

A Postdramatic Reading: Misogyny in Simon Stephens's Play *Three Kingdoms*

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Abstract

In *Poetics*, Aristotle explains the first known framework of dramatic theatre in history, basing it on certain principles. The restrictive structure of these principles makes playwrights apply an understanding that prioritizes performance, and seek a theatrical aesthetic shaped according to the mentality of the present. In this sense, *Postdramatic Theater* (2006), which Lehmann puts forward, shows the realities of postmodern society and highlights the performance text created with active participation of audience and reader. Contemporary British playwright Simon Stephens, who presents the lives of postmodern individuals in his plays, draws attention as a leading playwright of the Postdramatic theatre. Stephens's play *Three Kingdoms*, which was staged in three different countries and in three different languages, stands out as it contains the postdramatic elements put forth by Lehmann. The aim of this article is to examine the play *Three Kingdoms* by Simon Stephens, focusing on Postdramatic theater principles determined by Lehmann.

Keywords

Postdramatic Theatre
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About Article

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Postdramatik Bir Okuma: Simon Stephens'in Üç Krallık Oyununda Mizojini

Öz

Aristoteles *Poetika* adlı eseri ile dramatik tiyatronun tarihte bilinen ilk çerçevesini belli ilkelere dayandırarak açıklar. Bu ilkelerin uzun yıllar süren sınırlayıcı yapısı, oyun yazarlarını performansa öncelik tanıyan bir anlayışı uygulamaya ve günün anlayışına göre biçimlenen yeni bir tiyatroya estetiği aramaya iter. Bu anlamda Lehmann'ın ortaya attığı, *Postdramatik Tiyatro* (2006) postmodern toplumun gerçeklerini açık bir şekilde göstermeye çalışır ve izleyici ile okuyucunun da aktif katılımıyla oluşturulan performans metnini öne çıkarır. Oyunlarında günümüz postmodern bireylerinin gerçek yaşamlarından kesitler sunan çağdaş İngiliz oyun yazarlarından Simon Stephens, Postdramatik tiyatronun önde gelen oyun yazarlarından biri olarak dikkat çeker. Stephens'in üç farklı ülkede ve üç farklı dilde sergilenen *Üç Krallık* oyunu, kurgulanmasında Lehmann'ın belirlediği postdramatik öğeleri barındırması açısından incelemeye değer bir eser olarak göze çarpar. Bu makalenin amacı, Simon Stephens'in *Üç Krallık* oyununu Lehmann'ın belirlediği Postdramatik tiyatro ilkelerini merkeze alarak incelemektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

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Introduction

The first known frame of the traditional theatre on the history of stage was explained by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. The features that Aristotle based on the principles of “the three units of time, place and action” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 3) and the description of the theatre as a “whole, with a beginning, a middle and an end” reached the Elizabethan period with certain determinations since they are “time-bound concept[s]” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 3). Playwrights, who could not remain independent from the social events experienced, took the first steps to break away from the dramatic theatre with the idea of getting rid of the normative framework in which the taboos created by the traditional theatre during the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods were found. Thus, the playwrights launched a quest in order to produce individual-oriented works in which they could express themselves more easily, without being subjected to certain restrictions. Brechtian epic theatre, Antonin Artaud’s theatre of cruelty and absurd theatre, which they thought were the answer to this quest, failed to satisfy the playwrights and pushed them into a situation that Peter Szondi called “crisis of drama” (in Lehmann, 2006, p. 2).

Naturalist, Expressionist and Existentialist works are analysed as various ‘rescue attempts’ that still seek to adhere to dramatic form whilst exploring new content, whereas works by Piscator, Brecht, Bruckner, Pirandello, O’Neill, Wilder and Miller are discussed in terms of “tentative solutions” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 3).

The issues such as “finance capitalism, technological advances, globalisation and mediatisation challenge traditional concepts of nationhood, subjectivity, class” cause the theatre to question itself and push it to seek salvation from the crisis it is in (İlter, 2007, p. 7). In addition to this, “art forms such as happenings, environments, Fluxus events and performance art or live art”, which were prioritized by neo-avant-gardes to give importance to performance on stage, brought the performance text to the agenda (Lehmann, 2006, p. 4). With the performance text gaining importance, “a more permeable relationship between the audience and the performer” is formed and the audience moves away from the fact that the play is a work of fiction (Nutku, 2000, p. 253). While the actor performs on stage by using her/his body, it is up to the audience to observe and interpret this performance. All these developments form the cornerstones of Postdramatic theatre, which is a new theatrical aesthetic.

