This thesis is based on my translation of a Chinese domestic drama called *Once upon a Rainy Night*, written by Dr. Wei-Jan Chi, a famous playwright from Taiwan. This play was translated from Chinese (partial Taiwanese dialect) to English. Based on dramatic text translation theories, this thesis introduces detailed structural analysis as a useful tool both for translators and dramaturges.
FROM PAGE TO PAGE TO STAGE: TRANSLATION AND DRAMATURGY ISSUES OF \textit{ONCE UPON A RAINY NIGHT}

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Introduction

During the holiday season of 2006, my academic adviser Dr. Howard Blanning came back from his vacation in Taiwan with several books written by the same author—Dr. Wei-Jan Chi, one of the most productive and successful playwrights in Taiwan and the current chair of the theatre department at Taiwan National University. In the following month, I read most of these books, including a couple of plays, and the one I enjoyed the most was a play called Dark Night, White Thief (《黑夜白賊》), which later became Once upon a Rainy Night. This play is the first one in Chi's domestic trilogy Long Time No See (《好久不見》), and is also considered to be one of his most successful works. Chi attributed the success to his own experience: in the preface of Long Time No See, Chi says that this play is based on his relationship with his mother. In another article, Chi even mentioned that Mrs. Lin, the mother from Once upon a Rainy Night, is the only successful female character he ever wrote.

The character who shares the most similarity to Chi himself is the youngest son Hung-Kuan, a rebel of the family, an outsider; Hung-Kuan even goes to the same school as the Chi, which interestingly enough, is also where Tennessee Williams, writer of one of the most important domestic plays The Glass Menagerie which will be used as an example in this thesis, got his Bachelor’s degree—the University of Iowa. According to Chi, this character is more related to his past, the “dimmest period” of his life.

Besides the characters, the plot of Rainy Night is also partly based on Chi’s own experience, such as his father’s bankruptcy and the family history. The reason he chose to write these important passages of his life into this play is mostly because they are typical issues of his generation.

When I shared my excitement from reading this play and its related information, Dr. Blanning suggested I translate it into English. I started working on the translation in April
2007, and had a rough start, mainly because of unfamiliarity of the Taiwanese dialect, which is frequently used in the text. In the summer, during my trip to Czech Republic, I finally finished the first draft in a small café in Prague not far away from the Old Town Square. In discussing the translation with Dr. Blanning, my first reader and editor, in the following fall semester, the blueprint of this thesis started to emerge, and that was the beginning of everything.

This thesis consists of four chapters and two appendices. Chapter 1: Domestic Drama and Translation, contains my research on the definition, history and main features of domestic drama in relation to translation. Chapter 2: Translation Issues, contains basic theories of translating dramatic texts and examples from two domestic drama masterpieces Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* and Cao Yu’s *Thunderstorm*. Chapter 3: Case Study: A Comparative Analysis, contains a comparison of the use of detailed structural analysis in both *The Glass Menagerie* and *Once upon a Rainy Night*. Chapter 4: Detailed Structural Analysis and Function, contains a full version of the two-column action/dialogue detailed structural analysis of *Once upon a Rainy Night* and the demonstration of its function. Appendix 1 is a full-length translation of *Once upon a Rainy Night*; Appendix 2 is a photocopy version of the original text for the consideration of comparison.
Chapter One  Domestic Drama and Translation

Drama has always had the power to engage the present in a way that is less true of other genres. Unlike the novel it speaks in the present tense, and the sense of shared experience which derives from this makes it a sensitive instrument for plotting changes in cultural pressure, for responding to changing ideological, social, and aesthetic moods.

-- C. W. E. Bigsby, Drama as Cultural Sign

Bigsby’s observation of the nature of drama explains why domestic drama is such an appealing form to so many great playwrights in both the West and the East: in terms of familiarity, nothing beats domestic drama, because it is the most universally shared experience; therefore, it is a convenient instrument in delivering further meanings. To the audience, the intimacy domestic theme carries can easily break the fourth wall: they can spontaneously identify themselves with the characters, which is crucial to expressing themes beyond the household. Moreover, domesticity is a more reasonable agency in communicating social issues. A superficial explanation of this function would be: home stands for homeland, and household is an important element in a society; so it’s easier to reach beyond domesticity by talking about household metaphorically.

Brief History

Dramatic works have nearly always contained a sense of domestic drama within their fundamental plot line (Ritchard and Forward, 1). Since the early ages of ancient Greek drama, ordinary people’s struggles with their lives have been a preferable theme. Even in plays like Agamemnon where the Greek gods frequently interfere with the common people, domesticity still holds certain importance in the war between humans and the gods: the cause and resolution of the conflict both start in Agamemnon’s household.
In Renaissance theatre, pastoral drama and romantic drama started to take over the stage, and most of them either took place in households or have certain domestic elements in them. Towards the early eighteenth century, playwrights started to focus more and more on the problems of ordinary people, using domestic drama to express the “trend toward sentimental bourgeois realism” (Unknown author). As a middle-class started to emerge during this period of time, new domestic dramas also included a certain middle-class morality.

The era of realism of the Nineteenth Century was when drama took the complete step in incorporating realism due to the influence of playwrights such as Chekhov and Ibsen, both of whom showed extreme interest in domesticity, resulting in more serious and philosophical domestic dramas. In plays like *Cherry Orchard* and *Wild Duck*, characters and settings have completed the gradual development and embraced the realistic truths of current society. Along with realism came naturalism, and the combination of these two gave way to the “slice-of-life” shows commonly synonymous with domestic drama, a tendency that can be easily recognized in plays such as Ibsen's *Ghosts*.

In the Twentieth Century, Symbolism is introduced into domestic dramas, which ultimately caused more diversity within the genre.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, domestic drama became a combination of various styles, and its definition became more or less ambiguous. Even though the forms of dramatic works have expanded, there are still some of the common psychological, social, and political issues have their roots in domesticity. Nowadays, more and more domestic drama starts to communicate more complicated social issues such as civil rights, feminism, and current political and sociological disputes; and the reason behind this is still relevant to what we have discussed at the beginning of this chapter.
According to Ritchard and Forward, domestic drama is appealing to audiences in four main ways. First and most obviously, by eliciting empathy, as domestic drama generally includes characters whose daily concerns are commonly shared. It can also give the audience an insight into a family or domestic unit highly unlike their own and, if well crafted, or elicit empathy through showing the dramatic daily concerns of others. Second, domestic drama may be constructed to appeal to its audience through the use of humor. Third, suspense is created through dramatic irony as the audience is privy to secrets before some of the characters. Finally, by making domestic issues sanitized and attractive, domestic dramas appeal to an audience for escapism and clear resolution of issues (Ritchard and Forward, 5).

Chi’s *Once upon a Rainy Night* embodies all these qualities: the story takes place in an ordinary household with an unusual situation; it uses humor well; the central/beginning event, the missing jewel box, builds up suspense; it provides a resolution: the flood that will wish away all the unhappy memories. Overall, it expresses the “war-at-home” style of theater, which also fits in the new era of domestic drama.

**Definition and Genres**

Before we move to the topic of the translation of domestic drama, it is necessary to define the term. *Domestic* is derived from the Latin domus, or home. The word *domestic* is defined as “of or relating to the household.” In Chinese, the character “家” in “家庭” (domestic) and “家庭剧” (domestic drama) also means home, and it is a pictographic character, which implies the structure of the character is related to its meaning: it consists of a roof and a pig, which defines *home* both physically and economically. As defined by the English Communications Syllabus, the term ‘domestic drama’ refers to a text in which the emphasis is on character’s intimate relationships and their responses to unfolding events in their lives. (Ritchard and Forward, 1)
From this brief history, we can tell that domestic drama has not been a consistent genre. Throughout its development, it has interacted with other genres and generated different subgenres. Generally speaking, domestic drama in the post-Ibsenian era usually has certain realistic elements; therefore it can be included in a loosely-defined domestic realism genre. Both *Once upon a Rainy Night* and *The Glass Menagerie* can fit within these parameters, although they both have non-realistic features.

Domestic realism has been a preferable form for more than a century. On the American stage, for example, as June Schlueter asserts, despite an abundance of experimental activity which continues to this day, the characteristic paradigm of American theatre remained the realistic play—the domestic drama that achieves its goal through conventions of culture and theatre, which was too stubborn to disappear. Even in 1999, Americans’ belief that the nuclear family was the structural given of American life and that verisimilitude was the formal given of American theatre has sustained a tradition that has defined the American stage at least since Eugene O’Neill (Schlueter, 14).

**Construction of the Text**

Domestic realism relies on the audience’s recognition of the behaviors of family life in progress, peered at through the imaginary fourth wall of the family living room by an audience convinced that life is—or can be—like that (Schlueter, 20). Therefore, the audience’s expected awareness of the conventions of the genre, shape the author’s construction of the text whether these conventions are conformed to or subverted. The conventions can generally be classified into the three areas of subject, structure and language. (Ritchard and Forward, 3) These three conventions have a huge influence on the translation of domestic drama.
First, its subject matter: the audience expects the subject matter to revolve around the
domestic sphere, dealing with traditional families, urban family units or domestic
households. This experience, as I mentioned before, is universal, not particular to one culture.
Thus domestic drama is a more translatable genre in nature.

Second, its structure: although domestic drama doesn’t have a uniform structure, generally
speaking, it follows a fairly linear structure and has a patriarchal or matriarchal figure as a
representative of the family. This figure provides the guidelines of the everyday nature of
other family members. Challenging the patriarchal/matriarchal figure is also a common
structure within domestic dramas. Chi’s *Once upon a Rainy Night*, for example, follows this
structural pattern: although the linear narration is interrupted by flashback scenes, the
internal structure still follows a linear narrative. To fulfill the pattern in a translation, one has
to be fully aware of the structure during the whole process. I will elaborate this issue later
using examples from Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* and Cao Yu’s *Thunderstorm,*
two great domestic dramas from the West and the East.

Thirdly, its language: the language used in a domestic drama generally relates with the
“ordinary” characters of a show to reinforce the realistic impression of the show onto the
audience. The use of specific language enables a specific group of the audience to further
connect with the subjects of the domestic drama because language is an intimate personal
way of communicating. In translating a domestic drama, finding a character’s voice and
keeping the coherence of language is crucial. Sometimes this is the first and most important
step both in terms of content and structure.
Chapter Two  Translation Issues

Before our discussion of *Once upon a Rainy Night*, it's important to talk about some issues in translation, translating dramatic text in particular.

**About Translating Dramatic Texts**

Translation is a unique art/craft form that opens a window to the world, and gives us power to conquer the Tower of Babel. Although translation has existed as a tool that enabled us to steal a glimpse of the “other” for a long time, Translation Studies as an academic discipline wasn’t born until the late 1970s when Susan Bassnett first published her groundbreaking book *Translation Studies*, which remains essential reading in the field after two decades.

