asked her for the second round of filling the questionnaire and told that it would be confidential. For Alison he looked somewhat like anti-Dr. Minda.

In the next session she found that only she had been selected for the second round. He explained about what those previous session mean (i.e.) he said that those hidden pictures she found them in less than three seconds because she found all 5s and Ss and 8s and Bs as different colors. He further told that she had Synesthesia and explained that it was the cross wiring of the brain and so the senses merges. It sounded like somewhat horrible as dyskinesia or schizophrenia to Alison. She thought of asking him how serious it was but she didn't because of the fear that it might be taken off. She felt rather to take Faraday's pen and remove her eyes than taking off her perceptions. She hoped that her condition wouldn't get worse but she knew that her perceptions getting stronger and stranger since Tori died. Faraday found Alison more disturbed and tensed. She was scared that he might tell someone about her condition and her perceptions would be taken off but Faraday spoke to her in a comforting manner explaining about synesthesia. He said, "Synesthesia may be somewhat unusual, but it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you" (*Ultraviolet* 158)

Alison gradually gained confidence because he has introduced her The World of Synesthesia and getting her out of the shells. According to Faraday what she experiences the world of Synesthesia were normal and which was reassuring. Their sessions were filled with questions and answers as he wrote letter 'A' on the sketchbook using a different color and asked her what color it represent. She felt the letter was calm and confident and always in control and added that it was unfriendly and reserved. She added,

I examined the pinks and reds with a critical eye and decided on a light appreciation of magenta with a haze of candy red around it. 'B' is female,' I said as I drew the letter,' and extroverted. It's something of a Southern belle, if you know what I mean. C –'I set that red pencil down, hesitated between the light blue and the light purple and finally chose the latter,'- is lavender, sort of translucent and silky. It's shy, and it doesn't have any gender. (*Ultraviolet* 169)

Alison is associated with grapheme color synesthesia that is evident with the passage. It shows that she associated colors to letters and each letter she faced with gives her a different color. When Faraday further asks her that do the letters have tastes, she says,

Some do,' I said. 'A taste like blueberries- the kind that grew wild around here, not the big watery once you get in stores. B is like those candy hearts they sell around Valentine's Day. And C doesn't have a flavour exactly, it's more like a very light perfume. Then there's D'. I began to layer shades of blue and green, trying to get the right intensity of teal. 'D has hidden depths, it's sort of mysterious..... (*Ultraviolet* 169)

Her sense of seeing them also evokes distinct flavors and emotions. These forms are called Lexical- gustatory synesthesia and Lexeme odor synesthesia, that makes a synesthete taste letters and distinct smells associated to letters. For more than thirty minutes Alison spoke about her perceptions of numbers and letters. Faraday took notes of them which meant that he was paying attention to what she was saying and didn't think that she was insane. Alison was more gathering her confidence day by day, and when Dr. Minda asked about her sessions with Faraday she said that in some ways it was ok for her to be indifferent. By comparing Alison at the past and after meeting Faraday and knowing about her perceptions, the change in her was more evident. Willie Nelson, American musician in his book co- authored with Turk Pipkin, *The Tao of Willie: A Guide to the Happiness of Your Heart* says, "Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results". This is exact in the case of Alison that she turned her negative thoughts with positive ones that gradually makes her consider her problems in a positive way. She, so far, suffered considering herself as insane, but she herself said Dr. Minda that it was not a problem if she is insane. The positive result that she achieved here is the shift of understanding herself. Admits all her problems, once the understanding she lacked from the normal crowd is gained, she also achieved her self-confidence and gathered her optimistic life slowly.

Though Alison had to spend her time with Dr. Minda, she was always looking forward to spending time with Faraday. Since she had more questions to be asked about synesthesia, she thought that the only person to answer her questions would be Faraday. Their last few sessions were engaged with the discussions on near photographic memory. The way that how certain sights and sounds made her feel of being touched and how her pain was orange and pleased in the shades of purple and blue. Alison was still hesitant to ask him about that whether her sensory abilities had something to do with the way she disintegrated Tori and if she got angry or scared she might do it again. To cut her fears Faraday says, "What fascinated me,' Faraday said towards the end of our fifth session, 'is that you have so many different forms of synesthesia at once. Do you sometimes find it overwhelming? When you hear particular noise, for instance?" (*Ultraviolet* 177).