Hans-Thies Lehmann’s *Postdramatic Theatre* “systematically considers the new theatre aesthetics in terms of their aesthetics of space, time and the body, as well as their use of text” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 1). Postdramatic theatre, by assimilating certain principles of dramatic

theatre within itself and keeping up with its age, becomes the voice of the playwrights with some innovations it has made to the theatre. Lehmann systematically explains these formations within the post-theatre in his work *Postdramatic Theatre*. Based on the traits stated by Lehmann, the most striking principles of the postdramatic theatre are framed as follows: “hierarchy” seen/existing in the dramatic text disappears in the post dramatic text (Parataxis/non-hierarchy). Thus, in the text, which is shaken to its very foundation, Time intertwines, and confusion occurs. This gives rise to the principle of Simultaneity. This situation, which causes incomprehensible situations in the mind of the audience, activates the perception of the audience by creating a “retreat of synthesis”, that is, an individual rather than a common meaning. In this context, for the audience, who are accustomed to watching traditional theatre works with a definite beginning and end, the retreat of synthesis and fragmentation of the text create “warmth and coldness”, as they make it difficult for the audience to understand. This situation prevents the formation of a sense of integrity. Hence, “the spectators are no longer just filling in the predictable gaps in a dramatic narrative but are asked to become active witnesses who reflect on their own meaning-making and who are also willing to tolerate gaps and suspend the assignment of meaning” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 6).

The actor's body integrates with the stage and a state of “Physicality” emerges. In line with these thoughts, the stage design activates the empty parts in the mind of the audience with the idea of “play[ing] with the density of signs” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 86). This is accompanied by music/sound (Musicalization) and harmony. Beyond all these, concrete theatre, which is the expression of the most abstract thought that can exist, is a total opposition to the unity of meaning in the dramatic text. Since all these principles are performance-oriented, the text placed centrally in the dramatic theatre no longer carries its former value. After all, one of the biggest features that distinguishes postdramatic theatre from traditional theatre is that in postdramatic theatre, theatrical performance is not supposed to stay totally faithful to the text and this kind of theatre refers to theatre after drama. In defining postdramatic theatre, Lehmann states that “the text was to become just one element in the scenography and general ‘performance writing’ of theatre” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 4).

It is actually referred to a European theatre from 1960's onwards. For Lehmann, postdramatic theatre is not simply a new kind of text of staging—and even less a new type of theatre text, but rather a type of sign usage in the theatre that turns both of these levels of theatre upside down through the structurally changed quality of the performance text: it becomes more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than product, more

manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information (Lehmann, 2006, p. 85).

According to Alex Sierz, the most distinctive feature of the In-Yer-Face Theatre, which took shape under the wing of the post-dramatic theatre in the 90s is that: “[T]he language is usually filthy, characters talk about unmentionable subjects, take their clothes off, have sex, humiliate each another [sic], experience unpleasant emotions, become suddenly violent” (Sierz, 2001, p. 5). In this sense, the elements of violence used on stage can be considered as the most striking indicator of the expression of the performance. Although playwrights such as Sarah Kane and Mark Ravenhill used violence in their works and left their mark on the 90s and 2000s, Simon Stephens, who started to produce works in the same years, is not included in this group. Violence is also used as a tool in Stephens's works, but, based on the principles emphasized by Lehmann, the focus is on issues such as society-oriented individuality and how the internal situations of the individual provide a return to the society. “Stephens's plays inhabit a territory where the co-existence of seemingly irreconcilable forms of theatre appears manageable” (Angelaki, 2014, p. 142).

Stephens's “trilingual detective thriller *Three Kingdoms*”, in which he questions reality, pictures characters existing in today's post-modern consumer society, and focuses on the dilemmas of individuals he describes as captives of wild capitalism, pushes the limits in terms of the applicability of Postdramatic principles (Bolton, 2016, p. 339). On the other hand, pointing to the commodification of women in the consumer society, Stephens leaves the drama of the women, who are perceived as trading materials, to the interpretation of the audience. *Three Kingdoms*, “an experiment in multi-lingual theatre”, where Simon Stephens spreads the use of space to such a wide area for the first time, was penned in a much closer date: 2011 (Barnett, 2016, p. 309). Being a recent work of Stephens, it is one of his most remarkable and criticized plays. The play is even mentioned by most of the critics as a twist in the New English Theatre marking a new era by turning upside-down everything known in the conventional concept of the theatre world characterized as a fictional fantasy that is totally separated from the daily life.

In many ways *Three Kingdoms* was the hardest play to write of my career. It was a play that was prompted by an oddity in my working life. In the space of a week in 2008 I'd been asked to write a new play for the Traverse in Edinburgh and the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg. It struck me that it may prove rather hard work writing two plays at the same time. Maybe it would be expedient to write one play for both theatres. If I did this then perhaps Sebastian Nübling could direct it. Perhaps British actors could have the experience of working with him. Perhaps British

audiences could have the experience of seeing his approach to theatre and share the sense of energy and provocation that I'd enjoyed from our collaboration (Stephens, 2015, p. xii).