One basic theoretic starting point in Translation Studies is that we could not read literature in translation without asking ourselves if linguistics and cultural phenomena really were “translatable,” exploring in some depth the concept of “equivalence” (Bassnett, 11). Therefore, issues that emerge during the translating process oftentimes cannot be solved simply by seeking familiarity. As Finnish scholar Sirkku Aaltonen points out, maybe translation is not a window onto the secret garden of the foreign at all, but one onto the multitude of texts which can be used to serve everyone. These texts are surrounded by other texts and get their shape from them; they are not self-sufficient or independent of context and reception (Aaltonen, 1).

In translating dramatic text, more than other areas, one is confronted with difficulty in terms of linguistic, cultural, historical, socio-political differences; the most superficial concern here is that, as Bassnett asserts, a theatre text is read differently. It is read as something incomplete, rather than as a fully rounded unit, since it is only in performance that the full potential of the text is realized (Bassnett, 119-120). Thus, if translating other literary genres is like transplanting a tree from one place to another, translating dramatic texts is more like engrafting a branch from one tree to another: whether or not the branch can survive almost
completely depends on the gardener’s technique. Especially when translating for staging purposes, a dramatic text cannot be treated as a purely literary text. The consideration of style and register of language is made more complex by the acting style and theatrical performance. The meaning of words and sentences can change in the light of speech rhythm, tone and intonation, which may be indicated or merely implied in the text (Lai, 160).

Moreover, as Bassnett points out, the written text is a functional component in the total process that comprises theatre and is characterized in ways that distinguish it from a written text designed to be read in its own right; she stresses the theatrical aspect of drama, and argues:

…a theatre text, written with a view to its performance, contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, beyond the stage directions themselves. Consequently the task of the translator must be to determine what those structures are and to translate them into the target language, even though this may lead to major shifts on the linguistic and stylistic planes (Bassnett, 123).

This is why a detailed structural analysis is necessary in translating process: if a translator has a better understanding of the structure, many problems can be avoided from the very beginning. This is the reason why productions of the same foreign text generate different translations: the original translation was oftentimes intended as a reading text and didn’t serve the dramaturgical purpose well.

Therefore, on a practical level, the translating process should start with distinguishing the first and most fundamental of the three basic norms Andre Lefevere advocated in the 1980s: the translator asks himself what kind of translation he wants to produce (Lai, 161). This not only includes a choice between producing a reading text or a text for performance, but also
one between “bringing the reader to the source text or bringing the source text to the reader” (Aaltonen, 1). Such a choice entails an attitude towards the source text, ranging from the source text as the authority in a literal translation to an adaptation, or a drastic rewriting of the text which might be called a “version”. The objective may range from giving the reader/audience an idea of the source text/ performance in its own cultural environment to taking the plot or a message from the source text, giving it a different cultural and/or chronological context, for comment via the juxtapositions (Lai, 161).

Although I translated the text before I read any articles or books on Translation Studies, and Once Upon a Rainy Night was my first full-length translation work, I had a very clear vision of what kind of translation I wanted: first, it is a text for performance purpose, and because of the playwright’s popularity, it’s likely to be staged, so it is definitely not a closet play; second, it should be a direct translation with certain flexibility, which is to say, I would try to bring the reader/audience to the source text as much as possible, but under the precondition of performance purpose, or in Aaltonen’s words, “trying to present domestic issues in the light of foreign texts” (Aaltonen, 1).

**Brief History of the Two-way Translation between Chinese and English**

Early attempts to bring Chinese drama to the West consist of translations of traditional Chinese opera lyrics intended as literature for reading rather than performance. These include *The Western Chamber* (《西廂記》) and a number of Yuan dynasty operas. A rare exception was the experiments of Fr. Sheridan in Hong Kong in the 1950s to perform Chinese operas in English. Among the modern classics in English translate Chinese speech drama (話劇) are Cao Yu’s (曹禺)*Thunderstorm* (《雷雨》)by Wang Zuoliang (王佐良), and *Wilderness* (《原野》)by James Liu (劉若愚). Since the late 1970s, many new plays from China have been collected in anthologies of translations of contemporary Chinese literature, such as *Renditions* (1983) (Lai, 159).
Conversely, the introduction of Western speech drama to China began in 1907 with an adaptation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. From the 1930s, a number of translations from plays in English were published. These included the works of English dramatists such as Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Of these, Shakespeare attracted the most interest. There are over five versions of some of his plays, some of which were intended for performance while others were not.

In the 1960s, the busy publishing industry in Taiwan helped to bring out translations of Western post-war drama. The lively theatre scene in 1960s Hong Kong, and late 1970s China, have encouraged translations and adaptations of plays from many countries around the world from classic and modern classic to contemporary and avant-garde. These served mainly performances, and not all the translations have appeared in print (Lai, 159-160).

From this brief introduction of translation in both directions, we get the impression that throughout its history, dramatic translation first started with literary purpose, and then gradually took on a more performable purpose.

Since the main text we discuss in this thesis is translated from Chinese to English, they will be the only two languages involved in this conversation. Although, as Lai asserts, the nature of the traffic in each direction (from English to Chinese and from Chinese to English) is different, the goal I am trying to achieve here is to discuss the issue more through a pragmatic aspect rather than a linguistic aspect. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on the similarity rather than the differences between the two directions.

The two texts I use here as examples are arguably among the best contemporary domestic drama in America and in China—Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) and Cao
Yu’s *Thunderstorm* (1933).

**From English to Chinese**

The main difficulty in this discussion is that the target language—Chinese—is not accessible to all the readers, and it’s also a language with many subtle meanings. Thus, it’s almost impossible to explain the use of all the linguistic, contextual and intertextual instrumentation here even if the whole thesis were dedicated to this topic. So instead of examining the translation of idioms, slang, tone, irony, or word-play, I will try to explain the issue on a theatrical basis, using two examples from Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie*, Act 1, Scene 4.

**Dialogue**

Considered a perfect example of poetic realism, *The Glass Menagerie* is famous for the beauty of its language, especially Tom’s narration. Even in some transitional scenes, Mr. Williams’s language is always philosophic and poetic. Here is an example:

> Tom fishes his pockets for door-key, removing a motley assortment of articles in the search, including a perfect shower of movie-ticket stubs and an empty bottle. As last he finds the key, but just as he is about to insert it, it slips from his fingers. He strikes a match and crouches below the door.

> Tom. *(Bitterly)* One crack—and it falls through!

> *(Random House, 25)*

Obviously, Tom’s line has double meanings; it refers to both his key and his life. In translating this line, the two Chinese versions I picked here have two vastly different interpretations:
1. Dong Xiu’s version (also known as version A)

汤姆（痛苦地）一次失败，彻底完蛋！
Tom (Bitterly) Fail once, fall forever!
(Dong Xiu, 27)

2. Internet version, unknown author (also known as version B)

汤姆（埋怨地）一眨眼——它就不在啦！
Tom (Complainingly) In a blink of eye—it’s gone!
(Unknown author, 28)

These two translators each chose to translate one side of the double meanings. Version A translates the metaphorical meaning in a very articulate way: Tom’s life is like the falling key; one mistake leads to endless failure. Version B, in the other hand, has no reference to the metaphorical meaning, and just simply translates the line from its external meaning—Tom loses his key. In order to make it more reasonable, it even changes the stage direction from “bitterly” into “complainingly” to suit the situation better. One might easily make a judgment that version A is a better translation; however, in a dramaturgical point of view, there are also problems with version A—it skips the literal meaning of the line, and creates a gap for the audience which can be an obstacle for their understanding, especially in a performance. The first thing they see on stage is Tom looking for his key, and then all of a sudden, he starts to make a very bitter comment about life. In this sense, version B is better structurally, but the hidden meaning is lost.

Undoubtedly, a translation that can keep the double meaning is preferable. I would suggest two possible ways of translation here: version one is a very literal, word-to-word translation, but it can also have double meanings; the second one is more articulated, but it’s not as
strong as the expression used in Dong Xiu’s version. It can be understood both as a reference of the key and his life.

1. 汤姆 （苦涩地）一个小洞—它就落到底了！
   Tom. (Bitterly) One crack—and it falls through to the ground!
2. 汤姆 （苦涩地）你着错，着着错！
   Tom. (Bitterly) One wrong move, fails all through!

**Action**

In practical, not only the translation of dialogue has influence on dramatic structure, but also the translation of actions, because non-verbal language has the same importance as dialogue in terms of forward strategy. Therefore, in translating a dramatic text for performance purposes, understanding the significance of action in relation to the structure is also an essential issue. This example is also from *The Glass Menagerie*, Act 1, Scene 4:

Laura. Tom—shhh!

Tom. What’re you shushing me for?

Laura. You’ll wake up Mother.

Tom. Goody goody! Pay’er back for all those “Rise an’ Shines.” (*Lies down groaning.*) You Know it don’t take much intelligence to get yourself into a nailed-up coffin, Laura. But who in hell ever got himself out of one without removing one nail? (Dramatists Play Service Inc., 27)

The stage direction, “Tom lies down groaning” can be understood in two ways: 1. Tom lies down, and groans, then he says “You know...” and 2. Tom lies down and groans “You know...”. The two Chinese translations of this action are: 1. 汤姆一边叹气一边躺下 Tom “sighs as he lies down”, and says “You know...” (Version A) and 2. 汤姆哼一声, 躺下去 Tom
groans and lies down, and says “You know…” (Version B). This seemingly insignificant detail actually has more influence on the structure and directorial decision than it appears to have. The original text implies that Tom says the following line “You know…” in a groaning tone, which makes his next line sound more like an unsatisfied wish that is also in accordance with his earlier lines: “There is a trick that would come in handy for me—get me out of this 2 by 4 situation!” However, the two Chinese versions didn’t manage to achieve this strategy: version A makes it sounds like he is complaining and version B shows his insensibility of the situation, which is obviously not the case. The reason both of these two translators made a mistake here is because there is not an equivalent word in Chinese meaning “groaning,” so my suggestion here would be translating it into 嘟囔 which means “grumble ” or “murmur”. It’s easier and clearer this way to directors and actors to understand “groaning” as a tone more than a sound or a sigh.

**From Chinese to English**

As I mentioned before, the nature of the other direction of translation (from Chinese to English) is completely different, yet on the theatrical level, some issues remain the same, regardless what the target language is.

Since *Once Upon a Rainy Night* is a contemporary play, I will confine the discussion in this time frame. Cao Yu's *Thunderstorm* is undoubtedly the most popular Chinese play of the period prior to the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, and is considered to be a milestone in China’s modern theatrical ascendancy. The plot of *Thunderstorm* centers on one family’s psychological and physical destruction as a result of incest, as perpetrated at the hands of its morally depraved and corrupt patriarch, Zhou Puyuan.