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These lines show that how he looks at the case as a fascination rather than a disorder. She was tempted to tell the truth about the noise that she always heard from Tori which made her life chaotic, about the way her senses gets overloaded sometimes and how it becomes unbearable, but said nothing. But the next morning she pulled all her guts and asked Faraday whether he had heard of someone's synesthesia changing or getting very stronger all of a sudden. She explained what she was experiencing so far- the colors that she was seeing weren't on the regular spectrum, knowing a piece of fruit rotten inside when for others it looked normal, being able to taste someone's lie. Logically Faraday spoke of the birds and insects which perceive a far range of colors than humans do, including the ultraviolet spectrum. This kind of vision might make them perceive slight differences in the hues and when a person lies they give out subtle body cues. So when someone have unusual well- developed vision and sensory overlap may be they would be able to sense those kinds of things.

Alison told him that as a neuropsychologist he was supposed to think she was crazy and dangerous. It was unbelievable for her to find a man who is so trustworthy and contrasting to all other doctors and nurses in the unit. She told him that she killed Tori and being admitted there. Faraday was shocked at this and asked her about how it happened. She said, "Nearly everybody I knew thought she was perfect, but right from the beginning I sensed something wrong about her..." (*Ultraviolet* 184)

Alison told him about Tori and their last meet in the school before she disappeared or disintegrated. Alison told him all the misunderstandings they had and the evening that led to a fight. Tori started the fight and telling her the things she never wanted to hear. Alison wanted to go away but the more Tori pushed her the she angrier she grew. She struck out at Tori with both the hands, not bothering where she had hit her. She said,

The Noise- it got so loud I felt like my head was splitting open, and I could feel it...her...everything, all at once, and she screamed as she came apart but I couldn't make it stop, and I could still hear her screaming even after there was nothing left of her ---
(*Ultraviolet* 188, 189)

This instance gives the struggle that she was undergoing and how she was uncontrollable because of the noise from Tori. Her synesthesia of sensing something wrong produced sounds that nobody around her could hear. She felt head would split open because of the sound and it was unstoppable. Even though there was nothing left of her, she could hear her screaming. Even though there was nothing left of her after few minutes, she could hear her screaming. In addition, Alison was over- ridden because of the noises that any noise or simple touch would afflict her. Some synesthetes are over-sensitive to even mild noises or colors and

chose mild environment for their living. But for synesthetes like Alison, who hide their perceptions, the chance of managing their synesthesia or their over-riding senses could be ambiguous. In this situation, the synesthesia that occurs without any alert would complicate their lives. This is what exactly happened in Alison's case that day in school.

After sharing these experiences Alison feared that Faraday would also think that she was insane. The act of hiding Tori's disappearance was worse than the pain of relieving. She clenched her teeth trying to divert herself of thinking something else, but her memory was only filled with the bloodied face of Tori and her body twisted in anguish and shrieking. To her surprise Alison heard Faraday saying that he still believed her. He further told that she was not only sane but also innocent. At this she was at least relieved and also felt that how she had been stupid all the time. Dr. Chalmers shared his experience in an interview with Maureen Seaberg, about one of his classes, in which a student revealed "I have that. All these years I thought I was just weird" (Tasting the Universe, 128). This shows how synesthetes are relieved at least when they come to know about their condition. When synesthetes are removed of their negative thoughts through some kind of support, in the form of a counselling or rich resource from eminent personalities, they are likely to feel confident about themselves.