Even though the performance staged is what brings disgust among the audience and fills their heads with horror, the powerful effect of *Three Kingdoms*' script on the readers still cannot be cast aside. It is a shocking and horrible play where male characters are dominant and the performance of the play on the stage directed by German director Sebastian Nuebling is somehow described as "joyous" and a "joyride" by some critics. Matt Trueman says, "I was windswept. I was in love. *Three Kingdoms* is a joyride" (Review: *Three Kingdoms*, 2012). Andrew Haydon points out that "Perhaps the most interestingly contradictory [sic] thing about *Three Kingdoms* [...] is how joyous and freeing this parable about misery, suffering, sex-slavery, brutality, cruelty and murder feels" (*Three Kingdoms*, 2012).

The Three Kingdoms, which contains many basic principles of post-dramatic theatre, creates an individual-oriented perception emphasized in Postdramatic theatre, rather than a general meaning, and contains many deep connotations. At this point, after reading these comments having contradictions, it is crucial not to miss out the disgustingly horrible story and language used in the script. The objectification of the women and hate against them in the play brings the feminist ideology and misogyny into question without the need for a deep analysis of the text.

Discussion

Three Kingdoms

Three Kingdoms, in which, in addition to the problems created by the globalizing world, such subjects as the position of women in society, the consumer society created by capitalism, and the loss of the meaning of reality are intertwined and fictionalised, and which has the strategy of making the audience question the perception formed in their minds, also contains postdramatic indicators on which Lehmann focuses in terms of technical features intensely. In this context, the first act of the play, which consists of three acts, takes place in London, the second act in Hamburg and the third act in Tallinn, and "each chapter begins with a quote from a tirade used in the play" (Sayın, 2016, p. 132). With the opening scene, in an interrogation room, a young man named Tommy is interrogated by detectives DS Ignatius Stone and DS Charlie Lee. It is unclear why or how long Tommy has been there. As can be understood from the dialogues that follow, the reason for Tommy's questioning was the discovery of a woman's head, which had apparently been brutally cut off from her body and put in a bag, found in the Thames. However, even though Tommy says that someone he does not know gave the bag to

him, it seems like he interrupts the course of the play when he says that he has no information regarding this person, except that he has a different accent. From the DNA results, it is discovered that the severed head found in the river belongs to a famous porn star named Vera Petrova. According to the investigations and DNA results, Vera's teeth being made outside of London, the sperm residues found in her hair, and Aleksandr, who was questioned about the situation, lead the usual suspicions to focus on Andres Rebane, nicknamed White Bird, who is the master behind the porn network. Two detectives travel to Hamburg to further deepen and unravel this investigation. This situation is one of the most distinctive points of postdramatic theatre, which differs from traditional theatre. "By the standards of contemporary text-based theatre especially, where the duration of most plays rarely exceeds two hours, this is a long piece in the course of which the lead characters experience an extraordinary trajectory of transformation" (Angelaki, 2014, p. 142).

In the second act, DS Ignatius and DS Charlie are met in Germany by a German detective named Steffen. DS Ignatius, who speaks advanced German and says that he spent his youth in Germany, surprises Steffen with this aspect. Upon the allegations that Vera is originally from Estonia, according to the statements of the interrogated, Steffen tells DS Ignatius that Andres Rebane is in Estonia, something he discovered from his conversations with his colleagues. He advises them to go to Tallinn illegally, saying that if they go legally, they will not hand over the criminals to them. In the third act, DS Ignatius and Steffen are in Tallinn. This act is like a mirror that reflects the real face of the swamp that underlies the truly developed European image and shows it to the audience. DS Ignatius is very confused by the sentences of the characters about how and in what way Europe is formed, the consumption greed caused by the increasing capitalism, and the use of the female body, which has become a consumption object, as a commodity and has a hard time explaining what is happening. Ignatius is shocked to learn that the criminal White Bird, whom they are looking for, is Steffen. Steffen is the head of a systematically managed porn network, and the moment Ignatius discovers who he is, Steffen calmly tells DS Ignatius that he will not remember any of this, putting him to sleep. DS Ignatius, who is interrogated by the police in Tallinn when he wakes up, does not know / does not remember what happened during the time from falling asleep to waking up in the interrogation room. He learns that he is accused of murdering Vera Petrova, who was killed earlier, and a woman named Stephanie, who was found dead in her hotel room. The police say they will cover it up, since Ignatius is a senior detective in London. "The play uses the thriller genre to trace the corruption of local police and the ethical dilemma of the main character, a

detective who tries to avoid being complicit in the trafficking and murder network he is uncovering" (Reinelt, 2017, p. 248). When Ignatius wakes up, he is back in London, terrified, trying to discern whether what he saw was a dream or reality. Ending the scene in this way is, in a way, to ensure that the shock of the characters continues for the audience since "Postdramatic theatre offers tragic experience" (Lehmann, 2016, p. 442).

