A Post-Dramatic Analysis of Simon Stephens's Play:
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

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Abstract

Post-dramatic theatre is a new form of contemporary theatre practice. It emerged at the end of the twentieth century by the German theatre researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann. This concept seeks to examine and evaluate recent developments in theatre that have started to move away from conventional dramatic forms, emphasizing experiences that transcend the written text and traditional acting. Simon Stephens is one of the most prominent figures in post-dramatic theatre. His theatrical works are characterized by creativity and challenge traditional dramatic forms, offering new horizons in the world of theatre. This paper attempts to analyze Stephens's play, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2012), using the theory of post-dramatic. This analysis aims to understand how the play deconstructs the traditional dramatic structure and reshapes it in new and unconventional ways to offer a comprehensive understanding of the innovative potential of post-dramatic theatre and its influence on modern performance practices.

Keywords: *Post-dramatic Theatre, Innovation, Dramatic forms, Deconstruction, Performance practices.*

1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, contemporary theatre has faced significant changes, adopting innovative approaches that challenge traditional dramatic forms. One of the most significant changes is the emergence of post-dramatic theatre. The concept of post-dramatic theatre was created by German the researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann in the late 20th century. This type of theatre represents a shift away from traditional dramatic forms. It "is steered by the radical displacement – if not the ultimate dethronement – of dramatic text, in favor of other theatrical parameters, such as body, space, sound or image"(Boyle 33). It highlights the performative aspect of theatre by concentrating on the sensory and experiential components of the theatrical event which helps to blur the boundaries between performance and text, actor and audience, and reality and fiction. (Jurs-Munby 10-11). Thus, the post dramatic theatre "seeks to completely abandon the mimetic for solely performative"(Carlson 58). In consequence, "signification is not the be-all and end-all of performance" in post-dramatic theatre (Defraeye 644).

Simon Stephens is a renowned British playwright and a significant figure in post-dramatic theatre. He has gained success and recognition from both critics and audiences. According to Jacqueline Bolton, "[i]n only ten years of writing professionally for the stage, Stephens's plays have been translated into over a dozen languages"("Simon" 102). His contribution to theatre "is not limited"(Bolton, *The Theatre* 3). Stephens believes that a playwright's work "is to create play, and the energy and anarchy and disorder and creativity that the play incorporates"(Svich 204). Hence, in *Simon Stephens: A Working Diary*, Stephens discusses the importance of creativity and structure in his theatrical writing, highlighting his approach to the structure of his plays which is as creative as his use of language and imagery (23).

This study applies the post-dramatic theory to analyze Stephens's play: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, which is an adaptation of Mark Haddon's novel of the same name. It tells the story of the fifteen-year-old Christopher Boone who has extraordinary mathematics skills but finds difficulty to interact with people. The play provides a great case study for exploring post-dramatic principles as

it employs post-dramatic elements such as parataxis, event/situation, simultaneity, physicality, play with the density of signs, and irruption of the real.

The objective of this paper is to reveal how Stephens's play deconstructs and reshapes theatrical forms in innovative and unconventional ways, highlighting the main shifts in contemporary theatre and enhancing the understanding of post-dramatic influences on modern theatrical practices. The paper starts with a brief summary of the main features of Post-dramatic theatre, drawing on Lehmann's theory of post-dramatic theatre, and redresses it in the context of developments in contemporary theatre. Then, it analyzes Stephens's play: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, by applying post-dramatic theory to the play, to show how Stephens's play utilizes post-dramatic strategies to deconstruct and reconstruct the theatrical form in new way. The analysis focuses on two main aspects: the deconstruction of the traditional plot and the deconstruction of traditional character within the play.

2. Lehmann's Post-Dramatic Theory

Hans-Thies Lehmann's theory of post-dramatic theatre emerged as a response to the transformation of theatre and performance during the late 20th century. Traditional theatre, also called dramatic theatre, generally centers on a well-structured play, and emphasizes the development of characters and coherent plot. This classic form of theatre, which was rooted in Greek drama and later developed by playwrights like Shakespeare and Ibsen, depends on a written text where dialogue and action work together to build a cohesive performance.

