
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Dramatic Adaptation of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

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| ABSTRACT

Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a first-person metafictional novel that the British-Irish playwright Simon Stephens has adapted into a play of the same title. The adaptation remains grounded in its source text while generating new meanings through a change of genre. Attentive to the narrative possibilities of dramatic writing, Stephens reworks both the novel's narrative mechanisms and its characterization. By making Christopher's inner experience perceptible through action and dialogue, the adaptation enables readers or spectators to apprehend his distinctive mode of cognition and the complexity of his family relationships. It also extends the work's exploration of difference and understanding. Source novel and adaptation thus sustain an intertextual dialogue marked by both continuity and transformation.

| KEYWORDS

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time; Simon Stephens; dramatic adaptation; narrative mechanisms; transformation of characterization

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1. Introduction

Simon Stephens (1971-) is one of the most prominent and prolific British-Irish playwrights working in contemporary theatre. Since emerging as a dramatist in the late 1990s, his works have been widely translated and performed across the world. Alongside a substantial body of original plays, Stephens has produced numerous adaptations of novels and canonical European plays. His best-known theatrical work is his adaptation of Mark Haddon's bestselling novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003). Narrated in the first person by Christopher Boone, a fifteen-year-old boy whose distinctive cognitive and sensory experiences are commonly interpreted in relation to autism, the novel follows his investigation into the mysterious killing of a neighbour's dog. As the investigation unfolds, Christopher discovers painful secrets about his family and embarks on a demanding journey towards greater independence and autonomy. The novel received both the Whitbread Novel Award and the overall Whitbread Book of the Year Award, as well as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book. It was also longlisted for the 2003 Man Booker Prize and has reportedly been translated into thirty-six languages.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time possesses pronounced self-reflexive and metafictional qualities, since the narrative encountered by the reader is presented as Christopher's own written account of his investigation. His narrative is interspersed with diagrams, maps, mathematical problems, scientific explanations and philosophical reflections, all of which embody his distinctive way of perceiving and organising the world. The novel's reliance on first-person narration, typographical experimentation and multiple visual forms therefore presented formidable challenges for theatrical adaptation. Far from being constrained by these challenges, however, Stephens responds to them by devising an ingenious play-within-a-play structure. In the play, Siobhan, Christopher's compassionate teacher at his special school, reads the book Christopher has written and decides to adapt it for the stage. As theatre critic Spencer (2015) observes, such a device "may sound cumbersome, but it works superbly".

Directed by Marianne Elliott, the stage adaptation premiered at the National Theatre's Cottesloe Theatre in London in 2012. In 2013, the production received seven Laurence Olivier Awards, equalling the record at the time for the largest number of Olivier Awards won by a single production. It opened on Broadway at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in 2014 and achieved comparable critical acclaim in the United States. In 2015, the production received the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding New Broadway Play, the Drama League Award for Outstanding Production of a Broadway or

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Off-Broadway Play, and five Tony Awards, including Best Play. It has since been staged extensively across Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and Australia, attracting widespread acclaim from both audiences and critics.

Existing scholarship on *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* has developed along two broad lines. One examines the philosophical concerns of the play itself. GÜNENÇ (2022), for example, approaches the play through Alain Badiou's theory of subjectivation and argues that the play offers a different and autonomous definition of subjectivity. The other line focuses on the adaptation's staging and performance aesthetics, examining how narrative arrangement, physical performance, spatial design, lighting and projection, sound, and props represent Christopher's perceptions and inner world (Wang, 2016; Mai, 2020). By comparison, the logic of adaptation at the level of the play itself has received less sustained attention. In particular, the reworking of the play's structure, verbal narrative, and characterization, together with the adaptation's gains and limitations, remains insufficiently examined.