Wang Zuoliang’s (王佐良) translation of *Thunderstorm* is also a classic; most productions in English-speaking countries use it as a blueprint, although it was first translated for more
literal purpose. One of the most impressive qualities of this translation is the close capturing of the characters. This is also one of the difficulties that I found in my own translation experience: how to keep the consistency of a character’s language. Here is an example from Thunderstorm:

Lu (Coughing) God almighty! (Heatedly.) Just look at you. There’s not one of you can look me in the face! (Turning to Dahai and Sifeng.) It’s no good you pretending not to hear, either. I’ve worked my fingers to the bone to bring you two up, both of you, but what have either of you ever done to show your gratitude? (To Dahai.) Eh? (To Sifeng.) Answer me that! (To Lu Ma, who is standing by the round table in the center.) Or perhaps you can tell me, seeing that they’re your precious children? (Wang and Barnes, 246)

Lu Gui’s character is very ignorant and cranky: he is always unsatisfied with his situation. He likes to show off by using his parental authority all the time, but nobody in the family has any respect for him. His language is very rude and uneducated.

A word-to-word translation of the underlined part would be:

Lu … aren't you willing to listen to me? Can either of you grow up without my hard-work? Did you either of you do anything to show your gratitude?

A brief comparison is enough to give you the impression that Wang’s version is obviously not a direct translation: he chooses to phrase the lines differently in order to deliver the meaning better, and more importantly, to show the character’s speech pattern, which is crucial to the play’s forward strategy.
Here is another example; another one of Lu Gui’s line in Act 1:

Lu (who is used to being treated like this by his daughter and so can do nothing more than make a feeble protest): Oh, what’s the use of talking to you?

(Wang and Barnes, 11)

Again, a word-to-word translation would be:

Lu (who is used to being treated like this by his daughter and so and can do nothing more than make a feeble protest): Damn you, kid!

As we can see here, the original text is a curse, but according to the stage direction and the whole context (this is the first scene between the father and daughter before any major incident takes place), the subtext of this line is more like complaining rather than cursing. So the translator’s decision here is based on a full understanding of the playwright’s purpose. It not only helps to establish the character, it also serves the structure well: his daughter’s reply to this line is: “You talk too much!” So the exchange would be:

Lu (who is used to being treated like this by his daughter and so and can do nothing more than make a feeble protest): Oh, what’s the use of talking to you?

Feng (looking around at him): You talk too much! (Wang and Barnes, 11)

By altering the phrase, there’s a clearer flow that carries on the conversation, which not only helps readers understand the context, but also serves the stage purpose well.

From a brief discussion of translating dramatic text in two directions, we can conclude that structure overpowers everything else in a translation. It’s not only the internal structure that Susan Bassnett describes as the “distinguish[ing] structural features that make [the translation of the play] performable”, but also the external structure of the text. That’s why a translator of a play should also be the dramaturge: she/he has the access to the original text,
therefore a better sense of the overall structure. In this sense, any translating choice should be based on the structure and the forward strategy of the play.
Chapter Three  Case Study: a Comparative Analysis

In this chapter, I will elaborate more on the former chapter in order to explain the necessity of detail structure analysis in translating dramatic text, using more examples from The Glass Menagerie.

Text

The first thing on a translator’s agenda is the possibility of multiple texts. From Shakespeare on, many plays have more than one published versions; The Glass Menagerie, for instance, has two different editions in a time span of thirty years: it was first published by Random House in 1945, and then an acting edition in 1975, revised by the playwright himself, published by Dramatists Play Service Inc.

In a translation more for literal purposes, it’s possible for translators to use multiple texts in one translation with footnotes or other kinds of annotation. In a translation for performance purposes, however, a translator needs to make choices: what the differences are, what the playwrights’ intention would be, and most importantly, what’s better for the structure. Here is an example from The Glass Menagerie:

The first scene in the two editions is vastly different. The following is a detailed structure analysis of each, respectively.
Amanda is calling Tom and asks him to come to table otherwise they can’t say grace.

Amanda gives Tom a lecture about how to eat properly to help digesting.

Tom complains that her lecturing spoils his appetite. Amanda replies lightly that his temperament like a Metropolitan star.

Amanda points out that he is not excused from the table. Tom says he needs a cigarette. Amanda complains he smokes too much.

Laura says she’ll bring in the blanc mange.

Amanda’s voice becomes audible through the portieres.

Legend on screen: “ou sont les neiges.”

Tom divides the portieres and enters the upstage area. Amanda and Laura are seated at the drop-leaf table. Eating is indicated by gestures without food or utensils. Amanda faces the audience. Tom and Laura are seated in profile.

The interior has lit up softly and through the scrim we see Amanda and Laura seated at the table in the upstage area.

Tom bows slightly and withdraws, reappearing a few moments later in his place at the table.

Tom deliberately lays his imaginary fork down and pushes his chair back from the table.

Tom rises and crosses downstage.

Laura rises.

Tom remains standing with his cigarette by the portieres during the following
Amanda tells Laura her funny/unhappy experience in church
Amanda complains about the Northern Episcopalians.
Amanda gives Tom a lecture about how to eat properly to help digesting.
Tom complains that her lecturing spoils his appetite.
Amanda replies lightly that his temperament like a Metropolitan star, and points out that he is not excused from the table.
Tom says he needs a cigarette.
Amanda complains he smokes too much.
Laura says she’ll bring in the coffee.

Tom exits R. He goes off downstage, takes off his sailor overcoat and skull-fitting cap and remains off-stage by dinning-room R. door for his entrance cue.
Amanda’s voice becomes audible through the portieres—i.e., gauze curtains separating dinning-room from living-room. Amanda is sitting in C. chair and Laura in L. chair.
Eating is indicated by gestures without food or utensils. Amanda faces the audience. The interior of the dinning-room has lit up softly and through the scrim—gauze curtains—we see Amanda and Laura seated at the table in the upstage area.
Dinning-room gauze curtains open automatically.
Tom enters dinning-room R., slips over to table and sits in chair R.
Tom comes down to arm-chair in living-room R., lights cigarette.
Laura rises.
There are several major differences between these two editions. Firstly, and most noticeably, is Tom’s action/motive, in relation to Amanda’s. It’s not hard to see that the 1945 edition is relatively unpolished: there’s confusion, if not a mistake in Tom’s part. After his opening monologue, Tom “divides the portieres and enters the upstage area,” and then we see “Tom and Laura are seated in profile.” Since “Amanda and Laura are seated at the drop-leaf table,” the mostly possible assumption here would be that Tom is sitting at the table with them. But then we realize he is not, because it’s after Amanda calls him that he “bows slightly and withdraws, reappearing a few moments later in his place at the table.” Although Tom’s action here is more or less ambiguous, Mr. Williams’s intention here is clear enough: as both narrator and a character in the play, Tom needs a transition between his two roles. In order to accomplish this goal, he writes in the short conversation between mother and son:

Amanda. (Calling) Tom?
Tom. Yes, Mother.
Amanda. We can’t say grace until you come to the table!
Tom. Coming, Mother. (He bows slightly and withdraws, reappearing a few moments later in his place at the table.)

We can see here Tom’s bow is the transitional action here, and Amanda’s calling is the motive that leads to the action. However, with this way, another question arises: the first stage direction after Tom’s monologue is: “Amanda’s voice becomes audible through the portieres.” She is not calling Tom yet, because he needs time to enter the upstage area and wait for the cue. Then what should she talk about? Although this is a directorial problem that is not hard to fix in practice, there is still a blank here. Maybe this is why Mr. Williams changes it in the 1975 acting edition where he makes it very clear that Tom’s costume change is the transitional action, and not his conversation with Amanda. He also gives Amanda an introductive monologue during the transitional scene, complaining about the Northern
Episcopalians. This adjustment certainly changes the structure, as well as the characters’ first impression and relation to each other.

In the 1945 edition, Amanda’s first line in the whole play is “Tom?” which emphasizes the dedicated mother side of the character and the relationship between them; Tom’s first line is “Yes, Mother,” which shows us a more traditional Tom. Accordingly, we can see in the 1945 edition, Tom tells Amanda he is getting a cigarette before he actually gets one, and we don’t see him light the cigarette the whole time, while the 1975 edition, in the other hand, Tom goes to the living-room and lights a cigarette without asking for anyone’s permission first. Also in this edition, Amanda’s first monologue is a description of her experience in church and her comments on the Northern Episcopalians, which not only gives us more information about the family and herself, but also the independent side of the character. In this version, Tom shows his rebellious side earlier: his entering action is self-motivated, and his first line is talking back to Amanda’s lecturing.

In translating two vastly different editions, a translator must have full awareness of the structure in relation to the dramatic purpose. For example, if a translator chooses to combine two texts together by using Amanda’s opening monologue and her conversation with Tom as the transitional device together, there is a risk of diluting the dramatic tension. On the other hand, if a translator doesn’t understand the significance of the transitional actions and replaces the beginning of 1975 edition with the 1945 one, then it would create huge confusion about Tom’s two different roles.

Luckily enough, Once upon a Rainy Night only has one published text, and according to the playwright, it’s the acting edition. Thus the text issue doesn’t exist in this case.
Detailed Structure Analysis

In the first chapter, I try to demonstrate some structure-related translation issues using examples from *The Glass Menagerie* and *Thunderstorm*. I would like further explore this topic, again using a scene from a Chinese tran*The Glass Menagerie*.

In order to avoid the text issue, the scene I picked here is almost identical in both of the two editions, although the scene numbering is slightly different: they are Scene IV in the 1945 edition and Act I, Scene 4 and the beginning of Scene 5 in the 1975 edition; other difference will be highlighted.
Laura asks Tom where he has been tonight; he tells her that he watched a lot of movies because it was a very long program. And then he also saw a big stage magic show by a magician named Malvolio who can turn water to wine and whiskey; he volunteered to try the whiskey, twice. The magician gave him his “magic scarf”, and he gives it to Laura.

Tom also tells her that the wonderfullest

The interior is dark. Faint light in alley R. A deep-voiced bell in a church is tolling the hours of five as the scene commences.

Tom appears at the top of R. alley. After each solemn boom of the bell in the tower he shakes a little toy noise-maker or rattle as if to express the tiny spasm of man in contrast to the sustained power and dignity of the Almighty. This and the unsteadiness of his advance make it evident that he has been drinking. As he climbs the few steps to the fire-escape landing light steals up inside. Laura appears in the night-dress, entering living-room from L. door of dining-room, observing Tom’s empty bed (day-bed) in the living room. Tom fishes his pockets for door-key, removing a motley assortment of articles in the search, including a perfect shower of movie-ticket stubs and an empty bottle. As last he finds the key, but just as he is about to insert it, it slips from his fingers. He strikes a match and crouches below the door.

Laura opens the door and lets him in.
trick of all was how he escaped from a nailed coffin; he says this is exactly the trick he needs: so he can escape from this family, which is like a coffin to him.