In contrast, post-dramatic theatre adopts a different approach, where the text "is no longer the central element of performance, but is situated at the same level as the other signs that compose the theatrical production"(Bouko 25). In addition, in post-dramatic theatre, the dramatic form of mimesis has receded "in favour of a more self-reflexive model of representation"(Bicknell 31).This theatre aims to engage the audience on a sensory and emotional level rather than focusing on plot and character development. It "can contain all moods and modes"(Fuchs 179). According to Lehmann's theory of post-dramatic theatre, there are certain signs and traits of post-dramatic theatre, a work does not need to exhibit all these characteristics simultaneously to be classified as post-dramatic (57).

According to Lehmann's theory there are four signs of post-dramatic theatre: Retreat of Synthesis, Dream Images, Synaesthesia, and Performance Text which are used to identify the technical and conceptual indicators in the play that suggest the presence of post-dramatic elements (82). He suggests that the term 'theatrical signs' is meant to include all dimensions of signification, not merely signs that carry determinable information, but nearly all elements of the theatre (82). These signs are identifiable features that distinguish post-dramatic theatre from the traditional dramatic form.

Retreat of Synthes is one of the distinguished features of Post-dramatic theatre. In traditional theatre, plot, characters, setting, and dialogue all work together harmoniously to create a single story. According to Lehmann, this harmony is purposefully disrupted in post-dramatic theatre; in other words, "synthesis is cancelled" (82). Lehmann asserts that post-dramatic theatre divides and fragments the elements, producing a more unclear experience than combining them into a single, coherent whole. (82–83). In contemporary theatre, Lehmann's 'retreat of synthesis' has expanded into new dimensions. Now, Fragmentation has become a core approach to portray the complexities of modern life, which is increasingly characterized by digital interconnectivity, and the coexistence of multiple perspectives and realities. Consequently, many contemporary theaters utilize digital projections and physical performances to explore the boundaries between the real world and digital spaces, "enabling new forms of storytelling"(Foster 88).

Dream Images is another feature of Post-dramatic theatre. According to Lehmann "Post-dramatic theatre often utilizes dream images, fragmented images that do not follow a clear linear story like dreams to provoke an emotional and subconscious response from the audience rather than conveying a clear message in a performance (83). In addition, it is "a formal means of suspending the thematic flow of time"(Barnett 15). In contemporary theatre, this concept has evolved to include the use of virtual and augmented reality, allowing for new ways to create immersive and emotionally rich experience.an

Synaesthesia refers to the blending of multiple sensory elements, such as music, light, and movement, to create a theatrical experience. According to Lehmann, in post-dramatic theatre, synaesthesia is employed to enhance the audience's sensory

perception and provide more profound levels of interpretation (85). This concept has become increasingly relevant in contemporary theatre. It has expanded to include digital elements, which create a more interactive sensory environment that aligns with the complexities of modern life.

Performance Text is a sign of Post-dramatic theatre. According to Lehmann, the concept of 'text' extends beyond mere written texts to involve various forms such, as improvisation, and physical movements, and this allows artists to explore language, space and time creatively challenging boundaries (85-86). Lehmann's concept of performance text has developed in contemporary theatre to embrace the integration of modern technology and media. These advancements reflect how performance text now addresses the complexities of modern society.

In addition to the four signs, Lehmann asserts that there are eleven stylistic traits of post-dramatic theatre: parataxis/ non-hierarchy, simultaneity, play with the density of signs, plethora, musicalization, scenography, visual dramaturgy, warmth and coldness, physicality, concrete theatre, irruption of the real, and event/situation. These traits refer to the characteristic methods and techniques employed in post-dramatic theatre. These characteristics have evolved in contemporary theatre, demonstrating how post-dramatic theatre is inventive.