2. Reconstruction in Narrative Mechanisms: From First-Person Writing to Theatrical Narrative

Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is distinguished by its metafictional character and layered narrative structure. Through Christopher's first-person account, the novel gives readers access to his rich and nuanced inner life and the account itself is presented as a detective story written by Christopher within the fictional world. Christopher consequently occupies the positions of both experiencing character and narrator (Ue, 2014, p. 115). Beginning with the death of his neighbour's dog Wellington, he records his investigation of the killing, his discovery of family secrets, and the observations, judgments, and feelings that accompany these events. At the level of its overall structure, the novel therefore interweaves two narrative strands: external action and internal cognition. One strand follows the investigation into Wellington's death and the family secrets it uncovers, while the other consists of Christopher's reflections on mathematics, the universe, time, memory, language, lies, and human interaction. Interspersed throughout the action, these reflections disclose the logic by which he perceives the world, processes information, and decides how to act. Because he finds it difficult to identify facial expressions and unspoken meanings (Haddon, 2003, p. 2) and regards metaphor as a form of lying (Haddon, 2003, p. 20), he tends to interpret his surroundings through literal meanings, verifiable facts, and logical rules. He numbers his chapters with primes rather than consecutive integers because of their mathematical logic. When travelling to London alone, the excessive and unstructured information in the station and on the train leads him to count prime numbers or solve mathematical problems to restore a sense of order and relieve his distress. Confronted with the elusive nature of time, he uses exact timetables to turn it into a daily order that can be divided and anticipated (Haddon, 2003, p. 195). The passages of reflection that seem to depart from the main plot thus continually explain, mirror, and illuminate the outward course of events. They show readers what Christopher experiences while also drawing them into his distinctive ways of organizing experience, making sense of the world, and coping with uncertainty. Moreover, the boundary between Christopher as the character who experiences events and Christopher as the narrator who recounts them is porous and the two positions remain in dialogue (Ue, 2014, p. 115). As a narrator, Christopher records facts and observations without fully articulating the emotional causes, interpersonal significance, or social consequences of events and actions. The resulting gaps leave readers space to infer and construct the story's deeper meanings.

Although novels and plays are both narrative arts, they differ markedly in medium and in how they generate meaning. A novel unfolds through verbal signs that readers reconstruct imaginatively, whereas a play is written for performance and visual and auditory perception. When a novel is adapted for the theatre, its descriptions, narration, and characters' thoughts must be transformed into "speech, actions, sounds, and visual images" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 40). Mental activity that the source text can represent directly must therefore be externalized, to a greater extent, through what characters say and do. Although Haddon's novel centres on Christopher's inner experience, Stephens does not rely chiefly on the conventional dramatic monologue to convey his mental life. Instead, he constructs a dramatic narrative through reading aloud, dialogues between characters, and acts, while retaining Christopher's perceptions as its organizing centre. More specifically, Stephens uses a play-within-a-play to translate the novel's metafictionality into a metadramatic form. In the play, Christopher and his teacher Siobhan turn the book he has written into a play (Stephens, 2015, p. 73). The drama not only recounts Christopher's experiences but also incorporates the selection, adaptation, and performance of his manuscript into its story, openly displaying the processes through which the play itself is made.

The structure of Stephens's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* preserves the novel's inventive formal premise while responding creatively to the demands of play. As Linda Hutcheon argues in *A Theory of Adaptation*, adaptations are not mere copies of their sources but "palimpsestuous works" that remain under their shadow (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 6). In other words, the adapted work may be read as a text in its own right. It has an inextricable intertextual relationship with its source while retaining its autonomy and coherence (Qi, 2017, p. 10).

At the structural level, Christopher likewise occupies the dual positions of a experiencing character and a narrator in the play. Yet the performability of a play allows the two functions that converge in the novel's first-person "I" to be externalized as a relationship among different voices and actions. Siobhan partly assumes the function of Christopher as a narrator by reading his first-person words, while Christopher in the enacted story primarily occupies the position of the experiencing character, reliving narrated events through speech and bodily action. This device preserves the agency of Christopher's first-person expression, so that his way of perceiving the world continues to organize the play. At the same time, the simultaneous presence of narrative

voice and enacted action allows readers or spectators to grasp how Christopher understands and tells his story, while perceiving, in his bodily reactions and in the pauses, silences, hesitations, and questions through which Siobhan, as a distinct subject, orders and interprets it, emotional and interpersonal meanings that Christopher has not fully expressed or recognized. Readers or spectators consequently take a more active part in interpreting the story's deeper implications. As they imagine how Christopher experiences reality, they can understand his distinctive cognition and respond to him with empathy grounded in an acknowledgment of difference. The distance between Christopher's actions and his understanding of himself may also prompt them to reflect on similar discrepancies between their own conduct and self-perception, bringing self-examination into the process of empathy.