The Female Body as A Sign in Postdramatic Theatre

One of the most distinctive features of postdramatic theatre is the elimination of hierarchy. Thus, for the audience who are accustomed to watching conventional theatre, which has a definite beginning and end, this situation causes coldness towards the play. From the detectives' ongoing dialogue, the audience deduces what Tommy is accused of at the opening of the scene. Although the fact that the interrogation room is devoid of signs draws the audience's attention to Tommy's reason for being there, his staccato expressions in response to DS Ignatius' and DS Charlie's questions prevent the formation of a certain unity in the minds of the audience. "Thus, meaning remains in principle postponed" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 82). Tommy's staccato expressions, which have little relevance to the situation, continue until he is shown the photograph of the severed-headed woman by the detectives. This behaviour of Tommy, who looks at the photograph with eyes full of horror, fear, and bewilderment, draws the audience's previously dispersed attention to a single point, using physicality/gestures of the performance artist in post-dramatic theatre: the woman and her body. However, Tommy has no information about the murdered woman. By throwing the bag given to him by someone with a different accent into the river, he only fulfilled his mediation duty. Thus, the attention of the audience is drawn away from Tommy to the female body, which is the element of sign. As proof of this:

Ignatius: If you remove somebody's brain you remove their consciousness. Well, actually what you do is you separate their consciousness from their corporality, from their body. So we have somebody whose intention is to punish this girl in the most extreme way imaginable. In the fifteenth century they used to display heads of traitors on spikes on Bridge Gate. Why did they do that? (Stephens, 2015, p. 47)

The statements of Ignatius, which are on the idea that the beheading of a woman is a method of punishment, brings to mind the idea of misogyny, which has been going on for centuries. "The hatred of women is not a new term, yet an old one that is supposed to have been lost long ago" (Holland, 2006, p. 42). Misogyny is always accompanied by adultery and rape and associated almost always by sexual acts. Jack Holland asserts: "Misogyny always confronts

women with the same dilemma. Whether they are 'good' girls or 'bad' girls, they are forced into the same conundrum: they still arouse lust in men for which they, not those who desire them, are held responsible" (Holland, 2006, p. 43). Even the lust and desire that men have over women is claimed to be the result of women's behaviours. The fact that the detectives were not surprised when they state that the murdered person was a woman supports the misogyny idea: "Peter: There are certain things I want to draw your attention to. As expected, the deceased is female." (Stephens, 2015, p. 47). The female body and all practices carried out on women are part of a body-oriented system. As Lehmann points out:

The body becomes the only subject matter. From now on, it seems, all social issues first have to pass through this needle's eye, they all have to adopt the form of a physical issue. Love appears as a sexual presence, death as AIDS, beauty as physical perfection. In their relationship to the body theatre works become obsessed with fitness, health (Lehmann, 2006, p. 97).

Peter proves Lehmann's statements when the DNA reports of the murdered woman reach the detectives: "Peter: Firstly she was HIV positive. So she would have died anyway, yes? This just speeded up the process, ha? Not funny?" (Stephens, 2015, p. 51). In Stephens's play, woman body becomes something that men make fun of and make use of at the same time. The claim that the woman, who had sperm in her hair according to DNA reports and was found to be a porn star, was alive when she was beheaded puts the flow of events in a different frame. Ignatius' comment on this situation is interesting:

Ignatius: But if you were making a point, why would you put her head in the river?

Charlie: If you kept the body.

Ignatius: Or if you had an audience? (Stephens, 2015, p. 53)

The idea that there are different reasons underlying the decapitation of the woman can be evaluated within the scope of using the woman's head as a sign. In this sense, the use of the body as a sign is a situation frequently seen in postdramatic theatre. In particular, the selection of the female body as a sign confirms Lehmann's statements:

The female body as a socially coded 'projection screen' for ideals, wishes, desires and humiliations has become especially thematized as feminist criticism has made the male-coded images of woman, and increasingly also gender identity, recognizable as constructs, raising consciousness about the projections of the male gaze (Lehmann, 2006, p. 139).