Laura asks him to keep it down; otherwise he might wake up Amanda.

Tom murmurs that it’s much more difficult to get out of a nail-up coffin than getting into one; and he asks himself: who can get you out without removing the nails?

Scene IV/Act I, Scene 5

A few moments after the alarm, we hear Amanda calling: “rise and shine! Rise and shine! Laura, go tell your brother to rise and shine!”

Tom says: I’ll rise—but I won’t shine.

We hear Amanda again: she tells Laura to let Tom know that his coffee is ready.

Laura asks Tom to get up right away and don’t make Amanda nervous.

Laura asks Tom to talk to Amanda and apologize to her.
Tom argues that Amanda started not speaking to him first, and Laura insists that he should apologize. Tom says it’s not such a big deal that she doesn’t speak, but Laura begs him.

We hear Amanda calling from offstage again; she urges Laura to get some butter, otherwise she has to do it herself. Laura says she will take off soon. Amanda tells Laura to tell the shopkeeper to charge it. Laura says they make faces when she does so. Amanda says it won’t harm them. She also urges Tom to have his coffee.

Laura tells Tom again to apologize to Amanda before she leaves.

Amanda rushes Laura again.

Tom asks Laura what happened; she replies that she just slipped.

Instead of showing her sympathy, Amanda says that if anyone falls down and breaks a leg on the fire-escape steps, the landlord must charge them a fortune.

Tom stares at her stupidly. Beseechingly.

Tom is putting his shoes on.

Laura rises and crosses to door R.

Tom looks sullenly away.

Laura rushes out door R.

A second later she cries out. Falls on fire-escape landing. Tom springs up and crosses to door R. Amanda rushes anxiously in from dining-room, puts dishes on dining-room table. Tom opens door R.

Laura goes up R. alley, out of sight.
This is a very important scene from a dramaturgical perspective. In the first three scenes, Amanda discovers Laura has dropped out of school and has been lying to her the whole time, Tom and Amanda have their first big fight and during the fight, Tom accidentally breaks some of Laura’s glass animals. This scene is the beginning of recovery for their relationships, and a transition to the final gentleman caller scene. Understanding the structural significance of this scene is crucial in translating in terms of both character shaping and forward strategy.

First, Tom and Laura’s relationship. This is actually Tom and Laura’s first real encounter, so every detail is important in shaping the characters. Laura’s first stage direction is: “Laura appears in the night-dress, entering living-room from L. door of dining-room, observing Tom’s empty bed (day-bed) in the living room.” This action is slightly different in the two editions: in the 1945 edition, Laura is already on stage when the lights go up; the 1975 edition adds the entering action. The former one implies she is waiting for Tom in the living-room, while the latter implies she goes to the living-room to check on Tom. No matter which one a translator chooses to base the translation on, one thing remains the same: Laura is always waiting at home. As a matter of fact, the only time we actually see her getting out of the house is also in this scene: she follows Amanda’s order to get some butter and she falls on the stairs. Another domestic quality Laura shows in this scene is that she is a good listener. In her conversation with Tom, Tom does most of the talking while Laura’s stage directions include: innocently, beseechingly, slips into living-room, etc. In order to emphasize this action, the Dong Xiu translation adds a subject before some of the stage directions. For example:

Laura. Tom!—It’s nearly seven. Don’t make Mother nervous. (He stares at her stupidly. Beseechingly.) Tom, speak to Mother this morning. Make up with her, apologize, speak to her!

To emphasize the stage direction “beseechingly,” she translates it into: “Laura begging.” This modification actually has two functions here. First, in Chinese grammar, it’s not clear who is
acting beseeching without the subject, thus the translation clarifies the possible confusion. Second, by adding the subject, it stresses the power relation even further; Laura is the lesser one in the family.

Another similar example is right after this line:

Tom. Her not speaking—is that such a tragedy?
Laura. Please—please!

Dong Xiu's version translates Laura's line into: “I am begging you!” Here by adding the subject and object, it is not only easier for a Chinese reader/audience to understand, but also once again emphasizes the power relation.

Laura's otherness also shows in her relationship with Amanda. In the 1975 edition especially, Laura doesn't have a face-to-face encounter with Amanda in this scene; Amanda gives all her directions from off-stage. In the 1945 edition, although Amanda does enter, she stays in the upstage area, while Laura is downstage, ready to go out. In translating this scene, I think it's important to keep in mind the physical distance between Laura and Amanda, because it indicates their relationship: although they live in the same house, they are strangers. In order to accomplish this goal, I would even add stage direction such as: (Amanda) off-stage, loudly to remind directors of their relationship.

These examples show us the importance of detailed structure analysis in the translating process: it clarifies the action in relation to the dialogue, and helps the translators understand the subtext better; moreover, it better emphasizes the forward strategy and overall structur, and therefore helps the director to understand the text better.

Now I would like to further demonstrate the issue in my translation of Chi’s *Once upon a Rainy Night*. In order to make the comparison more reasonable, the scene I pick is similar to
the scene in *The Glass Menagerie*. It's the first scene in the second act, Mrs. Lin is getting obsessed with telling Chen their family history. Hung-Kuan can't stand it anymore, so he hides in his closet. Mrs. Lin sends Shu-Fen to check on Hung-Kuan. The following scene is a conversation between Shu-Fen and Hung-Kuan.

**ACT II**

Before the curtain is up, we can hear the sound of heavy rain.
When the curtain rises, Chen is standing alone on the third floor platform next to the rocking chair, under a faint light. On the second floor, four women are sitting on each side of a square table, and Mrs. Lin is standing beside the table. The first floor is empty now, but there is a chair that we didn't see in the first act next to the couch.
On the right front of the stage, there is a set of Hakka cards, table and chairs; on the left, an open colorful umbrella.
The first floor lights up.

Shu-Fen walks in and goes directly to the first floor closet and knocks on the door.

Hung-Kuan opens the door, and he is sitting in the closet with a glass of wine in his hand.

He finishes the wine and starts to play with the handcuffs he got from Chen.

Shu-Fen tries to get Hung-Kuan out of his closet, but he refuses and asks her to join him in the closet instead.

Shu-Fen doesn't want to get in at first, because she has closet phobia. And this brings the conversation back to their childhood when they played hide and seek together.

When Shu-Fen sees the handcuff, they have a conversation about the escape art.
and the magic show they saw together when they were little.

Shu-Fen finally gets in the closet, and we find out that Hung-Kuan has everything set up in there, and basically lives in the closet.

They start to talk about Mrs. Lin; Shu-Fen says Mrs. Lin is really upset ever since the New Year’s Day. Hung-Kuan tells her that Shu-Fen replies that she couldn’t sleep without pills these years either. Hung-Kuan shows his sympathy and asks her to find some relief in life: like Mrs. Lin’s jewels and his alcohol.

When Shu-Fen is about to give the handcuff back to Hung-Kuan and going back the second floor, she suddenly finds out that she can get her hands out without unlocking it.

The conversation goes back to the childhood memories again: they used to go to the movies all the time when they were little; every time Mrs. Lin and Mr. Lin, Shu-Fen took Hung-Kuan to the theatre. Hung-Kuan sighs and says now he can’t go to the movies, and Shu-Fen says she is never in the right mood since her divorce.

Shu-Fen hesitates a second, and joins Kuan in the closet, and she subconsciously picks up the handcuffs and plays with them.

Shu-Fen suddenly walks out of the closet.

Shu-Fen walks onto the second floor, and Hung-Kuan closes the closet door.
This is a relatively simple scene in terms of its own structure. However, from a dramaturgical point of view, it's also the first and only scene between the brother and sister, thus holds certain importance in the dramaturgical structure of the play.

First, the brother and sister relationship. From the first act, we already know Hung-Kuan and Shu-Fen are the closest among all the siblings, but it's not until this scene we start to realize how the relationship was built. In this short scene, there are three passages of their childhood memories: playing hide and seek, watching the magic show and watching movies. The first two memories emerge during the conversation: Shu-Fen doesn't want to get into the closet because she had claustrophobia since she was little and she always cheated on hide and seek; Hung-Kuan mentions the magic show because he is playing with the handcuffs. The third memory, however, is a little bit stiff in terms of transition.

**Hung-Kuan:**

That's awesome. You are like a magician.

*(He takes the handcuffs over)*

Sister, do you remember? You used to take me to movies all the time.

Every time dad and mom had a fight, we sneaked out and watched a movie. When sitting in the theatre, we forgot everything. What a pity, now I'm afraid of theatres. *(Chi, pp 62-63)*

As translator, my understanding of this dialogue is: it's a more casual chat that shows their intimacy, and it also explains the reason behind their relationship. In order to accomplish this goal, I break down some of the sentences, change some speech patterns to cater to the English reader's reading habit, and more importantly, to create a casual atmosphere. Here is the original text and a word-to-word translation:

宏寬:

你是魔術師啊？那麼厲害。

*(接過淑芬手上的手銬)*
姐仔，你記不記得以前，你常常帶我去看電影？爸爸媽媽一冤家，我們兩個就偷偷出去看電影，電影一看就攏沒記得了。可惜，我現在是不敢去電影院了。

Hung-Kuan:

Are you a magician? That's awesome.

(He takes the handcuffs over)

Sister, do you remember that you used to take me to movies all the time? Every time dad and mom had a fight, we sneaked out to watch a movie, we forgot everything watching movies. What a pity, now I'm afraid of theatres.

These changes not only make the transition more fluent, but also create the atmosphere and the intimacy it indicates.

As I mentioned before, in translating a dramatic text it's also important to notice the playwright's intention and forward strategy. In this scene, the most noticeable and important prop/symbol are the handcuffs. From the context of the play, we know that handcuffs is a crucial symbol: they represent everyone's burden/responsibility. For Hung-Kuan, it's the family history and his illness; for Shu-Fen, it's her dying father and her illegitimate relationship with Chen. In order to emphasize the handcuffs, the playwright uses the psychological device: in the original text, the word “handcuffs” is mentioned four times in the stage direction, but not even once in the dialogue. When the characters refer to them, they use pronouns:

Hung-Kuan finishes the wine in his glass, puts it away and picks up the handcuffs beside him casually.

Shu-Fen:

Why do you have THOSE?

In the former conversation, we've already noticed that Shu-Fen pays a lot of attention to the
handcuffs (Act I):

Shu-Fen:
You're playing with your handcuffs again.

Chen:
Oh, it's nothing. Whenever I'm tired—

Shu-Fen:
Or nervous.

Chen:
Or nervous, I always do this.

Here again, she uses “those” instead of “handcuffs”, indicates her suspicion. In order to emphasize this purpose, I capitalize “those” in my translation.
Chapter Four  Detailed Structural Analysis and Function

From the prior chapter, you might have gotten a hint of the possible function of a two-column action/dialogue detailed structural analysis in the translating process, which is a structural dramaturgical tool first used by Dr. Howard Blanning, and fundamentally based on Oscar Brownstein's theories of dramaturgy. In this chapter, a complete detailed structural analysis of Chi’s *Once upon a Rainy Night* will be given, and I will try to explore more on its dramaturgical function.