After long time Alison had met Kirk, who was not in the unit for few days. He told her about his past days with his mom and others, which was half fabricated and Alison found it through her sensations. He slowly spoke about her intention of marrying her and their future plans together. He also spoke about Tori's case and indicated that he might take care of it. Alison rejected him and went to library to escape from him. Kirk also came there leaving her nowhere to go safe. She was "standing still in the middle of the corridor, paralyzed, when the fire alarm above my head went off" (Ultraviolet 214). She also thought,

My stomach heaved. I couldn't do it... I'd never felt pain so loud. It felt like someone had smashed my skull open with sledgehammer, flayed the skin off my arms, and poured bleach down my throat, all at once. Convulsing in agony, I collapsed to the floor
(Ultraviolet 214,215)

The pain was similar to what she has experienced when she disintegrated Tori. She said to herself, "Not this, not again, not now---" (Ultraviolet 215). She felt as though she was trapped like a kaleidoscope, which spanned out of control. She felt her ears crashing, lights flashed, a million colors burned her skin, because of the smoke in the library. Kirk was the reason behind the smoke. 'Alien shapes loomed over me, their high pitched voices stabbing into my brain' (Ultraviolet 215). She was struggling herself to pull herself upright but her feet could not hold her weight. She wanted to get away from there, but she felt as though a giant's hand

closed around her arm and grinding her bones. Collecting all her strength and extreme panic she kicked out of the library. In spite of all trying to hold her, she wrenched herself free. After this Alison thought she could have died. It was horrible for her to breathe and have a pulse.

When the negative aspect of synesthesia increases, as in the above incident synesthetes feel that death would be better than living. This leads to the destruction of the beautiful part of synesthesia along with its positive attributes. Synesthetes are normally born with both positive and negative qualities of synesthesia, but the external factors that affects their living must be taken care. It would be also unwise to abruptly determine that death would be a solution for their problems. When they are pushed to that kind of mindset, proper encouragement and supervision is necessary.

At this, Faraday assured her that if she let him to help her, he would help her with some of her problems and see what he could do. “I’d lost faith in myself, and everyone else I’d ever trusted had let me down. But here was Faraday, picking up my shattered confidence and handing back it to me” (*Ultraviolet* 227).

She understood that she was not insane and not different. All her confidence is gathered up with new plight of her life with her gift. She felt that Faraday would understand her and believe what she says about her sensations and would not consider her as insane. Faraday enquired about someone whom she could talk about her condition. After hearing her say nobody, he further spoke about anything that she could do to take her mind off it. At their next session they spoke about Kirk and how he downloaded pictures from internet thinking that could make her happy. On that day it was the picture of an owl wearing a top. She avoided Kirk and the picture didn’t interest her. In an article *Famous Synesthetes: a Closer Look* Frantz Liszt, a Hungarian composer and pianist of the Romantic era is quoted. “O please, gentlemen, a little bluer, if you please! This tone type requires it!” (Liszt Web) for him the music played evokes colors, but it seemed not to satisfy him. Similarly, for Alison the colors of the picture were all wrong and they weren’t enough. She told Faraday that the colors were all wrong and they weren’t enough. Further she told him that it was like a new artist who failed to mix the correct pair of colors to bring out a new one. For Alison it was similar to watching a television, she told if it was a realistic show its colors must also be realistic. Faraday opened his laptop, typed a small word on the orange screen in a slight green color. “Tetrachomacy” I said slowly, tasting the syllables” (*Ultraviolet* 247).

Faraday was amazed by this. He thought she was exceptional and told her that there was no wonder that she was able to see things that nobody could see. He told that she was a tetrachomat. He explained “tetrachomat is a person who is with four color cones for vision

instead of the usual three” (*Ultraviolet* 248). It enables a person to differentiate different hues, even into the ultraviolet range. Tetrachomats are rare and especially female. The reason behind her ability to see the typed word and television programs or images, which was barely visible, because of her ultraviolet range. She recollected, “The rotten peach, I thought dizzily. The mark under Tori’s skin. I really had seen those things. Even without synesthesia, I would still have seen them” (*Ultraviolet* 248)