DS Ignatius and DS Charlie want to understand the message that is being conveyed with the severed female head in the photograph due to the implication that there is a different subject to be drawn by the use of the female body. As Lehmann states, in postdramatic theatre the

“image as representation gives us a lot, to be sure: especially the feeling of being always on the track of something else” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 171). In order to solve this mystery, DS Ignatius and DS Charlie interrogate another porn star named Hele Kachonov, a person close to Vera and, as the detectives believe, of Russian origin. Details such as the repetition of the questions, their translation into a different language, the difference in the accent used in the interrogation, which is conducted with the help of a translator, create a certain sound harmony in this scene. This harmony can be evaluated under the title of Musicality and Harmony, which is an inseparable whole of performance in postdramatic theatre because “the individual tone is already composed of a whole array of qualities” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 92). Although the detectives cannot get an answer for a while in the question-and-answer chain created with the help of a translator, Hele finally confesses that the person Vera works for is her boyfriend, Aleksandr. What the translator emphasizes at the end of the interrogation is that contrary to what is expected, Hele is not a Russian but a Lithuanian. At this point, Postdramatic theatre is proof that even the difference in accent has an important place in the course of the play. The accent difference is one of the most important building blocks of the big reality that lies within the small details. Aleksandr Richter, who is interrogated upon Hele's confession, evades the questions addressed to him, but the moment he hears that Vera's head has been cut off, he gives mixed answers with fear:

Aleksandr: She made shit money. She had a shit cunt. She fucked like a dead cow. She stank. She was lazy. She never stopped complaining. She was rude to the customers. She never cleaned out her cunt. The clients could smell other men inside her. She deserved to die. She deserved to get her head cut off. She was a stinking rotten piece of fucking meat. (Stephens, 2015, p. 60).

Aleksandr's statements about Vera Petrova contain a small version of the hate speech that women will encounter if they are not successful in this area and therefore women are seen as an object of consumption in the society. The female body, which is seen as an object of consumption, has an important place in this sense. Baudrillard, too, considers body as the finest consumer object because it “is simply the finest of these psychically possessed, manipulated and consumed objects” (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 132). The sex business exists, and women are merchandised in the real world, too. It is the reflection of the consumer society. In addition to all these, the idea of finding the person behind the trafficking of women, which has been turned into consumption in the play, continues to become more and more complicated. Aleksandr's statement that the person associated with the murder is Andres Rebane, known by the nickname White Bird, drags the events into a spiral that is difficult to understand. While Ignatius and

Charlie were wondering how to find Andres Rebane, or White Bird, which they thought was of German origin, the action now evolves in a different direction when Ignatius says that he had lived in Germany before and knew the language. The characters change countries and thus the trio of place, time and space, which is emphasized in the dramatic theatre, is literally destroyed.

Retreat of Synthesis and Irruption of the Real in Post Dramatic Theatre

The scene that opens with the arrival of DS Ignatius and DS Charlie in Hamburg means the elimination of synchronicity in the postdramatic sense for the audience, who may be accustomed to the simultaneous operation of the event flow in the dramatic theatre. The audience will thus be stunned by the plot they are trying to grasp:

If the principle of the one dramatic action is abandoned, this is done in the name of the attempt to create events in which there remains a sphere of choice and decision for the spectators; they decide which of the simultaneously presented events they want to engage with but at the same time feel the frustration of realizing the exclusive and limiting character of this freedom (Lehmann, 2006, p. 88).

In addition to the retreat of synthesis and the elimination of the concept of time, the use of different languages on stage is one of the most difficult situations to understand as “everything depends on not understanding immediately” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 87). The fact that Charlie can only speak English, Steffen only speaks German and DS Ignatius can speak both languages causes a division in perception as it creates an ambiguous atmosphere for the audience. As an example of this situation, Steffen mentions Kristina Suvi, who was Vera's former roommate, when talking about where to find White Bird and the others. Ignatius speaks German with Steffen and English with Charlie. Although the conversations often enter a repetitive cycle, the process of events continues unabated. Although Suvi states that a Russian film director named Georg Kohler might recognize White Bird and the attention of the audience is drawn in this direction, the audience's focus is redistributed when they disperse to their own rooms. In a sense, this is the retreat of synthesis. After Ignatius goes to his room to rest, a person named Stephanie Friedmann hears a scream from Ignatius' room, and the attention of the audience is turned in a different direction again. Ignatius, who seems to have experienced a “nightmarish journey”, prefers to suppress this situation (Angelaki, 2014, p. 145).

Later in the play, when Detective Steffen comes to see Ignatius, he reveals the name of Vera Petrova, who was killed, causing great surprise to Ignatius because he had not told the detective Steffen her name before. Steffen's dismissal of Ignatius as soon as he tells this to him is achieved by postponing the meaning that can be seen in postdramatic theatre: “synthesis is

cancelled. It is explicitly combated. Theatre articulates through the mode of its semiosis an implicit thesis concerning perception. It may appear surprising to ascribe to artistic discourse the ability to have a thesis like a theoretical discourse" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 82).