Parataxis/Non-hierarchy: it involves using juxtaposition and non-linear narrative structures where events, scenes, or elements are presented without a clear hierarchical order or linear progression. It involves presenting information in a more fragmented manner, allowing the audience to view various sections side by side (Lehmann 86). It encourages the audience to create their own connections and meanings rather than following a traditional plot. This trait has become more noticeable in contemporary theatre. It reflects a cultural shift towards valuing multiple narratives and non-linear storytelling, affirming that there is not a single authoritative perspective, but rather a blend of diverse elements that interact to form a cohesive whole.

Simultaneity: this refers to the simultaneous occurrence of various theatrical elements in a performance. As a result, the traditional structure of the play is broken, resulting in a multi-layered performance. It creates theatrical experience in which several events or actions cross over each other. This trait gives the audience a more

dynamic and fragmented experience as they choose where to focus their attention (Lehmann 88). In contemporary theatre, this trait has developed into a more dynamic form, where live performances interact with digital content at the same time, creating a complex and layered experience.

Play with the Density of Signs: this trait means the use of excessive signs or symbols in a performance to present a theatrical experience. This strategy has multiple ways of expression, through dense signs, to engage the audience in a sophisticated way and encourage them to think about how these aspects interact and contribute to the overall experience (Lehmann 89). The trait is exemplified in contemporary theatre by the use of multimedia, where visual and auditory elements are densely packed to create an environment of sensory overload, reflecting the complexity of modern life, where information comes from all directions.

Plethora: it refers to a performance that has an abundance of different elements such as actions, music, perspectives, and symbolic motifs. Instead of focusing on a single plot or theme, the play includes an abundance of images, sounds, and actions. This can evoke feelings of complexity, encouraging the audience to interact and interpret the performance in a variety of ways (Lehmann 90). In contemporary theatre, this trait manifests as an abundance of digital media formats, demonstrating the modern life surrounded by data and digital interactions.

Musicalization: Lehmann defines 'musicalization' as the integration of music and rhythm into theatre, not merely as background but as a structural element that can shape the atmosphere (99). This trait has expanded in contemporary theatre to include electronic music and live DJ performances, creating a synesthetic experience that blends music, text, and movements.

Scenography/Visual Dramaturgy: unlike traditional theatre, post-dramatic theatre utilizes visual elements to convey meanings and emotional states. According to Lehmann, these innovative visual storytelling approaches are utilized to create immersive environments that enhance the emotional effect of the performance and deepen thematic resonance, engaging the audience on an emotional and sensory level (94). In contemporary theatre, the trait has expanded to include interactive screens, and live digital effects, which respond to audience interactions and adjust the

performance dynamically based on real-time data, creating a more immersive experience (Sutherland 68).

Warmth and Coldness: it refers to the emotional distance or connection created between the audience and the performance. Unlike the traditional text which focuses on creating a sense of 'warmth' through the play and the audience (often created by focusing on characters' emotion), post-dramatic theatre, with its emphasis on visual and theatrical elements, can introduce a 'coldness' that some viewers may find alienating (Lehmann 95). The trait shows how performances balance emotional intimacy with intellectual distance. This duality reflects the complexity of contemporary society.

Physicality: it is the use of body language, gestures, and movements to portray feelings and meaning. In post-dramatic theatre, it is not limited to being a means of conveying the meaning, but rather becomes the main center of the performance; the body, in this theatre, is the center of attention rather than being a mere tool for presenting the text (Lehmann 96). In the contemporary theatre, this trait emphasizes the integration of physical actions with digital input, challenging traditional ideas of stage performance, "and creating new possibilities for immersive and interactive experiences"(Parker 58).

Concrete Theatre: this trait emphasizes the physical aspects of performance, such as space, bodies, and objects. The physical components of theatre, such as the performers' bodies, the colors, sounds, and materials employed, as well as how these elements interact with one another in space and time, are highlighted (Lehmann 98). Recently, this trait has developed. Theatres often mix real objects with digital effects, meeting modern audiences' expectations to experience performances on both physical and digital levels (Kaufman 76).

Irruption of the Real: it occurs when an actual event suddenly breaks through the fictional world of the play, showing the audience that they are witnessing something immediate and live. Using this method, the play's illusion is disrupted and a strong link is made between what is happening on the stage and the actual world (Lehmann 101–102). This trait has increasingly been utilized in contemporary theatre. In addition to Lehmann's characteristics of this trait, it has developed to include

performances which might incorporate live news, forcing the audience to confront the complexity of contemporary life.