Stephens also replaces the novel's prime-numbered chapters with a two-part structure and consecutively numbered scenes, reorganizing Christopher's private order of writing into a dramatic structure driven by shifts in the plot and the progression of action. The two parts correspond, respectively, to the discovery of the truth and to the actions that discovery sets in motion. The consecutive numbering therefore gives the rapidly changing situations a clear, cumulative framework. Because of the constraints of dramatic time and space, the play does not develop the source's two strands in the same gradual fashion. Instead, it draws on conflict and the tangible quality of action to translate Christopher's abstract reflections on the universe, mathematics, and logic into concrete dialogues and events, linking one scene to the next. His thoughts are conveyed partly through Siobhan's reading and partly through his interactions with others. This approach heightens dramatic conflict while foregrounding differences between Christopher's cognitive and behavioural patterns and those of the people around him. Christopher finds human social conventions difficult to understand because "people do a lot of talking without using any words". He insists that Siobhan says that if you raise your eyebrow it can mean 'I want to do sex with you', although Siobhan emphatically denies having said anything of the kind (Stephens, 2015, p. 7). When Christopher tries to discuss the mysteries of galaxies with his father, Ed (Stephens 2015: 7), or shows his thoughts about water (Stephens, 2015, p. 32), Ed responds with "Is that all right?" and "Does it?" By bringing Christopher's inner thoughts into his dialogues with others, the adaptation makes his distinctive thought processes apparent and reveals the particular understanding of the world that arises from them.

3. Transformation in Characterization: Stronger Agency and Shifting Functions

Hutcheon describes adaptation as an act of creative and interpretive appropriation (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 8). Stephens likewise reshapes characterization in response to the distinctive narrative capacities of the play and the ways in which its audience encounters characters. Because plays build character through speech, dialogic relationships, and action, he reinterprets the novel's cast accordingly. The novel characterizes others largely through Christopher's first-person descriptions, recollections, and comments, inviting readers to infer their emotional lives as his story unfolds. The play, by contrast, lets characters disclose themselves through verbal encounters, choices, and changing relationships, giving them greater depth and complexity.

In the novel, except for passages such as Judy's letters, Ed and Judy enter the narrative principally through Christopher's limited perspective. His difficulty in understanding other people's emotions and social relationships means that readers must infer motivations and feelings that he does not explain from the details of speech and behaviour he records. By reorganizing the characters' speech, the play gives Ed and Judy more direct and sustained opportunities for expression. In this light, their positions, emotions, and reasons for acting emerge through dialogues and conflicts. Ed retains the novel's combination of care for his son and a rough, hot-tempered disposition, but the play makes the contradictions within his character more pronounced. He loves Christopher, attends carefully to his daily needs, and can understand and support his particular requirements. At the same time, loneliness, exhaustion, and a loss of emotional control lead him to damage the relationship he seeks to protect through deception and violence. When the school refuses to let Christopher sit an A Level Math examination, citing inadequate provision and a wish to avoid treating him differently, Ed insists that it make the necessary arrangements, offers to pay for invigilation, and refuses to accept the school's decision (Stephens, 2015, p. 19-20). After Judy leaves, Mrs Shears helps Ed care for his household, and he hopes that their relationship will become more intimate. When this hope is disappointed, accumulated loneliness, resentment, and frustration erupt in an argument and are turned against Wellington. Ed also strikes Christopher violently when he discovers the record of his investigation. The play represents these major events through dialogue while adding material and adjusting how they are narrated to bring Ed's contradictions and complexity into sharper focus. After striking Christopher, Ed offers no explanation in the novel, saying only, "I need a fucking drink" (Haddon, 2003, p. 104). In the play, however, he apologizes promptly, explains that he tried to stop the investigation because he feared Christopher would get into trouble and be hurt, and repeatedly affirms his love for his son (Stephens, 2015, p. 28). Readers or spectators can thus apprehend his pain and helplessness more directly. The handling of Ed's voice in Scenes 35 and 36 adds another dimension. When Christopher reaches London and must take the Underground to find Judy, Ed, though absent from the situation itself, enters it as a voice. On the one hand, he represents Christopher's fear and questions the decision to travel alone, on the other hand, his voice offers specific warnings and practical guidance. The rules and methods established through Ed's long care for Christopher thus continue to help him navigate an unfamiliar environment. This adaptation gives Ed greater depth. His deception and violence remain reprehensible, but the loneliness, emotional disappointment, and pressures of care behind his conduct also demand consideration. Judy, too, acquires a complexity that challenges the reductive judgment that she has heartlessly abandoned her husband and child. Although Ed tells Christopher that she died of a heart condition, the investigation and the