She recollected the mark that she found on Tori’s arm. It was not visible to anyone on the school except Alison. She felt that she was a synesthete and also a tetrachomat all her life. She didn’t felt happy about it, instead she asked him that after Tori’s death why all her perceptions grew stronger and she could sense things that she never sensed before. Without clear evidence it was wrong to conclude that Tori was dead, told Faraday. He added that she had incredible gifts. Though Alison couldn’t imagine a life without her sensations and her tetrachomacy, she feared that she was dangerous. In spite of the more pleasure that those sensations brought, Alison’s notions about her condition was mixed with her both positive and negative circumstances.

It was Alison’s birthday. Her parents were there to wish her with gifts. Adding to other gifts there was her keyboard and with immense joy she hugged her parents. She started playing,

Melody came first, icy-bright as sherbet; then the tropical hues of harmony, and the dusky tones of the bass clef. Louder notes projected themselves at the front of my mental stage, while softer ones lingered in the background. Holding the musical picture in my mind, I lowered my hands and began (*Ultraviolet* 253)

The art of playing keyboard is exemplified through her synesthesia, resulted in creating magic. Due to lack of practice, she slipped off the keys first, but she picked up later. She played whole heartedly, which even her piano notes were not aware of. “At last I shifted into a minor key and slowed down, letting my fingers speak of all the emptiness I’d been feeling, the yearning for freedom and home” (*Ultraviolet* 254). Khalil Gibran in his very first Arab book *Al- Musiqah* wrote, “Music is the language of the spirit. It opens the secret of life bringing peace, abolishing strife” (34). In the same way the language of Alison became music that brought peace and satisfied her yearning. It was able to pause the battle inside her and spoke all her emptiness. She considered that her shelter and home was music and her freedom is enjoyed with its companion .She was in her own world making music, suddenly she realized somebody standing and watching her at the doorstep. She knew that it was Faraday who brought the piano on requesting Dr. Minda, though he didn’t admit it. When he was about to move she caught his hand and said she had something to play for him. She composed that very moment for him. After composing

she felt all her sensible parts had number of things to deliver, but she thought he was a researcher and she was her subject. Yet her heart longed for once. Faraday left with a friendly hug.

Dr. Minda warned about their relationship, which was because of the complaint made by Kirk. The therapy room, where she was playing her keyboard was dark and Alison and Faraday were there and parted with a hug- these made Kirk jealous and complaint about them to Dr. Minda. Dr. Minda believed Alison's words than Kirk's complaint so he warned only to meet with him during their session's .The next day in the group therapy, Kirk scintillating with energy. It was a triumphant glint in his eye, the opposite of what Alison thought.

Faraday came half an hour earlier and pulled her out of the yoga class to talk to him. They were hiding in the conference room and Alison asked what was wrong. He said that he has to hurry and added that does Alison believed him. As she said yes, he continued, "You're not insane. You're not a murderer. And what you saw happened to Tori was real. Don't let anyone make you forget that" (*Ultraviolet* 262, 263)

Before anything she could understand the door was bang open by security guard and Dr. Minda. He was taken by Dr. Minda telling Alison that Faraday has an appointment with him. Nobody was there to help Alison about what was happening. She turned back and she heard Kirk conversing with somebody that he had already told that there was something creepy about Faraday. He told that when he was messing around and looking for old photos and stuff, he googled him and got his page at the university. He continued saying that his pictures were spoofed and the address was not the same as the real address of South Africa University. The papers and PDF's with his name were all credited to a bunch of others. Kirk took all these to Dr. Minda and Dr. Minda had called the university and they were shocked to hear that the university members have never heard of a guy named Faraday. He said he may be jailed for that and considered it would be the best for screwing around a girl who was already messed in her head. Alison, hearing this felt like someone was prying her ribcage open and tearing her heart.