Event/Situation: it refers to particular events or situations that drive the play. This technique encourages the audience to interact with these situations, experiencing the emotions and sensory details without the need for a clear plot (Lehmann 106). In contemporary theatre, this trait has become more prominent. It has evolved to incorporate contemporary technologies and sensory techniques, enriching the theatrical experience for contemporary audience.

3. The analysis of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, is a full-length play which consists of two acts, tells the story of Christopher Boone, a fifteen-year-old boy with autism. The play revolves around Christopher's quest to solve the mystery of who killed his neighbor's dog, Wellington. The play is set in Swindon and London, England. The main character, Christopher Boone, lives with his father, Ed. Other significant characters include Siobhan, Christopher's teacher, and Judy, his mother. The play begins with Christopher discovering Wellington, the neighbor's dog, dead in Mrs. Shears's garden. Determined to find the criminal, Christopher embarks on a detective journey. Throughout his investigation, Christopher uncovers unexpected truths about his own family. He learns that his mother, whom he believed to be dead, is actually alive and living in London. Christopher decides to travel to London, where he faces and overcomes numerous challenges, displaying his remarkable mathematical talents and unique perspective in life. By applying the post-dramatic theory to Stephens's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, the paper reveals how the play deconstructs the traditional dramatic structure of the plot and characters to present a new and profound theatrical experience.

3. A. Deconstructing the Traditional Plot:

Parataxis / Non-hierarchy:

In traditional theatre, the play follows a linear chronological order, starting from the beginning and developing sequentially until the end. This pattern helps the audience to follow the plot development and understand the events easily. In accordance with the post-dramatic theory which asserts that the technique of

parataxis/ non-hierarchy emphasizes the creating of fragmented and non-narrative structure (Lehmann 86), Stephens utilizes this trait in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,* and evolves it through the innovative use of digital technology, which enhances the fragmented narrative and "allows the spectator to get inside the mind of an autistic boy"(Al-Nuaimi 20).

The play often switches between Christopher's investigation into the dead dog and his daily life. For example, after arresting Christopher, the story quickly moves to scenes at his school where he interacts with his teacher, Siobhan:

> **Policeman One**. I'm arresting you for assaulting a police officer. I strongly advise you to get into the back of the police car because if you try any of that monkey-business again, you little shit, I am going to seriously lose my rag. Is that understood?
>
> **Siobhan**. I find people confusing. This is for two main reasons… I never said that .
>
> **Christopher**. Yes you did. (6)

The non-hierarchy trait has evolved through the use of digital elements such as projections and lighting changes, creating a fluid shift between locations, and reinforcing the fragmented structure of the narrative. This non-linear storytelling, where different parts of Christopher's life are shown side by side; juxtaposing scenes from different aspects of his life without a clear chronological order, demonstrates the use of parataxis in the play which deconstructs the traditional structure of plot.

In addition, parataxis is used to illustrate Christopher's thought process and the way his mind works and presents different layers of narrative without a strict chronological order. For example, while questioning his father about Wellington, Christopher recalls his mother's absence and how his father told him she was in the hospital. This memory, enhanced by digital projections and sound effects, reflects his fragmented perception of time and events. This mixture of past and present, by using parataxis, provides a deeper understanding of his character and emotional state.

Moreover, in the scene where Christopher discovers his mother's letters, the use of parataxis is evident through the juxtaposition of his reading of the letters with flashbacks to his memories of her, "[m]other had never worked as a secretary for that made things out of steel"(39). These flashbacks are presented by digital projections of the text. The use of modern technology enhances the disjointed timeline by overlaying past and present. This technique mixes memories with current events, creating a fragmented and non-linear narrative that reflects Christopher's internal conflict and sensory experiences.

This approach not only captures the fragmented nature of his experience but also emphasizes the richness and multiplicity of his thoughts and observations; Parataxis, with its emphasis on presenting different layers of narrative side by side rather than in a hierarchical sequence, allows the play to reflect Christopher's complex character.

