

天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
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真善美聖

**A Study of the Captions in
English Department Annual Play 2018**

SANCTITAS BONITAS

PULCHRITUDO

VERITAS

學生：劉惟欣撰

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Introduction:

This project intends to introduce the captions in theater, including their traits and limitation, and integrating the ideas in case studying the FJU English Department Annual Play 2018, Everyman.

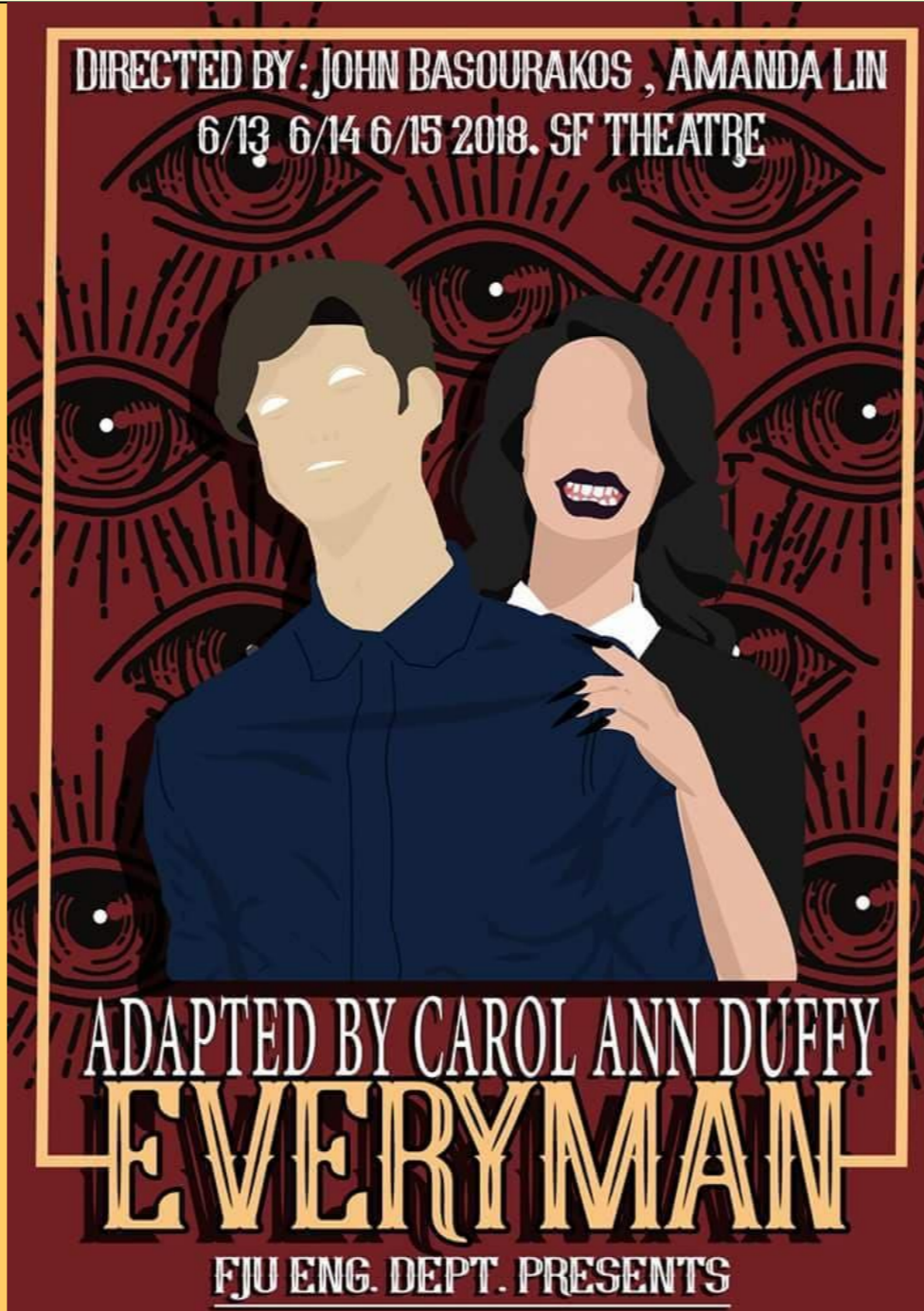
Outline:

- I. Everyman by Carol Ann Duffy & Annual Play 2018
II. Introduction of Captions
A. Characteristics & Functions
B. Limitations & Suggestions
III. Case Study on Everyman, Annual Play 2018
IV. Interview
V. Reflection and Conclusion

I. Everyman by Carol Ann Duffy & Annual Play 2018

Everyman is originally an English morality play in the 15th century, the writer is unknown. Characters are all allegorical, aiming to explore the question of how human beings can do to reach God's salvation.