**Stage**

*The stage consists of three platforms of various sizes. Each platform represents one living room on each floor: the one in the center is the second floor, with a luxury couch set and a square brown coffee table; the one on the left is the first floor, with a long couch; the one on the right is the smallest one, with nothing on it.*

*Depending on the production, each platform can have stairs set up. The rear dim area of each platform represents other parts of the house, such as bedroom, bathroom and kitchen.*

*Behind the platforms, there stands a tall, uneven-triangle wooden object. It can be opened from three different sides,*

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**Once Upon a Raining Night**

By Wei-jan Chi
Translated by Junying Xu
Act I

From three different news anchors, you can tell that this story takes place in Lee Denghui government time, and ironically enough, when he is emphasizing a society of love and harmony in his inaugural address on one channel, we learn about a fraud case involved high-level government officials on another channel. From weather report, we also find out that it has been raining in Taipei for quite a long time, and each side represents for closets on each floor.

Although television is mentioned several times in the play, we don’t see it on the stage, only a beam of bright light.

Story takes place in a three-story old-fashioned house in downtown Taipei, one day in the 1990s, at dusk time. Mrs. Lin, a sixty-five years old woman, lives on the second floor in this house with her youngest son, Hung-Kuan on the first floor, and her lately divorced daughter Shu-Fen possibly lives on the third floor with her semi-unconscious husband Mr. Lin.

Before the curtain, we can hear all kinds of water sound effects: “drinking water, water dripping, brooks flowing, tide, sea wave, rain, flood…” As the sound fades out and curtain rises up, Hung-Kuan, the youngest son is discovered sitting in the couch on the first floor platform, flipping channels randomly. He finally chooses the night news.

While Hung-Kuan is watching the news, Mrs. Lin enters with a wet umbrella. From the way they avoid each other’s eyes, you can tell there must be something unhappy happened between them lately. After she puts down her umbrella, Mrs. Lin walks up to dim area at the second floor platform.
and these consecutive showers have caused the flood situation in the city.
Suddenly, we hear Mrs. Lin screaming: “we’ve been robbed!”

They find out that Mrs. Lin’s secret jewel box which neither of them knows about before is gone. Hung-Kuan volunteers to investigate, but Mrs. Lin turns him down immediately. And Shu-Fen’s suggestion of calling the police is also rejected by Mrs. Lin, because she doubts there is anything they actually can do on cases like this.

After the shocking moment, it finally occurs to Mrs. Lin to check on the first and third floor. When she finds out that her jewel box is the only thing that was stolen, she comes up with the conclusion that the thief must be someone who knows the house well; both Hung-Kuan and Shu-Fen answer her with silence, because they’ve realized that Mrs. Lin doesn’t really care about what others says. After moment of silence, Mrs. Lin suddenly comes up with the idea that Shu-Fen should call her cop ex-boyfriend Chen for help. Shu-Fen denies they are still in touch, but Mrs. Lin sharply points out that she knows from the very beginning that they start to see each other again right after Shu-Fen’s divorce, and she just chooses not to say anything. Shu-Fen’s answer

Hung-Kuan shuts down the television impatiently and picks up a comic book.

Mrs. Lin rushes to the second floor living room, so do Shu-Fen and Hung-Kuan. Their first reaction is going to Mrs. Lin’s bedroom, but she stops them.

For a moment, nobody knows what to do, and all sit on the couch spontaneously. Hung-Kuan turns on the television again.
implies that Mrs. Lin was the one who chased Chen away years ago when they were together.

Mrs. Lin says this happens a lot recently, and asks Shu-Fen to ignore it and make the phone call immediately.

While Shu-Fen is talking to Chen on the phone, Mrs. Lin seems completely lost and tries to find comfort from Hung-Kuan, but he chooses to watch TV and totally ignores her. She asks him to turn off the television anxiously, but when he is about to, Mrs. Lin suddenly realizes that her favorite Japanese television drama is on, and it's the most important episode. For a moment, Mrs. Lin seems forget everything about the jewel box and had a passionate conversation with Hung-Kuan about the TV show, then about the odd weather. Hung-Kuan makes a prediction that Taiwan is about to sink into the ocean deep soon, but Mrs. Lin argues that their house is on a high terrain, and the whole Taipei will be under the water before they start to drown.

While they are waiting for Chen, the cop, Mrs. Lin gets curious about his financial situation, and when she finds

When Shu-Fen is about to make the phone call, the telephone suddenly rings, and startled three of them; for a while, nobody picks up the phone, finally Shu-Fen picks it up.

No response. Shu-Fen hangs up the phone and ponders.

Shu-Fen dials the phone without looking for the number first.
out that he owns a car and a cell phone, she makes a comment that Taiwanese cops must be dirtier than Japanese cops. Shu-Fen suggests that maybe they should call Hung-Liang and Hung-De, Mrs. Lin’s two older sons, but Mrs. Lin refuses saying it won’t help with the situation. Since she mentions them, Mrs. Lin starts to complain about her children: she says that they never appreciate parents’ effort; she bought this house in the hope of everyone could live together like the old days. Shu-Fen immediately points out that Mrs. Lin was the one who said that it would be too crowded if everyone moved in. Mrs. Lin complains more about her children, her husband and her unfortunate life. She concludes that the family could never afford a house like this without her; and Mr. Lin’s unconsciousness is actually a relief to him so he doesn’t have to witness all the shameful family affairs: two older brothers always fighting, younger daughter married a foreigner, older daughter gets a divorce. Shu-Fen tries to stop her, but she gets more and more emotional, rattling on and on about her two daughters’ wrong marriage.
Shu-Fen talks back and asks her why she didn't say anything before she got married. Mrs. Lin argues that it was Mr. Lin's decision, and as a woman, nobody would care about what she said.

After a brief courtesy chat, Chen asks to take a look at the closet where Mrs. Lin used to keep the jewel box; she first refuses, but Chen insists it's necessary according to the profile; she finally agrees to take Chen to see the secret spot reluctantly, but turns down Shu-Fen and Hung-Kuan's attempt to come along. While they are checking on the secret closet, Hung-Kuan and Shu-Fen have a discussion about the jewel box, and they both feel odd that Mrs. Lin keeps it such a good secret, even from them.

Chen agrees with Mrs. Lin that it's hardly possible being stolen if nobody knows where the jewel box was; and according to Mrs. Lin, the only person knew about it was her designer who died last year in a car accident.

Shu-Fen says Mrs. Lin should have listened to her and put the jewels in the bank instead of at home, but Mrs. Lin argues that neither bank nor currency is reliable, and that's why she bought all the jewels.

When they are quarreling, it suddenly occurs to Shu-Fen that she forgets to take Mr. Lin to the bathroom.

During her endless complaining, the door bell rings: Chen finally shows up.

Mrs. Lin and Chen walk to the closet.

Mrs. Lin and Chen walk back to the second floor platform from the closet.

All three of them rush to the poor-lit third floor where the bulb burned out long time ago.

They find Mr. Lin leaning on the bathroom wall; Shu-Fen and Hung-Kuan carry out a rolling chair with a beam of soft light on it that represents Mr. Lin. Chen is looking around on the third floor.
Chen asks about the locks and chain on the entrance to the roof, and Shu-Fen says that was Mrs. Lin's special design for security reasons; Chen points out that both the front and back door and the roof are all locked and there is no way getting out in case of emergence. Hung-Kuan replies that they can always jump off from the windows.

Before Chen gets the chance to say anything about the investigation, Mrs. Lin jumps to the conclusion that the thief must be someone in the family.

Hung-Kuan argues that there’s no certainty before the further investigation, and even Mrs. Lin could be a suspect if she bought insurance for the jewels; Mrs. Lin denies.

Chen finally gets the chance to talk and he asks Mrs. Lin about the details of the jewel box. Mrs. Lin subconsciously uses Japanese Yen to measure the value of her jewels and proudly introduces her very “reliable” made-in-Japan insurance box. Hung-Kuan mocks her says for many Taiwanese people, Taiwan is still a Japanese colony. To support his statement, he shows to Chen that everything is the living room is made in Japan; Mrs. Lin doesn’t get the irony, and still shows off her special Japanese table.
Chen is distracted by the fancy table for a while before the investigation conversation continues. He asks Mrs. Lin when the last time she opened the jewel box was, Mrs. Lin says it was the day before the lunar New Year. Then he asks her whether they had any visitors since then. Mrs. Lin says it was the New Year Day when they had a big family feast, and the forth day of the New Year, when they had the memorial ceremony for Mr. Lin’s father.

Before the memory starts, Mrs. Lin blames Hung-Kuan for being disrespectful to the ancestors, and there is a blackout at her last word. In the dim light, Mrs. Lin starts to recall what happened on the forth day of the New Year.

Mrs. Lin first introduces them. A-Yun, her oldest son Hung-Liang’s wife is a housewife and local Taiwanese, Mrs. Lin likes her, but she is not happy with the fact that two out of three of her kids are girls. Xiao-Ying, her second son Hung-De's wife is not a native Taiwanese, and they met each other and got married when they were studying aboard.

On the ceremony day, A-yun is busy preparing the sacrifice, and she volunteers to burn some joss sticks for the ancestors, but Mrs. Lin turns her
down immediately, and says that men should burn the joss sticks first.

However, there is no man around at the moment; so Mrs. Lin starts to ask A-yun about Hung-Liang. A-yun says he is in his company dealing with some business, and apparently, she doesn’t know much about it because he thinks it's unnecessary for women to know anything about business.

Then Mrs. Lin turns to Xiao-Ying and asks where Hung-De went. Xiao-Ying tells her that he went to the department chair’s house to pay a New Year call. Mrs. Lin is surprised that he is getting so sophisticated, and asks if he is going to make the new department chair soon. Xiao-Ying says he didn’t make it because of an anonymous letter about his plagiaristic articles. She doesn’t admit directly if they are or not, but she tells Mrs. Lin that Hung-De thought the current chair is the one who wrote the letter. Mrs. Lin questions why he would pay New Year call to a person who set him up, Xiao-Ying replies that schools are now darker than the society, you have to adjust yourself to adapt the world around you.

Mrs. Lin asks them to bring the sacrifice to the third floor where they set the shrine at.

A-yun and Xiao-Ying are about to bring the sacrifice to the third floor when Shu-Fen shows up and says she can take care of it and check on Mr. Lin on her

Mrs. Lin walks to the second floor to change her clothes.

Xiao-Ying passes the plate to Shu-Fen and then A-yun and Xiao-Ying exit. Meanwhile, Hung-Kuan walks to the third floor from the second floor.