Event/Situation:

Rather than structuring the story around a series of events that build toward a traditional climax, Stephens's play align with the post-dramatic theory, which emphasizes event/situation as a means of highlighting transformative moments that shape characters' lives (Lehmann 106). This trait evolves further by integrating modern technologies which "[push] the boundaries of traditional theater"(Brantley 4). Stephens's play focuses on events that reflect Christopher's psychological state rather than moving the plot forward in a conventional sense. In the play, Christopher frequently diverges from the main storyline to speak about stars; he says, "some people think the Milky Way is a long line of stars, but it isn't" (8). The situation devolves through the use of multimedia elements, including lightening shifts and background sound effects. Christopher's reflections on the stars are accompanied by immersive soundscapes and projections of the sky which highlight his anxiety and represent his character, emphasizing his detachment and his perspective on the world and social interactions.

The event/situation technique is also utilized when Christopher interacted with various strangers throughout his journey. This situation reveals his social challenges and strengths. These interactions do not necessarily advance the plot but offer deeper insights into his character and how he navigates the world. For example, When

Christopher talks to the lady at the information desk at the train station, the moment highlights his difficulty with social interactions:

> **Christopher**. How do I get to 451c Chapter Road, London NW2 5NG?
>
> **Information**. Where is that?
>
> **Christopher**. It's 45 1Cc Chapter Road, London, NWG. And sometimes you can write it 45 1 c Chapter Road, Willesden, London, NW2 5NG.
>
> **Information**. Take the Tube to Willesden Junction… Got to be near there somewhere.
>
> **Christopher**. What is Tube?
>
> **Information**. Are you real? (68).

In addition, the play does not with a traditional resolution of the plot but instead concludes with Christopher's achievement of taking his A-level math exam. This event is significant for Christopher's personal growth and triumph over his challenges. Christopher proudly announces his successful completion of the A-level math exam, he says: "I got an A* on my A-level… And then I'm going to university in another town…And I will be a scientist. I can do these things" (99). This event demonstrates Christopher's success rather than ending the plot in a traditional manner.

Simultaneity:

In accordance with the post-dramatic theory which asserts that simultaneity involves the presence of multiple elements or voices occurring at the same time (Lehmann 88), the play employs multiple voices to present different angles of the story, creating a fragmented plot that challenges linear development. Instead of a continuous storyline, the audience encounters a series of interconnected voices that reflect Christopher's fragmented perception of reality.

In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, when Christopher interacts with the Duty Sergeant at the police station, multiple voices, by "actors seated at the

margins of the stage step forward to assume various roles"(Soloski 2) appear simultaneously. This simultaneity in voices deconstructs the plot. The conversation is presented through overlapping voices, presented by actors and digital sounds, performing the plot in a fragmented manner that reflects Christopher's fragmented perception:

> **Voice Four**. A piece of string.
>
> **Voice Five**. A piece of a wooden puzzle.
>
> **Voice Six**. Three pellets of rat food for Toby, my rat.
>
> **Voice One**. £ 1.47 (this was made up of a £ 1 coin, a 20p coin, two 10p coins, a 5P coin and a 2p coin).
>
> **Voice Six**. A red paperclip.
>
> **Voice Four**. A key for the front door.
>
> **Voice Five**. A Swiss Army knife with thirteen attachments including a wire stripper … (7)

Furthermore, the contrast between Christopher's personal reality and how other people see him might be emphasized by these overlapping voices. The voices provide insight into the multitude of ideas and senses Christopher is processing, besides they also highlight the gap between his inner world and the way others (such as the police) perceive or interact with him. Rather than centering on Christopher as an isolated figure with a simple storyline, the play employs these voices, integrating with digital sounds, to highlight the variety of viewpoints and the fragmented character of reality as perceived by an individual such as Christopher.