discovery of her letters reveal that she left Swindon with Mr Shears after finding the pressures of family life unbearable. In the forty-three letters she writes to Christopher, Judy admits that she “was not a good mother”. She acknowledges that she lacks Ed’s patience and describes the exhaustion, frustration, and isolation of prolonged care through incidents in a shopping centre, arguments at home, and an injured toe (Haddon, 2003, pp. 129-144). Her love for Christopher is real, yet love has not automatically given her the ability to understand and care for him. The play selects and recombines from the forty-three letters the material most revealing of their relationship, assigning their reading alternately to Judy and Siobhan (Stephens, 2015, pp. 32-34). When Mr Shears proposes that they leave together, Siobhan relates that Judy’s heart was broken but that she finally believed leaving would be best for everyone Judy then says, “And so I said yes.” (Stephens, 2015, p. 34). The break between these statements brings the conflict between Judy’s feelings and her actions into focus. This device turns the novel’s relatively continuous presentation of the letters into a play with the rhythm and dialogue. It also allows Judy to speak in her own voice and reinterpret her past. Her pain, struggle, and divided feelings become more immediate. The play thus represents Christopher’s parents more fully as carers caught between love, fatigue, anger, guilt, and responsibility, rather than reducing them to “the father who lied” and “the mother who left.”

Besides Ed and Judy, Siobhan undergoes significant reconstruction in the play. In the novel, she is primarily Christopher’s most trusted teacher: she shows him how to process information, express emotions, and manage anxiety, and she advises him on his writing. From Christopher’s perspective, Siobhan respects his particular needs and understands his reliance on order and logic. She tells him explicitly what he should and should not do (Haddon, 2003, p. 39). She also suggests that, when he is frightened or angry, he do something with a regular rhythm (such as music or drumbeats) to regain his calm (Haddon, 2003, p. 190). Christopher gradually applies these methods in everyday life. During conflicts with others or in unfamiliar surroundings, he often restores a sense of order by counting, working through calculations, following a prescribed route, or devising rules in his mind. Siobhan therefore provides a crucial frame of reference for his understanding of the outside world, organization of personal experience, and regulation of emotion. Her teaching has gradually become part of his habitual thinking and conduct. Building on her importance in Christopher’s inner life, the play turns a psychological influence conveyed in the novel largely through memory and reported speech into a character who operates across narrative levels. Siobhan appears not only as a participant in the story but also as a proxy for Christopher’s narrative voice and a guide within his inner experience. As discussed above, she reads his manuscript and communicates his first-person account. Her reading also advances the plot and connects distinct scenes. More significantly, the play presents the guidance Christopher has internalized as spoken exchanges. On his journey to London, Siobhan repeatedly appears as a voice. In Scene 35, she guides him through the crowded station with a steady left-right-left-right rhythm (Stephens, 2015, p. 48). In Scene 44, she prompts him to notice cars, gardens, and the sky, shifting his attention from fear to objects that can be identified, described, and categorized (Stephens, 2015, p. 61). In this sense, Siobhan might be understood as a confidante of Christopher’s inner self, or even an imagined version of himself. Nevertheless, the play preserves her agency as a separate character who participates in shaping the story. As she reads, she draws on her own imagination, comments on his manuscript, and questions parts of it. She also maintains the professional boundaries of a teacher. Despite her close emotional connection with Christopher, she does not intervene in his family affairs. On both occasions when he says his father has told him to stop investigating Wellington’s death, she advises him to do as Ed says (Stephens, 2015, p. 13, 22). When Christopher asks to visit her home rather than his father’s before his mother finishes work, she replies, “I’m not your mother” (Stephens, 2015, p. 70). The convergence of these three narrative positions enriches Siobhan’s characterization and lends greater scope to the play’s dramatic expression.