Thus, the audience experiences ambiguity. Steffen changes the subject before Ignatius asks him how he learned Vera's name, using the excuse to meet with DS Charlie to question the director Georg Kohler they are looking for. It is unclear what happened to Ignatius during the events leading up to the interrogation of Kohler.

During the interrogation, Steffen's use of extreme violence against Georg attracts attention. Violence is one of the elements used in Postdramatic theatre in this sense. "Here danger and pain are the result of deliberate passivity, everything is unpredictable" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 140). The effect of a kind of physicality in front of the stage is the application of it in a way that arouses emotions such as fear and irritation in the audience. The fact that Kohler does not recognise Vera and is frightened when he sees the photograph takes the art of performance to the highest level. Thus, the "player's body and the spectator's gaze are always confronted with the universe that has been summoned forth" (Lehmann, 2016, p. 433). In the ensuing questioning, Kohler gets a second wince when asked if he knows Andres Rebane. Kohler looks in amazement as if something strange is happening, but his statements do not make much sense.

A feature of postdramatic theatre is the irruption of the real. Reality leaves its place to doubt, making the audience question what reality is. Starting with the sixth scene, we begin to question what reality is in the dialogues between DS Ignatius and Stephanie. Despite having no information, Stephanie tells DS Ignatius that he will find what he is looking for, creating a strong sense of curiosity in the audience. At the same time, someone who can claim such states without any knowledge causes the audience to question the developing events. According to Lehmann, this is, in a sense, the irruption of the real: "The irruption of the real becomes an object not just of reflection but of the theatrical design itself" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 100).

In this sense, the irruption of the real has the quality of being a pre-warning for the spectator about the developing concerns/warnings. Following the statements by Stephanie, one of the characters who makes the biggest contribution to the irruption of the real, Ignatius cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy because he is sleepless. Despite this, he interrogates Vera's former roommate, Kristina Suvi, at her home. Kristina's statement that Vera is Estonian, not Russian, once again changes the course of events. At the end of the interrogation, Ignatius confesses his sleep problems to Stephanie. According to Freud, "our unresolved conflicts

surface during our sleeping hours” (Burger, 2014, p. 70). However, Ignatius's choice not to sleep in order to escape from the conflict in his mind arouses curiosity in the audience. The situation deepens even more for DS Ignatius, who gives the footage of Vera, which he watched on DVD before coming to Germany, as the reason for his inability to sleep. In act one, when DS Charles asks him whether he watched the DVD, he answers no. This paves the way for the audience to doubt how authentic Ignatius really is in his statements and ideas. Another version of the irruption of the real is when Stephanie tells Ignatius' fortune through palmistry as if nothing has happened and says he will find what he is looking for. Palmistry by Stephanie acts as a kind of illusion, which goes against the nature of reality. This situation leads to “destabilisations of meaning that beg for plural treatment and interpretation” (Love, 2016, p. 324).

Steffen will put the end to the irruption of the real. For this reason, after Klaus Brandt, the person whose sperm was found in Vera's hair, says that they will find White Bird in Estonia, Steffen offers Ignatius to go there. However, he says they must do it illegally. Otherwise, Estonian officials will take care of it, without handing over the culprits to them.

The disappearance of the concept of time in postdramatic theatre results in parataxis, that is, non-hierarchical sequencing. “In the parataxis of postdramatic theatre the elements are not linked in unambiguous ways” (Lehmann, 2006, p. 86). That is, any word or situation that the character has said before can be repeated in later scenes. Parallel to this, Ignatius's answer at the opening of the scene is an example of parataxis: “Rudi: Do you want me to tell you the truth about this country? – Ignatius: The truth?” (Stephens, 2015, p. 115).

Here, the purpose of parataxis is to be a warning for the event flow that will develop from the beginning to the end of the act, and to draw the attention of the audience to this point. At the beginning of the scene, Stephens, who presents sections from a group of males and females in Estonia, where women are trafficked, especially emphasizes that the characters use pseudonyms instead of their own names. Dialogues regarding another woman named Olya, who is a newly recruited group member, show that “women are the central commodity” in consumption (Poll, *When Little is Said*, 2016).

Sony: We should give her a name.

Tom: She's got a name.

Sonny: No, a different name. Like a pet's name. Like a dog's name.

Fredo: Like Fido or something.

Sonny: Train her to fetch our slippers. Train her to make us a gin and tonic. Train her to do something useful instead of just sitting there all day sucking our cocks and whimpering in a language I can't even fucking understand (Stephens, 2015, p. 108).