Thus, the use of several post-dramatic elements such as parataxis, event/situation, and simultaneity, offers the audience a new way to understand the play beyond traditional frameworks. By the use of these stylistic traits, the play creates a unique experience that reflects the complexity of Christopher's personal journey in an innovative way. **3.**

B. Deconstructing Traditional Characters:

Physicality:

In *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, physicality plays a significant role in portraying Christopher's character in an untraditional structure. In accordance with the post-dramatic theory which asserts that physicality deconstructs the traditional structure of character, it is not primarily utilized to convey explicit meanings but rather to create evoke emotions (Lehmann 96), Stephens utilizes this trait to enhance the audience understanding of Christopher's character, incorporating multimedia elements which reflect Christopher's inner conflict.

In the first scene of the play, when Mrs. Shears sees Christopher touching her dead dog, she screams and asks him to get away from her dog. Christopher does not take a verbal response from her, but he makes some physical movements through which the audience is able to understand what he wants to say; "Christopher puts his hands over his ears. He closes his eyes. He rolls forward. He presses his forehead onto the grass" (4). Here, the physical movements, the integration of lighting shifts, and sound effects reflect Christopher's thoughts and feelings which he does not utter. His movements and digital effects reveal his tension and distress over the dog's death. Due to his autism, he finds it difficult to express himself through words, making physicality a crucial means of communication. As a result, the play effectively utilizes movement and visual elements to represent Christopher's internal state, allowing the audience to interpret his emotions in a way that transcends verbal dialogue.

Furthermore, in the police station, when the police ask Christopher questions about the dog, Christopher's discomfort is shown physically. Then, when the officer "tries to lift him up by his arm"(5), Christopher reacts violently and hits the officer. In fact, Christopher's body language clearly conveys how nervous and scared he is. Stephens enhances this physicality by utilizing sound effects and lightening shifts. These physical movements help the audience to understand Christopher's character. He does not know how to interact with people; he refuses to be touched, which is something he struggles with throughout the play.

In addition, Christopher mathematical way of thinking is shown by his physical movements. In the train station, Christopher is walking in a specific pattern, turning left, then right, and then repeating this sequence, "left, right, left, right, left, right,… "(59). Christopher's movements are a direct reflection of how his

mind works. Stephens evolves Christopher's physicality with mathematical visuals projected into the stage. Christopher's behavior is not just about getting from one place to another; it is a coping mechanism that helps him proceed and make sense of the chaotic world around him. These actions reveal a lot about his character; they show that Christopher is someone who finds comfort in numbers and patterns. Christopher's physical actions give the audience a window into his unique way of experiencing and interacting with the world, making his physicality an essential part of understanding his character. Thus, Christopher's character is shown through his physical actions rather than traditional dialogue structure.

Play with the Density of Signs

In traditional theatre, characters are usually developed through dialogue and actions, focusing on a straightforward storyline. But in the play, according to post-dramatic theory which asserts that the trait of 'the play of density of signs' involves the use of density of signs, symbols, or sensory elements to build meaning(Lehmann 89), Stephens utilizes the trait of 'the play of the density of signs' to rebuild the structure of characters in an unconventional way. In the play, 'the play of density of signs', specifically the excessive use of sounds and overlapping voices reveals, Christopher's suffering to deal with the world. Stephens takes this trait further, utilizing advanced technology and immersive sound design to externalize Christopher's inner thoughts.

When Christopher enters a crowded train station, the play utilizes a mix of loud noises, and overlapping voices, by utilizing modern sound technologies like immersive sound design, to represent his sensory overload. The audience hear what Christopher hears, which makes them feel his anxiety and confusion in his journey; they know about Christopher's fears and thoughts, which are not told through dialogue:

Voice Two. 0870 777 7676.

Voice Four. The Lemon Tree.

Voice One. No Smoking.

Voice Two. Fine teas.

> **Voice Five**. Automatic Fire Door Keep Clear.
>
> **Voice Two**. Air Conditioned.
>
> **Voice Three**. Reserved Parking (54-55).