The reduced importance of the other secondary characters also deserves attention. Apart from Christopher, Siobhan, Ed, and Judy, the remaining roles are distributed among six numbered voices, who play neighbours, teachers, passers-by, and others without close relationships to Christopher. Moreover, when the play represents how Christopher receives and organizes the world, individually defined characters recede and the numbered voices perform a more abstract function. In Scene 3, they enumerate the contents of Christopher’s pockets, making his thought processes audible. In Scenes 32 and 35, they recur as recorded voices representing the flood of information entering his awareness. The compression and functional reassignment of these secondary figures reduce the number of fixed roles required, permit rapid changes of setting and situation, and keep the narrative focused on Christopher and his closest relationships. They also reinforce the play’s metadramatic quality by keeping the construction of its story in view.

4. The Gains and Losses of Adaptation: Thematic Intensification and Representational Limits

As distinct forms, the novel and the play have different narrative possibilities and priorities. Stephens adapts *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* into a play that responds to the possibilities of a play while sustaining the source’s central concerns. Through its reorganization of narrative mechanisms and transformation of characterization, the play develops the novel’s thematic concerns and offers a useful model for translating first-person metafiction into drama.

For Stephens, a play is not simply a reproduction of literature but an opportunity to reassess and recreate the source text. By selecting and combining key events and ideas from the novel and reshaping them as dialogues, actions, and conflicts, he develops its thematic implications. Although the novel never uses the words “Asperger’s” or “autism” in its narrative, and the former appears only on its cover, readers have often reduced Christopher to a person with Asperger syndrome. The source

describes him only as “someone who has Behavioural Problem,” and resists confining him within the categories of “Asperger’s” or “autism”. By attending to what Christopher thinks and feels during his investigation, it presents the particular modes of cognition and behaviour through which he encounters the world and invites readers to reflect on differences in perception and understanding. Its central concern, in other words, is “standing up for difference and trying to understand outsiders who see the world in surprising and revealing ways” (Haddon, 2009). The play carries this concern forward and develops it. Stephens externalizes the inward discourse conveyed by Christopher’s first-person writing as conversations, conflicts, and concrete actions, turning the ways in which he perceives, understands, and organizes the world into dramatic events that can be apprehended directly. Christopher thus emerges as a character at the margins whose thinking follows a distinctive logic. As the conflicts unfold, readers or spectators may recognize the differences between his conduct and understanding and those of others. This approach may help correct reductive readings of the novel and redirect attention to the recognition and understanding of difference. The expansion of Siobhan’s role and the reshaping of her functions further enrich this concern. The play asks what kinds of relationships and environments enable a person who experiences the world differently to grow on their own terms and remain true to themselves, and how understanding can be established and bounded. Siobhan acknowledges the specificity of Christopher’s experience, respects his reliance on facts, numbers, and order, and adapts her communication and guidance accordingly. By affirming his existing capacities and offering concrete strategies, she creates conditions for his independent action. Christopher’s journey to London and his continued pursuit of mathematics arise from his persistence and courage, but they also depend on support grounded in respect and empathy. In the play’s terms, empathy and respect are therefore more than attitudes toward difference. They may help make the development of a person’s agency possible. Yet the altered ending suggests that such support does not erase real limitations. At the end of the novel, Christopher takes his own journey to London, his reunion with his mother, and the completion of his book as grounds for believing he can “do anything” (Haddon, 2003, p. 268). The play recasts this affirmation as the repeated question “Does that mean I can do anything?” (Stephens, 2015, p. 73), to which Siobhan offers no answer. Her silence does not deny Christopher’s achievements which just refuses to turn his experience into an inspirational promise that all limitations can be overcome. As Stephens explains, a direct assurance that Christopher can do anything would compromise a teacher’s honesty, “because none of us can do ‘anything’ and life isn’t about the capacity to do ‘anything’. It’s quite the opposite of that. Life is about the capacity to negotiate our inabilities rather than to engage with our abilities and tries on our abilities” (Ue, 2014, pp. 117-118). Through Siobhan’s reconstructed role and the open ending, the play extends the novel’s engagement with difference. It affirms the force of understanding and empathy while declining to idealize them as a universal remedy.