The misconception that a woman is one of the most basic needs consumed in the globalizing world comes to the fore as the Body in postdramatic theatre. As Baudillard states, "in the consumer package, there is one object finer, more precious and more dazzling than any other--and even more laden with connotations than the automobile, in spite of the fact that that encapsulates them all. That object is the BODY" (Baudillard, 1998, p. 129).

The female body is an invaluable element in this sense. In addition to the consumption of the female body, or "women exploited by a European network of sex trafficking," as a commodity, the fact that people generally seek consumption and include them in their own expressions is actually a sign of a break (Zaroulia, 2016, p. 357). Parallel to this thought of Baudrillard, Michael defines transaction of bodies in the play by stating that it is like "finding humanity in the marketplace", making clear that even the concept of humanity has become an instrument of capitalism. (Stephens, 2015, p. 109)

Michael: [...] In the future we'll be finding girls in London and selling them to Beijing. We'll be finding girls in Paris and selling them to Mumbai. We'll be finding girls in Frankfurt and selling them to Rio de Janeiro. We'll be finding girls in Amsterdam and selling them to Moscow (Stephens, 2015, p. 120).

Keeping women above all consumer goods can be grounded upon the notion that the "body `reappropriated' in this way is reappropriated first to meet `capitalist' objectives: in other words, where it is invested, it is invested in order to produce a yield" (Baudillard, 1998, p. 132). As Lehmann claims in his book, "in a kind of exchange with the living bodies and together with the objects, they change the stage into a landscape of death, in which there is a fluid transition between the human beings and the dead puppets" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 73). Parallel to the fact that the female body is no longer valued in the society, it is seen as worthless even within the family, which is a reference to the deteriorated family concept created by capitalism. The best example of this is easily noticed in Vera's father's reactions to the news of his daughter's death:

Mr Petrov: (in Estonian) She was a whore. She was a pain in the arse. She lied. All the time. She had no friends. She smelt fucking disgusting. I really, you know, hated her. I'm not sad. She deserved it. It was always going to happen one day. It was just a question of time. (Stephens, 2015, p. 111).

The expressions Vera's father used against his daughter are an indication of the extent to which women can be excluded both from family and from society. After Vera's father's unsatisfactory answers, Ignatius and Steffen go to talk to someone named Rudi Peiker about *White Bird*. Although everyone speaking their native language seems to be an element of harmony in the play, it is the beginning of ambiguity for the audience. The events that develop after this scene present themselves in very complex occurrences in terms of meaning and it is one of the moments when performance art reaches its highest level. When Ignatius, who has been suffering from sleeplessness for days, directly asks Rudi about *White Bird*, he just smiles, looking at Steffen in confusion. Meanwhile, for no reason, Steffen says he is tired and asks Ignatius to hit Rudi Andres. This situation also points to the state of physicality that is evident in postdramatic theatre. Physicality is presented to the audience through violence.

The truth that enables this production of violence begins to appear with the response Ignatius receives after his violent act against Rudi. When Rudi says, "He's here. In Tallinn. Now. Right now. He's here. I know he is. I'm feeling fucking lucky. I can feel it in my bones", a "paradox in audience" is constituted and Ignatius's perception of events is affected (Stephens, 2015, p. 117; Fowler, 2016, p. 332). This ending of the scene concentrates the attention of the audience on one point: what Ignatius is going to do. The scene thus comes to a conclusion as an open-ended one.

The drinks that Ignatius and Steffen consume when they go to a pub after meeting with Rudi are other consumption objects used as signs in the scene. By drawing attention to the signs, the lost reality is questioned. The reality emphasized at the beginning of the third act is completely ambiguous here. The confusion in the mind of the audience is about what reality is. At the opening of the act, the moment when Ignatius says "The truth" is reenacted. In postdramatic theatre, "time occurs in repetition, a more or less subtle compression and negation of the course of time itself" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 156). In the process, Lisuu's question to Ignatius regarding *White Bird* leads to Ignatius undergoing a transformation. In this sense, the changes and transformations in postdramatic theatre occur:

Transformations can be produced through magical procedures, disguises or masques, they can occur through new knowledge (anagnorisis) or physical processes; they can be recurring metamorphoses analogous to natural processes or belong to a temporal form that is symbolic and cyclical (Lehmann, 2006, p. 77).

It is clear that Ignatius experienced this transformation through natural processes. After Stephanie, the fact that one more person has knowledge of the person Ignatius is looking for

makes it difficult for the audience to grasp the plot and reality. The most obvious example of the irruption of the real is the fourth scene. Reality has now changed in a way only apparent to the perception of the characters. Ignatius' saying that Steffen planned all the events from the first moment the severed head was found in the river coincides with the moment when Ignatius, experiencing "the duality of thematized memory" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 73), realizes everything: Ignatius: "When Aleksandr Richter said he was an 'evil fuck' he was talking about you. Steffen: I'm not evil, Iggy. I only sell things that people want to buy. Ask her if she wants to go with you to your room" (Stephens, 2015, p. 123).