From the next day onwards, the hot topic of the unit was Faraday and Alison. The patients in the unit spoke about Faraday in an abusing manner, which Alison couldn't tolerate. Dr. Minda told and his connection to the University of South Africa was false. When Dr. Minda asked Alison whether he had made her uncomfortable or touched her sexually, she said no recollecting his gentle touch around her. He also asked whether he pressurized her to say any personal information regarding her including the police case. Alison thought that it was Alison who told them out of her will and he also believed her and really seemed to care. When she said no Dr. Minda was surprised because when he confronted him, he claimed that he was a journalist and he has been working undercover operation to investigate her case for his magazine. He

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showed her his magazine, and also apologized for exposing her into this without thoroughly investigating his credentials.

Alison, shattered because of this, thought of what he had told her. She decided it was her time to stop fighting the system and to work with it to get out of the prison. She thought “-even it meant sacrificing my secrets and my pride” (*Ultraviolet* 275). She collects information surfing through net- scientific papers, newspaper articles, forums bubbling with conversations and was happy that at least his information regarding her problem was true. She gives all the known information to Dr. Minda. He was uncertain to believe that the reason behind all her violent episodes are because of her senses gets over- stimulated. Alison explained him,

My synesthesia gets a lot more intense when I’m under pressure’, ‘the fight I had with Tori... it was pretty emotional, and we’d been building up to it for a long time I felt guilty for hitting her, and I was scared I’d get in trouble, and by the time I got home I was so upset that every little thing sets me off. Sudden noises, bright lights, people touching me or even just talking to me- it all hurt so much, I would have done anything to make it stop. And when I couldn’t get the pace and quiet I needed to calm down, my brain just sort of... short- circuited, I guess. (*Ultraviolet* 277).

This details that how she had gained her confidence to explain her condition, without any inhibition of considering herself insane. When she is undergoes pressure, she could not tolerate the intense synesthesia. Anything such as loud noises, bright lights and even the touch or talk made her lose her control. She also explained the library incident which was similar to the fight occurred with Tori. Though Dr. Minda had learned about synesthesia, he didn’t think it would be this serious. He enquired that why she had not informed them to her family, since this condition was with her from her childhood. She told that she was afraid there was something wrong with her and it was especially after her mother’s reaction. As she had explained the reason behind her actions so far, she pleaded Dr. Minda to allow her to go home, at least for a day or two.

Dr. Minda further questioned about what happened when she was at a row with Tori. She could only say that one minute Tori was there and the next minute she disappeared. He asked whether she might have killed her by accident and blocked the memory out. Alison felt the voices of Faraday in her mind whispering that she was not insane and she was not a murderer. She geared up her confidence and told that if police found out and come up with clear evidence then she will have to accept it, but for now she didn’t knew how it was possible for her to disintegrate Tori.

Soon Alison heard that without any proceedings from Dr. Minda Alison's mother wanted to take her home for the weekend. Dr. Minda dictated her conditions to be followed as she did with her mother. The news of going home was incredible for Alison. Dr. Minda considered it as a good sign from her mother and wished her good luck. Alison's mother realized her fault of neglecting her when Alison was in desperate need of her. Alison thought it must be some alien inside her mother's skin who is speaking, because it was totally contrasting to the mother who refused her appeal to come home.

When they were on their way to home, Alison's mother revealed that Alison's grandmother was a synesthete who was likely with Alison's conditions. She also refused medications fearing that her private world would be taken off from her. Then her condition become worse and along with that cancer took her and she passed away. Alison's mother was instructed that her illness would run in families and if she had children they might also have the condition. Alison's mother added,

I'm so sorry,' she whispered. 'I know I've hurt you.....disappointed you.....in so many ways. I don't expect you to forgive me, but.....I want you to know that I love you, Alison. And that if I could turn back the time, and change everything that happened between us....I would (*Ultraviolet* 289)

The above lines show how the synesthesia is being feared by normal people and so Alison's mother also felt that Alison would be considered insane by others. She also revealed that after being thrown out from the psychiatric unit Faraday met Alison's parents and explained the condition and also saved their misconception about her condition. Hearing this she was eager to meet Faraday and so she phoned him. Though his number was registered long back in her memory she was able to retrieve it through her colors associations. He was there for her. Part of Alison wanted to slap him and shout in fury and betrayal but rest of her wanted to express love.