Another example is when Christopher calms himself by focusing on familiar sounds, like reciting prime numbers; Christopher says "2 3 5 7 11 13 17 19 23 29 31 37 41 43 47 53 59 61 67 71 73 79 83 89 97 101 103 107 109…281"(63). This method helps him to find comfort and peace when he feels anxiety. By layering modern technology like projections of the prime numbers and Christopher's voice of reciting prime numbers , Stephens evolves the density of signs into a tool for both narrative and emotional impact to help the audience to understand how he deals with difficult situations; hence, "sound is performance"   (Ovadija 11). The use of dense sounds in the play helps to build Christopher's character in an innovative way. By making the audience experience his sensory world, the use of dense sounds in the play gives a deeper insight into his mind and feelings, showing the complexity of his character in a way that goes beyond simple dialogue and action. According to Fraser, Christopher's complex inner experiences are vividly portrayed in the play through the use of lighting and projections, which transform them into visual and emotional expressions on the stage (142).

Irruption of the real

In traditional drama, characters rarely break the fourth wall. The audience is an observer, not a participant. In accordance with Lehmann's trait of the 'irruption of the real' which happens when a real-life event unexpectedly disrupts the play (101), Stephens utilizes this technique and evolves it by integrating modern technology to reshape the character in an innovative way which deconstructs the traditional structure of characters. In the play, the characters interact directly with the audience, presenting their thoughts and emotions in a fragmented manner.

Christopher frequently addresses the audience directly, sharing his thoughts and emotions. This direct interaction breaks the fourth wall, creating a connection between the character and the audience. For example, in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Christopher narrates his story directly to the audience, explaining his thought processes and feelings. He says, "I don't like acting because

it is pretending that something is real when it is not really real at all so it is like a kind of lie" (50). This direct address brings the audience closer to his inner world. Another example, Christopher directly involves the audience in his mathematical problems, by utilizing projection mapping, sharing them with his mathematical problem as if they were part of his thought process. He says "I had ninety minutes to answer ten question – but I spent thirty minutes doing groaning which meant I only had six minutes to answer this question" (102). This interaction draws the audience into his unique way of seeing and solving problems.

Siobhan, Christopher's teacher, often addresses the audience, providing explanation to Christopher's behavior and thoughts. Her perspective is presented alongside Christopher's, by utilizing lightening shifts which isolate her from the rest of the scene. Through her direct addresses, Siobhan serves as a guide, helping the audience navigate Christopher's complex inner world; she contributes to present a new structure of the character. For example, Siobhan frequently reads from Christopher's notebook, explaining his thought processes and reactions to the audience. Her explanations offer an insight into why Christopher behaves the way he does, highlighting his challenges and strengths. She says, "Mother died two years ago…Then I went up to my bedroom…and played six games…a policeman thought I'd killed him…so I hit him"(12-13). This direct address from Siobhan places her observations alongside Christopher's experiences, enhancing the audience's understanding of his character.

Judy Boone, Christopher's mother, also breaks the fourth wall by addressing the audience directly through her letters to Christopher; this technique is enhanced by the integration of visual projections of her handwritten letters and memories. Her perspective is presented independently, providing a fragmented but comprehensive view of her character. Judy's direct addresses allow the audience to perceive her emotions and thoughts. For example, Judy's letters to Christopher are read aloud, revealing her emotions and experiences directly to the audience. These letters give an intimate look into her struggles, regrets, and desire to reconnect with her son, she says, "I wanted to explain to you why I went away… Iwas not a good mother, Christopher. Maybe if things had been different… I might have been better at it"(42). This direct address gives the audience a deeper understanding of her motivations and the complexities of her character.

In summary, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* deconstructs traditional structure of the character through the lenses of physicality, play with the density of signs, and irruption of the real. These post-dramatic traits portray characters innovatively, creating a complex and immersive theatrical experience that invites the audience to deeply connect with the characters and their thoughts.

4. Conclusion:

This paper applied the post-dramatic theory to Simon Stephens's play *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* to explore how the play breaks down traditional dramatic structures and rebuilds them in new and unique ways. It gave a clear understanding of the innovative potential of post-dramatic theatre and its effect on modern performance practices. The analysis focused on two main aspects: the deconstruction of traditional plot and the deconstruction of traditional character within the play.