As a laureate poet, Duffy adapted the play into a modern play, which was first performed at the Nation Theatre in London in 2015. The differences from the original version include more modernized scene settings, and more concrete characters with vivid personalities.



As Everyman is the play for this year's FJU English Department Annual Play, the captions will be in Chinese. It's crucial to translate the texts according to the tones of the characters, and historical background.

Above all, understanding what is captioning is also crucial. So, I will first give a brief introduction to theater caption, its characteristics, functions, and also its limitations as well as suggestions given by scholars.

II. Introduction of Captions

A. Functions & Characteristics

- 1. Prepared in advance to "mirror with" the performance
2. Appear at the same time "as the words spoken or sung", helping the deaf audience to access to the performance
3. Sometimes captions contain "additional information". Eg. sound effects, character's name, etc. (Stage Text)

B. Limitation (1)

- 1. Sometimes when the actors speak very fast, it may be hard to synchronize the lines with the performance. (Tang)

C. Suggestion (1)

- 1. Two suggestions:
a. Conciseness of the captions (「字幕的簡潔性」): eg. "When I was a kid" should be translated as 「小時候」 instead of 「當我還是小孩時」.
b. The continuity of captions between spaces (「短暫間歇時刻的延續」): When the actors speak very fast, it's important to let the captions remain on the screen longer, in order to decrease the time discrepancy. (Tang)

Limitation (2)

- 2. Translation approach:
a. Translate the texts literally, but with too many information for the audience.
b. Or try the best to reduce the word length, but may lose the creativity of the original text. (Bai)

Suggestion (2)

- 1. This question is hard because the boundary of language has changed drastically, and "body" can even be used as texts.
a. Sometimes we can just sit back and enjoy the beautiful sound of lyrical lines, such as Shakespeare's classical plays that "rely heavily on the texts".
c. Debatable issues:
1) How active caption translating should be as part of the performance?
2) Should the translators have their own interpretation in response to the writers?
d. Sidenote: but Chinese lang. has its advantage as "pictogram", since it can saves a lot of space. (Bai)

III. Case study

A. Biblical Reference

Everyman has a lot of religious reference, so clarifying the terms regarding Christianity is needed. For example:

- 1. "I have nothing to do with any creed": 「我沒信教」
2. "reckoning": 「清算」
3. "Why should I be judged so soon?": 「審判之日」 (the judgement day)

B. Characters' Names

All the characters are allegorical, so it might take some time to decide the translations. Mostly, I think the translation team chose to be faithful to the English names, so the Chinese translations are not far from the original one:

- Everyman: 「艾弗曼」
Goods: "worldly goods": 「塵世的貨色」
Death: 「死神」
God: 「上帝」
Good Deeds: 「善事」
Knowledge: (does not appear in the captions)

C. Profanity and Curse Words

In the captions, the translator teams left many curse words untranslated.

- For example: "Happy Fucking Birthday!": 「生日快樂！」

D. "Thine" and "Thy"

I noticed that during some conversations, the character will use "thine" or "thy" to express sarcasm or just simply, respect. And the translations have marked out the differences between "thine", and "you".

- For example:
1. The Goods: "You're under the illusion we are...thine?": 「現在你是在幻想我們是祿的嗎？」 (This shows the Goods' ironic tones)
2. The Death: "Thy will be done." 「願祿的旨意被奉行。」 (This shows the Death's respect to God)

IV. Online Interview

(Link: https://bit.ly/2KXyjHC)

- 1. What is the biggest challenge when you are translating Everyman? And how do you overcome it?
R2: I think the most important step is to watch rehearsals.
R4: We need to adjust constantly during rehearsals because the performance may differs from the play itself.
2. What do you think is the biggest difference of theater captions from other forms of text?
R3: The captions have to keep up with actors' pace.
R4: Limited words and the necessity to match the character's tone. And we have to discuss with the director and the actors since the whole cast is a team.

V. Reflection and Conclusion

- 1. I went to see the Annual Play at June 14th, and I really enjoyed the performance. Overall, I think the translation has done a really great job in mirroring with the actors' performance, and the word lengths are comfortable enough for reading.
2. During online interview, I asked them whether they have considered putting characters' names along with the captions. They answered that play lines already have contained each character's personality. Also, adding names may make the captions too long to read in a short time. So they in the end decided it's better not to add the names. It's interesting to know their opinions, containing the process of making decisions.
3. I also learned that it's important for the translators to communicate with the director and the actors, and adjust the captions accordingly. Caption translating is not a lone work, but a teamwork with all the other people who take part in making the play.

Special Thanks:

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Works Cited:

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