They both drove in Faraday's car. He was straight from his work as a janitor and added that he doesn't needed much sleep. Alison asked him whether it was just like his profession as a journalist. He spoke against that thought and said that he was really a scientist. He explained that he was waiting for the right moment to reveal his identity because not all could believe his story.

He told that he belongs to some other planet, where the scientist team had been researching on an extraordinary and powerful natural phenomenon. As a boy he was curious and believed that they could learn more if one of them went and learnt about the phenomenon first hand. He also volunteered for that. Other scientists told that it was dangerous and things would

go wrong. On the contrary, he wanted to prove himself and so with the help of another apprentice he determined to investigate the phenomenon first hand. They borrowed a machine that the scientists used as a transport cargo and it was set up into the middle of the phenomenon to take Faraday. At first the plan worked perfectly and he safely arrived at his destination. But when he tried to contact his apprentice at the other end and deliver his readiness to come home, there was no reply from him. He also tried to find out his machine but he could no longer find it. He was abdicating. He had nobody and nothing and even knew no language of Earth. He taught himself the language by visiting the library for one year and started to know things he wanted to know. Once he created a legal identity for himself life became easier. But it was not enough for him that he wanted to find his machine and make it work properly and go home.

Faraday wanted Alison to find out his home. He had been investigating everything possible- “bizarre newspaper story, urban legend, and coffee- shop rumor that crossed my path. Strange lights, odd noises, people disappearing without any trace-“(Ultraviolet 303). Alison shattered at this, asked him that whether he chased her and studied her like a lab animal and gained her hope to know what happened to Tori. He explained that he already knew that Tori disintegrated which Alison told him before. She has everything to do with it because he knew she had synesthesia even before he met her. He added that he came with a thought of persuading her to help him, but after knowing the torment she was undergoing he changed his priorities. He wanted help to go home as it was with Alison. He told that if she has to blame someone for Tori’s death it must be him “Because the machine that brought me here, the one I’ve been looking for all these years...is the same one that tore her apart” (Ultraviolet 306).

He told her the phenomenon was a dimensional rift that links the one part of universe to the other. They measured the rate of the rift at which it was moving in space and calculated few thousand years ago that it would have passed directly through the planet, where they belonged to. So far it have been possible for them to step out from their planet into Earth and the same way from Earth to their planet. He further told that this must be possible because both the planet’s people come from the same ancestors. Alison guessed that that is why he looked exactly as a human only difference with his eyes. His eyes was violet.

Alison thought that all these were fake as his identity, but her synesthesia made no signs of lie. So she asked him to lie and as he said he didn’t care for her and he was not an alien, her sensations tasted like a cocoa powder. He wanted Alison to find the machine and if he could repair it, he could find the reason behind what happened to Tori and why it had killed Tori, as Alison believed. He pleaded her to come with him to know more about Tori’s disintegration and his story. Though Alison wanted to go home, she agreed. They went to the school, where she disintegrated Tori. The machine was a tool that was transmitting information and it can also

record every detail of the object to the subatomic level and transmit the information to the other side of the rift.

The machine was also able to transport people, of which Faraday was a living example. It would be extremely painful when a person is shifted. He told her that the process would be virtually instantaneous and there could be no reason that the person who is transformed must be conscious. Alison could hear Tori screaming in agony, even at that moment at the back of her mind. If there was no great damage, Faraday told that there are chances of Tori being alive.