Hung-Kuan enters the third floor.
Hung-Kuan is sent to the third floor to burn the joss sticks as the male representative. From the causal conversation between the brother and sister, we learn that Mr. Lin used to be very strict to his children, and women in this family are never allowed to speak out.

Mrs. Lin interrupts the conversation, probably because she doesn’t want them to talk about Mr. Lin in front of Chen.

Memory continues, we find out that Hung-Kuan seems have a drinking problem and he has been seeing a doctor secretly.

Qingshui is about to burn some joss sticks.

He asks Hung-Kuan to get him some, but Hung-Kuan doesn’t know how many joss sticks he need to get; Qingshui made a comment that young people today don’t know anything about tradition anymore.

Mrs. Lin interrupts again, and the moment she says “there you go”, the power comes back. She insists that Qingshui is the most possible suspect.
because he is broke and has a key to the house. Shu-Fen immediately responds that’s impossible. Chen settles down the argument by saying that he has made a note on it.

Memory continues. We find out that Shu-Fen has been helping Qingshui financially for quite a while. Qingshui is a abnormal old man who acts like a predictor all the time; we learn from Mrs. Lin later on that he became like this after he founds out his wife was cheating on him in his sailor’s days.

Mrs. Lin interrupts again and questions Shu-Fen about the money she gave to Qingshui; trying to avoid the quarrel, Chen switches the topic and asks Mrs. Lin to finish the story.

Mrs. Lin interrupts again and questions Shu-Fen about the money she gave to Qingshui; trying to avoid the quarrel, Chen switches the topic and asks Mrs. Lin to finish the story.

Memory proceeds. Mrs. Lin takes over the narration, and the timeline jumps to the feast after the ceremony.

From their conversation that guests are seated separately: men in a room, women in a different room.

They bring dishes to men’s table, where

Mrs. Lin interrupts again. Shu-Fen and Qingshui freeze. Shu-Fen walks to the second floor platform as she answers the question. Qingshui exits.

Before Mrs. Lin’s memory begins, there are already several men enter from both stage right and left with props. They set up the dinner table in the center of the stage, sit down and pretend they are eating.

A-yun and Xiao-Ying enter, each with a dish in their hands.
sits Hung-Liang, Hung-De, Qingshui and several other male relatives. From the random conversation on the table, as well as Mrs. Lin’s introduction, we learn something about Hung-Liang, the oldest son: he is a very sophisticated business man, and he doesn’t seem trying to hide the fact that he looks down upon Hung-De, the second son, a college professor.

On the table, they also talk about Mr. Lin’s stokes: one of the relatives points out that it’s odd that he had two stokes in one year, considering the advanced medication now.

Episodic memory proceeds: Mr. Lin’s sister, aunt enters. Mrs. Lin immediately points out that she is a suspect too, because she likes to look into other people’s privacy.

Aunt asks Shu-Fen why Mrs. Lin bought this old and dark house.

Mrs. Lin, Hung-Kuan and Shu-Fen argue about the house: Mrs. Lin insists that she bought the house at a reasonable price, and it looks exactly the same as their old house in Keelung, which represents their old glorious days; Hung-Kuan points out that everyone in the family is laughing at her behind her back because it doesn’t worth the price. Mrs. Lin says that they are just jealous.

Shu-Fen leaves the second floor and runs into the middle-aged woman; meanwhile, men on the dinner table exit with the props.

Mrs. Lin interrupts again. Shu-Fen and aunt walk to the third floor.

Mrs. Lin interrupts; aunt freezes, Shu-Fen talks to Mrs. Lin.

Shu-Fen and aunt are on the third floor. Shu-Fen walks to Mr. Lin’s rolling chair, while aunt is looking around causally.

Mrs. Lin is obviously not very comfortable with this conversation, and she tries to change the topic again by interrupting them.
From the phone conversation, we can tell that it's his friends want to get him out to drink with them again. Chen tries to reject, but finally accepts it.

Trying to get it over quickly, Chen asks Mrs. Lin to focus on more important information. However, in stead of finishing the story, Mrs. Lin decides it's crucial for Chen to know something about their family history to understand the whole situation.

Disregard Hung-Kuan’s irony, Mrs. Lin starts to boast about the glorious days of the family. In the old days, Mr. Lin's father was the most outstanding one among all the brothers. He owned two hotels next to the Keelung railway station, an antique store, and a shipyard on Peace Island. He lived in the only three-storied building on the whole island, and every piece of furniture was antique, even the floor was marble. He was not only rich, but also powerful. After the liberation, he was a congressman. He even had dinner with Du Yue-sheng, the infamous gangster who was also Chiang Kai-shek’s friend. Shu-Fen immediately points out, last time she told the story, it was not Du Yue-Sheng. Mrs. Lin is not embarrassed at all, she keeps going, tells Chen the

Shu-Fen walks to the second floor and aunt exits.

Chen's cell phone rings. He tries to find it in his pocket; he takes out a pair of handcuff first, then the cell phone. He walks to the corner to answer the phone.

Chen hangs up and sits on the couch; he picks up the handcuff and plays with it habitually.

Chen and Shu-Fen exchange a look.
ship story: how they lost their business because they loaded thirty-eight ships to the Japanese navy.

Not long after the liberation, their grandpa passed away. Mr. Lin’s brothers had a big fight for the inheritance. Not long after their grandpa’s death, Mr. Lin took over the shipyard business. After the liberation, the whole market was gloomy, and of course there was the loss of the thirty-eight ships. One year, Mr. and Mrs. Lin went to travel to Japan, when they came back only finding out their money had been stolen by the financial manager. Several days after that, the company went bankrupt. After that, the family doesn’t settle down for seven years: Mr. Lin has to work under a fake name, and Mrs. Lin plays Mahjong to support the family. When Mr. Lin got back on his feet again, his didn’t do well on his business; he went bankrupt twice. But according to Mrs. Lin, both of the time, he was dragged down by others.

Chen tries to figure out what is wrong with Hung-Kuan, but Mrs. Lin doesn’t give Shu-Fen a chance to explain; just simple says he doesn’t sleep well and has a bad temper.

Hung-Kuan starts to get restless when Mrs. Lin is telling the ship story; he tries to stop her, but Mrs. Lin totally ignores him.

Hung-Kuan is getting more and more anxious when Mrs. Lin is telling the story. And he finally snaps and tells Mrs. Lin to shut up. Then he rushes down to the first floor, and starts to look for his pills the messy table. He takes two pills and with wine, and then scratches his lap and tries to calm down. At last, he takes the bottle and walks into the closet. The three on the second floor are stunned by Hung-Kuan’s breakdown, and stand still.

After a short awkward moment, Mrs. Lin leaves the stage to make some coffee.

Shu-Fen and Chen get to talk a little bit about Mrs. Lin.

Shu-Fen says she changes a lot these
years, and becomes more and more like their father: making decisions by herself all the time. Take the house for example, Mrs. Lin bought it without asking anyone before hand.

Chen thinks the house is strange, and Shu-Fen says she hates it because it makes her feel like the whole family didn’t change a bit during all these years. The air circulation and lighting are poor, and the humidity is so heavy; everything in this house feels sticky. The decoration might seem fine, but under the floor, it’s already gone moldy.

Chen asks her if she hates this house that much, why she doesn’t move out. Shu-Fen says she has to take care of her father. From their conversation, we also learn that Chen comes by yesterday, and none of them wants Mrs. Lin to know about it.

During the conversation, Chen habitually plays with his handcuffs. Shu-Fen points out that he always does this when he is stressed out. Chen says he doesn’t sleep well recently, and he fails quitting drinking. He is not happy with his job and drinking is the only way to relieve his stress.

After he leaves, Mrs. Lin starts to ask Shu-Fen questions about their

Mrs. Lin enters again with a plate of watermelon.

Chen doesn’t touch the watermelon at all, but he substantially holds the plate for a while until he leaves.
relationship, and she tells her to break up with Chen right away.

Shu-Fen doesn't want her to get involved, but Mrs. Lin blames her for getting a divorce and dishonors the family.

Shu-Fen talks back and says that her ex-husband was cheating on her the whole time. Mrs. Lin replies that no matter what happened divorce is wrong.

Shu-Fen complains a little about that taking care of Mr. Lin 24-7, while Mrs. Lin doesn't even want to go upstairs to take a look at him. Mrs. Lin replies that her misfortune is all Mr. Lin's fault, and she has to look after the whole family after Mr. Lin's stokes.

Then she asks where Shu-Fen goes this afternoon, and we finds out that Shu-Fen wants to move out and she is looking for an apartment now. Mrs. Lin is angry about it.

Hung-Kuan and Chen have an encounter. Hung-kuan asks about Chen and Shu-Fen, and concludes that he is lucky that he didn't marry Shu-Fen because their family is too complicated.

Second floor light goes down. Shu-Fen and Mrs. Lin stand still. First floor lights goes up. Chen walks onto the first floor, and is startled by Hung-Kuan when he suddenly comes out from the closet.

Chen gets nervous again and plays with his handcuffs, but he accidentally handcuffs himself.
Shu-Fen tries to get Hung-Kuan out of his closet, but he refuses and asks her to join him in the closet instead.

Shu-Fen doesn’t want to get in at first, because she has closet phobia. And this brings the conversation back to their childhood when they played hide and seek together.

When Shu-Fen sees the handcuff, they have a conversation about the escape art and the magic show they saw together when they were little.

Shu-Fen finally gets in the closet, and we find out that Hung-Kuan has everything set up in there, and basically lives in the closet.

Before the curtain is up, we can hear the sound of heavy rain.

When the curtain rises, Chen is standing alone on the third floor platform next to the rocking chair, under a faint light. On the second floor, four women are sitting on each side of a square table, and Mrs. Lin is standing beside the table. The first floor is empty now, but there is a chair that we didn’t see in the first act next to the couch.

On the right front of the stage, there is a set of Hakka cards, table and chairs; on the left, an open colorful umbrella.

The first floor lights up.

Shu-Fen walks in and goes directly to the first floor closet and knocks on the door.

Hung-Kuan opens the door, and he is sitting in the closet with a glass of wine in his hand.

He finishes the wine and starts to play with the handcuffs he got from Chen.

Shu-Fen hesitates a second, and joins Kuan in the closet, and she subconsciously picks up the handcuffs and plays with them.
They start to talk about Mrs. Lin; Shu-Fen says Mrs. Lin is really upset ever since the New Year’s Day. Hung-Kuan tells her that Shu-Fen replies that she couldn’t sleep without pills these years either. Hung-Kuan shows his sympathy and asks her to find some relief in life: like Mrs. Lin’s jewels and his alcohol.

When Shu-Fen is about to give the handcuff back to Hung-Kuan and going back the second floor, she suddenly finds out that she can get her hands out without unlocking it.