As can be understood from Steffen's statements, the idea of consumption is everywhere and has permeated even the smallest segments of society. As Fowler states: "exposing harsh truths about the human condition in advanced capitalism. Blurring genre boundaries, this perplexing play ended up mirroring, through Ignatius Stone, how impossibly implicated we all are in trans-national systems of corruption that reveal" (Fowler, 2016, p. 331).

Therefore, there is no such thing as truth anymore. The concept of the real in postdramatic theatre is handled as follows:

Aesthetically and conceptually the real in theatre has always been excluded but it inevitably adheres to theatre. It usually manifests itself only in mishaps. It is only in the form of embarrassing mistakes that this image of trauma and desire of the theatre, the irruption of the real into the performance, is normally thematised (Lehmann, 2006, p. 101).

Steffen's remark to Ignatius that nothing will ever be the same again, and not explaining how to do what needs to be done, is for the audience to interpret the play in their own way. In postdramatic theatre, "The 'event' situated within aesthetic time does not refer to the events of real time" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 142).

When Ignatius wakes up in the morning, he is taken to the interrogation room by the Estonian police because of the blood stain on his clothes, which he cannot understand. As can be seen from the statements of the officers who initiated the interrogation, Ignatius is accused of killing Vera and Stephanie. Ignatius, on the other hand, does not remember anything and cannot discern what is real. For Ignatius, truth will never return and trying to find himself in the lost reality is a futile effort. There is nothing Ignatius can do now. For Ignatius, "reality is depicted in ways that are obviously hard to bear" (Lehmann, 2006, p. 118). The presentation of the irruption of the real in this way shakes the audience by the scruff of their necks. The things that cause the irruption of the real present "the abundance of simultaneous signs" which imply that it is because of people's desire for endless consumption (Lehmann, 2006, p. 82). Ignatius,

who consumes the things presented to him without asking why, accompanied by a great emotional explosion, presents a micro image of the individuals of the society who cause the loss of reality. After consuming all these objects, Charlie and Steffen come next to Ignatius in turn. However, the fact that Charlie pretends to have no previous experience with Ignatius stuns the audience. Although Ignatius, who is accused of killing Vera and Stephanie, claims that Steffen was the one to do it, the police officers talk about Steffen being a very senior detective. They say that since Ignatius is also a detective, they will release him. This is how the scene ends, and Ignatius wakes up in London. Reality as the last scene presents can be explained as follows:

The performance often leaves open whether there exists any real connection in what is being presented simultaneously or whether this is just an external contemporaneity. A systematic double-bind arises: we are meant to pay attention to the concrete particular and at the same time perceive the totality (Lehmann, 2006, p. 88).

As a result, the reality that Ignatius cannot understand every time he opens his eyes is left to the perception of the audience by Stephens in order to show the audience that Ignatius is actually the object he consumes and creates.

Conclusion

The concept of post-dramatic theatre represents going beyond the centuries-old theatre understanding, rather than signifying a new theatre form or formation. Hans-Thies Lehmann, one of the key figures at this point, explains in his *Postdramatic Theater* many factors that play a fundamental role in the formation of this new understanding in principles. The most distinctive feature of Postdramatic Theatre, which includes the traces of the Dramatic Theatre, is that an understanding that prioritizes performance on the stage comes to the fore. At this point, Lehmann associates the factors that affect the performance with the media culture that started to emerge after the 60s. He implies that the elements that help bring the body to the fore, such as musicality and dance, which are included in the understanding of theatre, initiated by the historical avant-gardes and later expanded by the Neo-avant-gardes, contribute to the performance of the actor on the stage. On the other hand, indicators used, which contribute to directing the viewer's attention in relation to the play viewed, support a formation in which visuality is at the forefront and thus performance is carried to the highest levels. Thus, text, which is at the forefront in traditional theatre, is replaced by performance in Postdramatic theatre. One of the most important writers of Postdramatic theatre, which emerged after the 60's and influenced England in the 90's, Simon Steffens's *Three Kingdoms* includes the

Postdramatic principles that Lehmann emphasizes. The fact that each act of the play, which consists of three acts, takes place in a different country is one of the most remarkable points that can be seen in the Postdramatic theatre. In addition, elements such as parataxis in the play, different accents, the body being used as a sign, warmth and coldness, and the irruption of the real make it possible to examine the play from a Postdramatic perspective. At the end of the play, the references to the consumer society carried out over the female body, which Stephens presents as the content of the play, and the effects of the realities created by the globalizing world on a European basis, are left to the interpretation of the audience.

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