Alison wanted to believe it at once, but again at once she had very little hope. She tried whether she could sense anything with her synesthesia. She could not because her synesthesia was as natural as breathing for her. Dr. David Chalmers, the author of *The Conscious Mind* also known for coining the phrase ‘the hard problem of consciousness’ who, in an interview with Maureen Seaberg says, “For me, it is like breathing: I was born with the lungs that support these altitudes” (120). This example shows that for synesthetes their perceptions are like breathing that could not be taken away and also it is hard for them to force their perceptions to occur. Synesthesia had not been a forced phenomenon all her life. With broken heart Faraday and Alison returned to car. Alison tried to console him, but the chip in his hand began to create noise that she was experiencing similar with Tori, “Rust speckled my vision, and my head filled with a piercing, hateful drone- the noise I’d hoped never to hear again” (*Ultraviolet* 324)

All happened once again because she heard the unbearable sound, which was from Tori the other day, but now with Faraday. She ran away from him for the noise “All night I thought I was hearing mosquitoes but it wasn’t, it was you, and that- thing!” (*Ultraviolet* 325). The chip he was inserted with makes much noise and she, out of piercing sensations ran to the pine tree and ripped out the machine from its trunk and handed to Faraday. She could not bear that sound and at an attempt to stop the sound, she snatched from him. Unfortunately it bursts and both Faraday and Alison gets into the other planet.

The pain was horrible. Alison thought that she was dead, but they were in Faraday’s home (i.e.) another planet. They found Tori alive there. She was like a rebellion angel sitting with the same dress and wounded nose. Tori wanted Alison to take her home, and it was eight hours she had been there. Alison realized that the time differs to one planet to other, and she also reminded herself the urge of returning home as soon as possible. At an attempt of escape from there, Faraday spoke to the apprentice once helped him, but he was against the thought of helping them. He told in their language to Faraday that Tori was also an alien and he kept her under experimentation of her lives in the other planet called Earth. As the row between Alison

and Tori grew, he feared Alison might kill Tori and so he brought her back. It was not an easy job to get out from there because the wormhole through which they came has shut.

On the other hand, Alison understood that it was she who mistook Tori's behavior, but she was a good person. Once all came to know that the warm hole they came through was shut, Tori became inconvincible with her burst out tears. Faraday told that he was once friend to the apprentice, but now it can't be the same. He tried to talk to him further. Alison left the room to know what Tori was doing. As she stepped out, she waited besides the door end and listened what Faraday and the apprentice spoke. The apprentice made clear that he wanted to show the group, who had gone to collect materials for the planet, his experiment and become a great scientist. He added that after the experiment's success Tori might be killed and the decision will be finalized by the heads of the scientists.

Alison was in a hurry to inform Tori that she might be killed. But she thought it would be inappropriate to say that to Tori, who was working on the holes to try open them. Tori told her she would not lose hope until she found one to open. Faraday joined them because he knew how important it was for them to go to their planet. He told that the apprentice would not get up because he had hit him and locked up in the room. As Faraday and Tori was working with the warm hole and other machines, Alison had no work to do. Faraday asked her to take rest because she looked very tired. She slept for more than an hour and when Faraday woke her up she was able to mention the time with her synesthesia. She even felt the emotions of Faraday and realized they failed. Alison also told him that she listened the conversation between Faraday and his friend and she could easily understand their language because of her synesthesia.

I can sense the shape of things, feel their texture, even tell you what colour they are, without looking at them. And when you sent me out of the observatory, so you could talk to Mathis in your own language...I didn't recognise any of the words, but understood what you were saying (*Ultraviolet* 377)

Faraday was surprised by this because he knew that her synesthesia had changed again. Though he was happy, his inability to take them to their planet made him sad. It was a credit that was similar to Vladimir Nabokov, an Australian writer, who was able to 'same letters in different languages'. Their closeness made them forget their state and to fill the pain of not being able to go home, both kissed each other. She wanted him to roll down, but her responsibility of taking Tori home stood first. Faraday told her that the warm hole they found is unstable and they were unable to detect what was in the other end. If Alison and Tori were sent without knowing this they would land somewhere instead of Earth. After many failed attempts Alison suggests that she would try it with her Synesthesia to find the Earth. She said,