The conversation goes back to the childhood memories again: they used to go to the movies all the time when they were little; every time Mrs. Lin and Mr. Lin, Shu-Fen took Hung-Kuan to the theatre. Hung-Kuan sighs and says now he can’t go to the movies, and Shu-Fen says she is never in the right mood since her divorce.

Four female relatives are quarrelling over nothing while they are playing cards. Mrs. Lin interrupts and criticizes them.

During the narrating, Mrs. Lin suddenly finds out that the blankets and quilts they are using are from her closet.

Shu-Fen suddenly walks out of the closet.

Shu-Fen walks onto the second floor, and Hung-Kuan closes the closet door.

The women on the Hakka start to play. We realize later on that this is what happened on the same day in the woman’s room.

Shu-Fen walks to the other side of the stage where four men are playing
On the Mahjong table, Hung-Liang makes negative comments about politics and his conclusion is playing Mahjong is the most exciting thing, because everyone on the table is honest.

Shu-Fen and mid-aged woman are chatting when Mrs. Lin interrupts and complains about her being late all the time.

Chen asks if there is something happened between them since Mrs. Lin is judging her so sharply; Shu-Fen relies that they had some money-related issues before. Hung-Kuan says they have money-related issues with every relative.

Mrs. Lin asks Hung-Kuan why did he borrowed the handcuffs; Hung-Kuan replies it’s just for fun and asks Chen where he can get a pair of them.

Mrs. Lin tries to defend her argument by telling Chen how this aunt betrayed them before when they bankrupted.

Mahjong, including Hung-Liang, the oldest brother.

Door bell rings. Shu-Fen answers the door. Meanwhile, the Mahjong four move the table and chairs to the stage central, and change it to a tea table. Shu-Fen enters with a mid-aged woman. Three men also enter: man A sitting on the couch, Hung-De sitting on the chair, and Qing-Shui squatting in the corner.

Everyone freezes when Mrs. Lin interrupts, but before that Hung-Kuan gets out of his closet and walking to the third floor, with the handcuff in his hands.

Hung-Kuan gives back Chen his handcuffs; and he puts them back in his pocket.

Shu-Fen accordingly changes her outfit. Mrs. Lin goes to the middle-aged woman.
Mrs. Lin even criticizes her outfit on that day; Shu-Fen corrects her memory.

Woman asks about other relatives, and Mrs. Lin says she can take her to see them.

Man A comments that because of Taiwan’s gloomy economy, everybody goes to invest in mainland. Qing Shui argues it’s the other way around.

Man A tries to chat with Hung-De about the prostitutes in mainland, but Hung-De doesn’t pay attention to what he is saying, and tells him a story about his encounter in mainland. During the conversation, Qingshui constantly interrupts and tells them his new prediction.

Man A & B and Hung-Liang have a discussion with Mrs. Lin about selling a piece of their inherited land. But they end up blaming one of the brothers’ families.

Hung-Kuan interrupts and comments that every year the family didn’t show up became the target for everyone.

Shu-Fen, Mrs. Lin and woman walks to the dim area on first floor; meanwhile, three men on the tea table start to talk; Hung-Kuan also walks down slowly to the first floor platform and leans on the closet.

Although these two are talking to Hung-De, he is smoking on the chair, absent-mindedly. Meanwhile, Mrs. Lin and Shu-Fen appear on the second floor platform.

First floor platform lights down. Hung-Liang walks out from stage rear to Mrs. Lin who stands on the second floor platform. Meanwhile, man A from first floor walks to the round table on stage center; and man B from stage right walks to the round table, too.

Qingshui walks onto the stage central.
Qingshui is murmuring “big brother is gone”, and everyone agrees that if Mr. Lin is still conscious, things won’t be so messed up.

Mrs. Lin is getting bored of the memory, and she concludes that everyone could be a suspect. Hung-Kuan argues that nobody is. They try to settle down the arguing by asking Chen’s opinion. Chen says he needs to do some financial investigation. Hung-Kuan says there’s no need, because all their relatives are not as rich as they used to be.

Mrs. Lin concludes that other families went broke because of their own reasons, but only their family was dragged down by others every time.

Hung-Kuan tries to argue with her using what happened in the New Year’s Day, but Mrs. Lin refuses to mention anything about that night. Even though Chen says it might be helpful, she rejects and decides to go to bed.

Hung-Kuan is about to tell the story, but he finds out that there is no wine left in his glass; so he decides to get some wine first and leaves before Shu-Fen could stop him.

Mrs. Lin interrupts the memory again by walking away from them. Four men leave the stage.

Mrs. Lin walks to the dim area on the second floor.

Hung-Kuan walks to the dim area. Shu-Fen and Chen walk to the second floor while talking, and then sit down.
While Hung-Kuan is gone, Shu-Fen apologizes to Chen for keeping him so late. Chen says he is confused by the story between Mrs. Lin and the middle-aged woman, because he remembers witnessing it, and it's the other way around: Mrs. Lin was the one who betrayed their relative.

Hung-Kuan starts the story: “Once upon a time, there was a lovely family. Father was from a rich family, and well-educated. He went to Shanghai to study and enrolled Taiwan University right after the liberation—the same one I got kicked out of. Father spoke Shanghainese and Mandarin fluently—and Japanese, which was not very common among his generation. In an accidental but fateful occasion, father met mother—that was back in the anti-Japan war time. The American army bombed Taiwan because of the Japanese troops here. Bombs falling like rain. Unfortunately, a lot of Taiwanese were killed by the bombs which were supposed to get the Japanese, and became innocent “flowers in a rainy night”. One of them was a student, who was dad's best friends' sister and also mom's best friend. That's how they met, the night before the funeral. The details of their courtship are not available, so we’ll just skip that part. Mom's father, our grandpa was also quite a character. But he was neither a senator nor a CEO; he was a famous gangster at that time. After the marriage, white became darker, dark became whiter, kind of like

Hung-Kuan walks to the second floor platform from the dim area, with a bottle of wine in one hand, a glass in the other.
the politics today. They had some happy days, but like every dynasty in China, happy times never last long, and they would never come back again. The ship factory was over, and the family was in great debt. From then on, the couple and their five kids lived an unstable life. During that time, they fought a lot because of money, but the admirable thing was, even though they talked about divorce every time they fought, they never did. This is quite incredible for young people today who consider divorce as easy as changing underwear. I am not sure it's a shame of this generation or the misfortune of last generation. Dad lived an unfortunate life: got back on his feet after a failure just so he could fall down again. Eventually, in ROC 79, after three bankrupts and two stokes, he didn't back on his feet again. Mom is not as well-educated as dad, but dad is not nearly as sophisticated as mom. Dad knows all theories about Mahjong, but mom has been called the goddess of Mahjong since she was very young. Mom changed lot during these years. She invested, or to say, speculated with her small fortune—real estate, stock and lottery. Within a few years, mom became this enviable rich woman. Four years ago, without informing anyone, mom bought this outmoded modern house with a high price in the name of the first son. Although it's my old brother's name on the contract, mom claimed that this house belongs to the three of us. Because of the recent fluctuation in real estate market, two brothers—not including

At the ending part of his speech, Hung-Kuan walks to the second floor while talking. Meanwhile, Hung-De walks to the second floor from where he is sitting all the time; so does Hung-Liang. Hung-Liang sits on the crouch and Hung-De on the armchair. Hung-Liang stands in the corner with a glass in his hand.
me—decided to persuade mom to sell the house. “

Hung-Kuan’s story finally reaches the New Year’s Day.

Hung-De tells a story about how his friend found his dying dad relief by giving him this Chinese medicine. Hung-Kuan immediately catches the implication in the story, and the three brother have a quarrel.

After a causal chat, Hung-Liang brings up the topic: the house.

Hung-De and Hung-Liang try to convince Mrs. Lin to sell the house because of the gloomy real estate market, and also because they are not taking advantage of the location at all: every other house in the neighborhood make the first floor a business spot, except them.

Mrs. Lin argues that the house is exactly like their old house, and she is planning to start business in the near future, so she won’t sell it. This gets on Hung-De’s back because he doesn’t have any faith in their family business.

Mrs. Lin says she knows Hung-Liang wants the money from selling the house; Hung-De says he won’t let it happen.
and asks Mrs. Lin what is special about this house, since it’s not inherited. Mrs. Lin replies: she bought this house with her money, it is a heritage to her.

Hung-De seems like give up. But he tries to talk Mrs. Lin out of the antique store idea, since she is not in debt or in great need of money.

Mrs. Lin finally tells them that she is in great debt because of this house; moreover, she lost a lot of money on stock, even her other real estate is gone.

Hung-De blames Hung-Liang of keeping him from this; Mrs. Lin says the monthly money he gives her doesn’t give him the right to lecture them. Hung-De talks back, and he says that the reason the family went broke so many times is because they are always squandering. He even reveals that Mr. Lin used to have a mistress.

Mrs. Lin and Hung-Liang stop him.

Hung-De won’t stop: he finally gets the chance to speak out. He says nobody really knows Mr. Lin, and he failed in business for other reasons.

Hung-Liang points out Hung-De was the one who decided to study aboard when the family was at the bottom.

Hung-De argues that is because he thought staying in the family wouldn’t do anything different. And he concludes that it was always Mr. Lin’s own fault

Shu-Fen runs down to the second floor.

Hung-Liang tries to punch Hung-De; Shu-Fen and Mrs. Lin try to stop him. All of sudden, there is a mess on stage. Eventually, they stop him. Hung-Kuan, who is standing aside the whole time suddenly bursts into laughter.
every time he failed.

Everyone suddenly finds the best target: and they all blame Hung-Kuan being the useless cripple. Hung-De even says he is a rat in the closet.

Hung-Kuan decides he doesn’t want to tell the story anymore; he says: “Anyway, we were talking about remembering the point, but did we? Are we trying to find the thief? Or it’s just an excuse? What thief are we trying to find out? All the people come here just because my mom lost some jewel, even the ex-boyfriend… why do we only think about thief when we lost something… anyway…”

Shu-Fen decides to finish the story for him.

Memory preceeds. Hung-Liang is irritated by Hung-Kuan’s attitude, and he yells that he will punch him to death.

Hung-Kuan suddenly gets out of memory and becomes present tense. Everyone except Shu-Fen freezes.

Hung-Kuan walks to the dim area.

When Shu-Fen and Chen are talking, Hung-Kuan walks out from the dim area and stands at where he used to be in the memory.

Hung-Liang tries to punch Hung-Kuan, and Shu-Fen stands between them. Mrs. Lin tries very hard to stop them, and Hung-De is struggling as to which side he should stand in.

Hung-Liang gets even angrier because he can’t reach Hung-Kuan, so he slaps Shu-Fen in her face. Everyone is surprised by the sudden movement. Meanwhile, A-yun walks in with some firecrackers.
Mrs. Lin, Shu-Fen tries to settle them down.

A-yun asks if it's time for the firecrackers, and Hung-De sends her away.