In the play, Stephens deconstructs the traditional plot by using post-dramatic traits such as parataxis, event/situation and simultaneity. Stephens evolves these traits through the use of multimedia and modern technology. Parataxis, or non-hierarchy, is evident as the play abandons linear storytelling, frequently shifting between Christopher's investigation and his personal life without a clear chronological order. In addition, memories are mixed with current events. This technique helps to reflect Christopher's unique way of perceiving and interpreting his world. The event/situation trait is utilized to focus on transformative moments that reveal Christopher's psychological state rather than following a traditional plot structure. Events such as his explanations of mathematical concepts or the discovery of his mother's letters, provide deep insights into his character. Christopher's experiences at the train station and on the train to London highlight his sensory overload, focusing on his intense reactions rather than advancing the plot traditionally. The play ends with Christopher's personal achievement of passing his A-level math exam, marking his success instead of a conventional plot resolution. The irruption of the real technique is utilized by employing multiple voices which disrupts the conventional plot structure by presenting a fragmented narrative. The play employs overlapping voices to reflect Christopher's fragmented perception of reality. For example, during scenes involving his investigation into Wellington's death or his

personal routines, various voices provide fragmented accounts that interrupt the main plot. Through these post-dramatic traits, the play effectively deconstructs the traditional plot, offering a new perspective on the structure of the plot.

The characters in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* are represented through a non- traditional dramatic structure that challenges conventional character representation by incorporating post-dramatic traits such as physicality, play with the density of signs, and irruption of the real. Physicality is utilized to portray Christopher's character in an untraditional way. Christopher's movements, like turning left and write, show his mathematical mind. In addition, they reflect Christopher's comfort in dealing with patterns. Stephens's use of 'the play with the density of signs' reshapes the character in an innovative way, unlike the traditional structure of characters. For example, in the train station, the dense use of sounds and overlapping voices, integrating with digital sounds, helps the audience to understand how Christopher deals with his fear and confusion; it reveals Christopher's' anxiety and internal conflicts. 'Irruption of the real' is employed to break the fourth wall, and to present characters addressing the audience directly, sharing their thoughts and emotions. This direct connection between the characters and the audience creates deeper insights into characters' complexities. Through these techniques, the play challenges traditional character roles, offering an innovative portrayal that deconstructs traditional structure of characters.

In conclusion, applying the post-dramatic theory to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* effectively reshapes the traditional theatrical forms. By challenging the traditional plot and character, Simon Stephens creates a play that not only tells a story in a new way, but also deeply connects the audience with the performance.

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تحليل ما بعد درامى لمسرحية سيمون ستيفنز الحدث المروع للكلب فى منتصف الليل

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المستخلص:

مسرح ما بعد الدراما هو شكل جديد من أشكال الممارسة المسرحية المعاصرة. وقد ظهر هذا المفهوم فى نهاية القرن العشرين على يد الباحث المسرحى الألمانى هانز ثيس ليمان. و يهدف هذا المفهوم إلى تحليل و تفسير الاتجاهات الجديدة فى المسرح التى بدأت فى التباعد عن الأشكال الدرامية التقليدية, مع التركيز على التجارب التى تتجاوز النص المكتوب و التمثيل التقليدى. يعد سيمون ستيفنز أحد أبرز الشخصيات فى مسرح ما بعد الدراما. وتتميز أعماله المسرحية بالإبداع و تحدى الأشكال الدرامية التقليدية, مما يفتح آفاقاً جديدة فى عالم المسرح. يحاول هذا البحث تحليل مسرحية ستيفنز، الحدث المروع للكلب فى منتصف الليل (2012), باستخدام نظرية ما بعد الدراما. يهدف هذا التحليل إلى فهم كيفية تفكيك المسرحية للبنية الدرامية التقليدية و إعادة تشكيلها بطرق جديدة وغير تقليدية لتقديم فهم شامل للإمكانات الابتكارية للمسرح ما بعد الدراما و تأثيرها على ممارسات الأداء الحديثة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مسرح ما بعد الدراما, الابتكار, الاشكال الدرامية, التفكيك, ممارسات الأداء.