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My synesthesia,' I said. 'I know it's probably impossible, but- when I was at Pine Hills, every time I looked at the night sky, I heard music. Always the same music, but totally different from the song that the stars sing out here. I'd know that song again. And there's the relay, too- it's sending out a signal, isn't it?' (*Ultraviolet* 381)

She believed the same song that soothed her could help her to identify Earth and it's still sending out signal. It was unique that she could even differentiate it from each stars sensations. Faraday thought that it would be difficult to sense Earth from a long distance. Yet he believed Alison, "You've never really tested the limits of your abilities, have you?" (*Ultraviolet* 381). She had feared to test her abilities because she thought that she would lose her mind. For now it doesn't matter because she considered it as her responsibility to take Tori home. Once she was ready she looked into the sky. Her tetrachromacy and synesthesia both played their role

"I was speechless with awe. A tapestry of iridescent light unfurled before me, star-jewelled, and shimmering with all the colors of the spectrum and beyond. I'd seen the aurora borealis once and been entranced by its otherworldly glow; but this was a billion times lovelier- and more dangerous." (*Ultraviolet* 383)

For the first time she stepped to know all her abilities. It was a gradual change of her that her synesthesia once made her consider herself insane has become not only wonderful but opened its wings to experience what she is capable of. She lifted her hands even to touch the rift, she realized it was her crate she was wearing. She actually felt like floating in space. "Ice- hot stabbing eighty-seven sour crimson slashes suffocating wet ochre thickness pounding dizzy hideous triangle fifty pulsating opaque acrid zigzags crushing white fire hurt -----" (*Ultraviolet* 384)

With steeping emotions holding confidence and her responsibility to take back Tori home, she enabled herself to allow her senses to merge. It was unbearably intense and she shut it down again. "I'd lose my mind" (*Ultraviolet* 387). She was about to withdraw but Faraday always believed her. Alison's memory was loaded with memories from row with Tori to Dr. Minda's last appointment. As Tori was losing hope in her, she picked up her confidence again and her only last thought was Faraday and Tori. She thought what would happen if she failed. But she thought, "I heard the universe as an oratorio sung by a master choir of stars, accompanied by orchestra of the planets and the percussion of satellites and moons." (*Ultraviolet* 393)

Alison found the universe through the experience of envisioning what she is capable of with her extraordinary senses. She was overwhelming with the thought of herself. Her pains were senseless and she considered her mistakes were all for a good reason. Even the oratorio singing was splendid for that reason.

I realized then that even though I was a tiny speck in an infinite cosmos, a blip on the timeline of eternity, I was not without a purpose. And as long as I had a part in the music of the spheres, even if it was only a single grace note, I was not worthless. Nor was I alone. (*Ultraviolet* 394)

Alison realized that she had a purpose and her life was worth to be rejoiced with her gift. When all was ready, the apprentice was trying to break open the door. Faraday realized their need to go fast and made the arrangements. The warm hole was also in a temporal flux and not stable all time. Alison pleaded Faraday to come with them. He told he can't and also added that he has to stay there because the impulse generator was not stable enough. It was necessary for someone to stay there and keep the readings constant for them to land safely. Alison told she loved him. Faraday to he didn't but Alison knew he did and they parted.

Alison and Tori returned home, and the mystery was cleared. Alison was put up in the unit again. Tori spoke to Dr. Minda to let her home and bumped up stories of what had happened. Tori and her parents moved to another place because it would be safe for Alison. Alison's notions of her indifference, mental illness and insecurity is removed by experiencing her real worth of living.

Every individual perceive world in a unique way based on the notions and experiences that shapes their life. Synesthesia is one such trait that allows one to perceive the world in a different way. It does not mean that one is mentally ill when they view things differently. It is their ability that enables one to envision their capability of experiencing something not through the commoners' eye. Their world may be different but they may not be different because they are also bound to live with their exceptional quality. This research is one of the experiments of such disability turning to be their ability. They are not indifferent rather view things differently. They are not disabled but are abled in a unique way with great gifts to open their individuality.

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