Hung-Kuan mocks Hung-Liang for being the second Mr. Lin, and also mocks Mr. Lin's authority. Mrs. Lin gets irritated too, and tells him to get out of the house.

Hung-Kuan replies, he really wants to get out but he has nowhere to go.

Shu-Fen asks everyone to stop.

Hung-Kuan says although he hates this family, he has nowhere to hide. Mrs. Lin asks him what he is hiding from.

Mrs. Lin swears to tear Hung-Kuan's closet apart.

Hung-Kuan begs her not to, but Mrs. Lin insists to, and keeps asks him the reason. Hung-Kuan finally utters that he has been sick.

Shu-Fen tells Mrs. Lin that Hung-Kuan is on several different medicines; Mrs. Lin says they must be sleeping pills. Shu-Fen tells everyone their trip to the memory, the day they went to Keelung.

Suddenly Mrs. Lin walks towards the first floor platform.

Hung-Kuan stands in front of her.

Hung-Kuan walks down to the second floor platform immediately after he said this, and appears again on the first floor and hides in his closet. Meanwhile, people on the second floor keep talking.

Shu-Fen walks to the first floor platform during her monologue. Meanwhile, Hung-Kuan walks out of the closet and joins her in the memory, the day they went to Keelung.
Keelung; she says Hung-Kuan begged her to take him to see their old shipyard. This part of the memory is also acting out on stage.

Shu-Fen says the shipyard is not there anymore, so Hung-Kuan says he wants to go to their old house on Peace Island.

They find out that the house is no longer there anymore.

Shu-Fen asks him what’s wrong; he says he can’t find his pills and begs her to take him home.

Mrs. Lin asks Shu-Fen what happened to Hung-Kuan, and she tells them that Hung-Kuan has panic disorder. Mrs. Lin doesn’t want to accept this and keeps saying that it’s not true. And when Shu-Fen says it might be acquired; Mrs. Lin denies there is anything wrong with the family.

After the conversation, they move one or two steps, but you can tell from his face that they are already there on the island.

Hung-Kuan starts looking for something on him very anxiously. When he can’t find it, he walks back and forth restlessly.

Hung-Kuan squats on the ground and scratches himself like crazy. Shu-Fen helps him stand up and takes him back to the closet on the first floor.

We can hear the firecrackers from a distance, which means it’s passed midnight and the New Year’s coming.
Mrs. Lin says she wants to go to sleep and asks everyone to leave, and then she murmured that it's better this way for Mr. Lin because he doesn't need to know about all these things. This makes Shu-Fen finally snaps. She reveals the truth to everyone: Mr. Lin didn't take his blood-pressure control medicine after his first stroke, so he can get an ultimate relief, and Mrs. Lin was aware of the situation the whole time without telling anyone else in the family except Hung-Liang who was running away from his creditors at that time.

Shu-Fen tells Chen that although she found out about Mr. Lin, she didn't tell anyone, because she felt this might be the only solution to Mr. Lin. And this is the end of the story.

Mrs. Lin says she needs to go to the third floor to get a shirt.

Chen says it's time for him to leave. Shu-Fen insists to walk him. Chen makes a confession: he wants to know more about the dark side of the family.

Shu-Fen comes back to present. Hung-De and Hung-Liang leave the stage in slow motion. Mrs. Lin walks to the rear of the second floor platform, to the dim area.

Silence. Mrs. Lin walks out from the dim area.

Mrs. Lin walks to the third floor platform, to Mr. Lin's rolling chair and squats beside it, talking to him. Mrs. Lin's following monolog is used as the background of Shu-Fen and Chen's conversation. They walk to the first floor platform while they are talking.
because this fulfills his desire of revenge.

Meanwhile, from Mrs. Lin monologue, we find out that she knows about Mrs. Lin’s mistress the whole time, and she just chose not to tell.

Chen tells Shu-Fen that he is planning to get a divorce, but Shu-Fen says they shouldn’t see each other anymore; she is not sure about her future, but she knows for sure that she will move out.

Chen finally leaves.

Mrs. Lin tells Shu-Fen that Mr. Lin just passed away, and she asks Shu-Fen not to move out. Shu-Fen replies with silence.

Chen tries to tell everyone that the flood is coming.

Chen says: “there is no way out!”

The dim light on the rolling chair fades out. Mrs. Lin acts in sorrow, but in silence. Then she walks slowly to the rear of third floor platform, to the dim area.

Chen leaves from stage left. Shu-Fen walks to the rear of second floor platform.

There is a moment when the stage is completely empty. The water sound effect at the beginning fades in.

Slowly, Shu-Fen and Mrs. Lin appear on the second floor platform from the different side.

Chen walks on stage all wet.

Nobody is listening to him.

Chen walks to the first floor closet, and opens the door, but just hears Hung-Kuan’s voice singing.

Chen closes the door.

The water sound effect becomes louder.

All lights fade out.

Curtain off.
A detailed action-dialogue structure analysis is not only useful in the translation process; it also serves well as a dramaturgical tool. Here I would like to explain this function by showing one example.

As I mentioned in the last chapter, handcuffs are a very important prop in this play. As a matter of fact, the word “handcuffs” is mentioned twelve times in the whole script: eleven times in stage directions, but only once in dialogue. This uneven number shows us the playwright’s intention of using it as a symbol more than a stage device. First, handcuffs don’t really serve their function at all in this play, just like the investigation of the robbery case—it doesn’t lead to a logical solution. Second, “handcuffs” are a very strong image themselves both superficially and metaphorically: they represent power, but they are also a trap—physically and mentally—from which everybody wants to escape. Accordingly, the word “handcuffs” is avoided intentionally. There is another example in the second act:

_Hung-Kuan gives the handcuffs to Chen._

Mrs. Lin:
Where did you get those?

Hung-Kuan:
(To Chen)
Thanks.
(To Mrs. Lin)
I borrowed them from him for fun.

Mrs. Lin:
What fun could you possibly get from those?
Chen puts the handcuffs back to his pocket.

Chen:
You’re welcome.

Hung-Kuan:
Where can you buy a pair of those?

Chen:
Well…

Mrs. Lin:
What do you need those for? You’re not…

Chen:
Just for fun…I’m not what?

In this little passage of conversation, “handcuffs” is referred five times, but not actually said; it’s almost like a taboo. If we trace this part in the two-column detailed structural analysis on pages 59-61, we can see here this seemingly unimportant conversation is actually a transition for Hung-Kuan both physically and emotionally. In the end of the first act, he leaves the second floor living room where the narrative takes place and hides in his closet because he can’t stand Mrs. Lin retelling the family history anymore. We find out later this is due to his panic disorder caused by this very fact—he wants to move on, he wants revolution, but in this household where everyone is lingering to the past, he has no way out. However, Hung-Kuan is also the most active element in the play in terms of his characteristic as well as
the character’s function in the forward strategy. Although he is not capable of getting out, he appears to be the character with the most revolutionary spirit and the dynamic between him and Mrs. Lin is the most entertaining part of the play. Moreover, Hung-kuan is one of the most active elements on stage from a dramaturgical perspective; he has a very paradoxical attitude towards the past: on one hand, he really doesn’t like Mrs. Lin’s story; on the other hand, he is the second most important narrator himself, and it’s through him we get to reach the New Year’s Eve happenings where the play reaches its climax. He is also functional as the connection between the three main characters: Mrs. Lin, Shu-Fen and Chen. As a matter of fact, if we take a closer look at the two-column detailed structural analysis, he is the only character who has a one-to-one encounter with all three of them. Based on the above reasons, we can tell Hung-Kuan is a necessary device in terms of the dramatic forward strategy. In order to bring him back to stage, the handcuffs are a crucial prop. On page 60 of the two-column detailed structural analysis, the right action column reads: “Everyone freezes when Mrs. Lin interrupts, but before that Hung-Kuan gets out of his closet and walks to the third floor with the handcuffs in his hands.” In relation to the left dialogue column, we find out that Hung-Kuan leaves his closet/shelter and rejoins the second floor family history conversation with a clear motivation—the handcuffs.

What’s even more interesting is that if we interpret this transition in the context of handcuffs as a symbol of burden/trap, then you may notice that every character who plays with the handcuffs has an unspeakable complexity. For Hung-Kuan, it’s the family history and his illness, so he plays with them in his closet hiding from the reality, especially when he talks about suicide and his unhappy childhood. For Shu-Fen, it’s her dying father, her divorce and her illegitimate relationship with Chen, so the only time she plays with them is when Hung-Kuan and her are talking about her divorce in the closet. With Chen—he is the one who has the handcuffs most of the time—we only find out his secret pleasure of revenge at the end. If we trace handcuffs in the dialogue, it’s not very difficult to notice that the only
time the word is mentioned is by Shu-Fen when she points out Chen’s habit of playing with them, which can be interpreted as her being the family who has the courage to face her burdens. Accordingly, at the end of the play, Shu-Fen is the only one who makes a decision to move on. On the contrary, Mrs. Lin, as we can tell from the dialogue above, doesn’t want to face, or is even afraid of, her burdens until the last scene.

This is just a simple example to show one of several ways of using the two-column detailed structural analysis for dramaturgy purposes. In practice, the detailed analysis oftentimes can help dramaturges find the playwright’s ambiguous intentions or useful speech/action patterns by examining action in relation to dialogue. In this regard, the two-column detailed structural analysis is a practical tool for dramaturges as well as translators.
Conclusion

On January 25th, 2008, almost six months after I finished my first draft of the translation in Prague, there was a stage-reading of *Once upon a Rainy Night* in Hiestand Hall, Room 100, primarily for Devon LaBelle and Charles Haugland, two young dramaturges from the Actor’s Theater of Louisville. The first time hearing my translation read out loud was a very different experience, which made me think more about the performability of translation. Around the same time, I was doing dramaturgy work for Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing* for educational purposes, and also working as assistant director for a main-stage show. These experiences all together gave me a sense of the difficulty in staging a translated dramatic text: if staging a play in its original language involves a double interpretation from the playwright to director, then to actors, then staging a translated play involves triple interpretation from the playwright to translator to director then to actors. In other words, if the text in the original language is an acting version of the play, then it’s a “text-performance-text-text (translated)-performance” process. However, more important than estimating the possible loss of information, you can imagine the space for dramaturgical interpretation. Therefore, a good translator of a dramatic text also has to be a good dramaturge.

In order to accomplish this double goal, a detailed structural analysis is introduced in this thesis. This analysis divides the script into two categories: dialogue and action in a two-column fashion. From examining this two-column analysis, a translator can have a better understanding of the whole context from a dramaturgical point of view based on the insight of the relationship of “what is heard” and “what is seen” onstage, which is also crucial for directors. Actually, by using this structural analysis of this play as a tool, not only have I improved my translation, but I also gained a deeper understanding of the play both in terms of content and structure.
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