The more pronounced contradictions within Ed and Judy likewise broaden and deepen the play’s thematic scope. Their transformed characterization reveals the practical difficulties that caring for a child with distinctive cognitive patterns and particular support needs poses for a family as a whole. Both love Christopher, yet prolonged care, difficulties of communication, and the frustration of their own needs leave them exhausted and sometimes unable to control their emotions. By granting them greater agency, the play portrays them as ordinary people struggling with love, responsibility, guilt, and helplessness, inviting readers or spectators to respond with understanding rather than simple condemnation.

These thematic developments also respond to a question implicit in the novel’s metafictional form: whether fiction can communicate truth, and what kind of truth it might communicate. Christopher is committed to factual accuracy and rejects lies and metaphor, yet he loves the Sherlock Holmes stories and learns from them ways of observing, reasoning about, and understanding reality. The novel therefore suggests that readers may discover a form of truth through fiction. By exposing its own status as a constructed text, its metafictional structure encourages readers to recognize meanings that cannot be reduced to a record of facts. The play makes this question explicit. In Scene 28, when Siobhan proposes adapting Christopher’s book into a play, he initially objects, describing acting as “pretending that something is real when it is not real at all” and treating it as akin to lying. Siobhan responds, “Some people find things which are kind of true in things which are made up” (Stephens, 2015, p. 38). Their eventual adaptation of Christopher’s book becomes the metadramatic work that the audience is encountering. By translating the novel’s metafictionality into a play-within-a-play, Stephens invites readers and spectators to seek another kind of truth in its fiction: an understanding of difference, empathy, and the realities of family life. The play thereby reflects on, and makes a case for, the value of dramatic fiction. The movement from metafiction to metadrama both preserves the novel’s self-conscious attention to writing and develops it into an open discussion of the relationship between fiction and truth.

Nevertheless, adapting a long novel capable of accommodating extensive mental activity into a play driven largely by speech, action, and conflict inevitably entails selection, compression, and reorganization. By externalizing Christopher’s inner experience as dialogue, voices, and action, the play makes his ways of perceiving, understanding, and organizing the world more immediately accessible, helping readers of the script and its anticipated spectators to grasp the cognitive logic behind his behaviour. This same externalization, however, also makes certain behavioural traits more prominent and risks encouraging a reductive interpretation of his character. Under the constraints of dramatic time and space, many of the novel’s fragmentary philosophical and scientific reflections, which seems to move away from the main plot, are substantially cut or simplified. Those intricate reflections and chains of reasoning are central to Christopher’s inner life and to the distinctive way he understands and orders his experience. The play, however, foregrounds such responses to anxiety and fear as refusing touch, groaning, screaming, curling up, and counting. The prominence of these actions and sensory traits may lead readers to see him chiefly as a typical

autistic character, overlooking his complex thoughts about mathematics, the universe, time, and human relationships, as well as his agency. The adaptation thus gives the plot greater focus and intensifies dramatic conflict, but it also partly weakens the reciprocal relationship through which external action and internal cognition explain and illuminate one another in the novel, diminishing the intellectual depth of Christopher's inner world.

5. Conclusion

Through Christopher's first-person writing, Haddon's novel interweaves an investigation, revelations about his family, and inward reflection within a single narrative. Turning a metafictional work so deeply dependent on Christopher's inner consciousness into a play involves negotiating differences in narrative medium, modes of perception, and reception. Stephens transforms the novel's written structure into a dramatic narrative driven by reading, dialogue, voices, and action, using a play-within-a-play to carry forward its metafictional quality. The expanded role of dialogue and action also reshapes the secondary characters. These choices give Christopher's inner experience a more immediate form of expression and both sustain and develop the novel's thematic concerns. At the same time, the compression of the internal cognitive strand and the greater prominence of behavioural traits create a risk that Christopher will be understood in reductive, categorical terms.

More broadly, the adaptation gives the novel's literary concerns renewed expression through dialogue and action. Stephens retains its central insights while using dramatic forms to reread and reinterpret the source, giving questions of fiction, difference, and understanding new forms of articulation. Adaptation can thus generate new meanings while carrying forward a source work's core concerns. Stephens's play offers an instructive path for translating first-person metafiction into drama and opens further possibilities for the adaptation of comparable literary works.

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