

# From Aristotle's Poetics to See "Thunderstorm" the Use of "Discovery"

Xiang Zhang, Jianyu Xiao

Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, Guangzhou 510320, China.

---

**Abstract:** Chinese drama is an "imported product". Its introduction is closely related to the impact of foreign culture. Western drama theory gave a lot of reference to Chinese drama creation at that time. The drama Thunderstorm not only integrates the Chinese traditional culture, but also absorbs the influence of foreign culture. "discovery" and "sudden transformation" in the ancient Greek ideological work "Poetics" have been fully used in the drama Thunderstorm, among which "discovery" is an indispensable link in the narrative promotion of the whole drama. The application of "Thunderstorm" can be divided into "small discovery" that is, "discovery" that does not involve the overall situation, more arranged in the stage of the plot development and the beginning; "great discovery" is the discovery of the sudden effect of the plot, more arrangement and climax stage; and "multiple discovery" is "discovery" for multiple times, the use of "discovery" is also one of the key factors for the success of the drama "Thunderstorm".

**Keywords:** Discovery; Narrative; Reference

---

## Introduction

Aristotle's Poetics is a classic work of western tragedy theory, which is also of great reference significance for its later drama creation. In Poetics, one of the tragic structural elements of the "best tragedy" is the complex structure of "discovery", in which the so-called "discovery" refers to the transformation from not knowing to knowing, so that those people in prosperity or adversity find that they have kinship or enemies with each other. Whether from the tragedy of the Oedipus King in ancient Greece, or the Thunderstorm in modern China, there is a view of "discovery" from poetics."Thunderstorm" integrates Chinese and Western, and the use of "discovery" makes its narrative twists and turns, leaving enough suspense for the audience, which is also an important reason for its enduring.

### 1. "Little discovery" under the narrative foreshadowing of Thunderstorm"

The narrative of the play needs to leave the foundation to increase the plot tension and introduce the suspense to make the plot reasonable. The foreshadowing can highlight the main characters and events behind it, and lead to important plots and contents. In the drama Thunderstorm, a large part of it is completed by "discovery"."Discovery", also known as "small discovery", leaves suspense for the narrative and makes the plot progress step by step.

At the beginning of the drama and not from 30 years ago weeks abandoned lu shi ping mother began to speak, but from three years ago the sitting room "haunted" events, the sitting room is the origin of LuGui "found", and behind this is numerous without an affair with master, but the "found" is not broken, but just suggested to the four phoenix, by the bedding opened the show. There are many "small discoveries" in the drama, such as fan Yi detect zhou Ping and the unusual relationship between men and women, so feel oneself abandoned and the heart is jealous, shallow had the idea that let four phoenix hope to leave. Then numerous without and detect two master weeks and four phoenix relationship unusual, in the first act, four phoenix to two master pour water, two young master said: "thank you", four phoenix listen to blush, numerous without has found at this moment, detect the relationship is not generally said: "blunt, how do you so polite", it is numerous without the discovery is more determined behind please four phoenix mother to take four phoenix events. Later, shi ping came to pick up her daughter four phoenix home. When she came to the host's home, first from the visual point of view to find the home familiar, the first is the hot summer closed the window, then in the window of their young photos, found himself to Zhou Yuan, is 30 years ago he experienced a "nightmare" place. In the process of talking with wife fan anyi, shi ping discovers his daughter is repeating his mistake unexpectedly, the daughter that is a servant and rich family child had unusual relationship, for the feelings that she wants to break up daughter after make groundwork. Shi Ping accidentally meets Zhou Master in the garden of Zhou, through talking with Zhou Master around the old raincoat and old shirt found that the

Zhou Master is the Zhou Puyuan who prompted his miserable fate in those days. In the gradual advancement of the narrative, the drama is found step by step, laying a series of groundwork for the narrative of the drama, and the “sudden turn” and “great discovery” of the subsequent plot have naturally happened.

Some of the above “small discoveries” are the protagonist detecting new situations from the unknown, and then have some ideas or ideas, will advance the action and decision. Imagine that if the characters do not find the important clue of things, then the subsequent actions and even the tragedy are abrupt. From the perspective of Poetics, the “small discovery” of “Thunderstorm” under the narrative preparation gives the conditions for the formation of the “sudden turn” in Poetics, which makes it possible for the tragedy to be thrilling.

## **2. The “great discovery” under the conflict of the Thunderstorm**

In the play, the story is developed by conflict, and the characters in the play have opposite desires or pursuits, or there are obstacles that they need to overcome. The biggest conflict in the drama Thunderstorm is the “great discovery” of ethics, which makes it dramatic.

In the drama, it describes the ethical issues of two close relatives. The first one is Fanyi and Zhou Ping, who are supposed to be stepmothers and stepsons, but there is a relationship between men and women, which should not appear but is difficult to mention. They suffer the suffering that depressing family environment brings, two lonely empty soul meet, collision gave a spark, their feeling is deformed from the beginning, it is not get happy result. Zhou Ping for the incestuous relationship with the stepmother, soon produced disgust and regret, and later fell in love with the young and beautiful servant in the family, his heart got a trace of comfort, which contributed to the second ethical issues. Four phoenix for and the zhou family young master this relationship is full of desire and satisfaction, as well as the expectation of the future, but they have made a big mistake. Four phoenix and Zhou Ping they are half-brother and sister, this discovery also eventually led to Zhou Ping’s suicide, this unbearable result. In the first drama, the discovery of the relationship between Fanyi and Zhou Ping was revealed to prevent the eloping between Zhou Ping and Si Feng and running away from home. In the second drama, the relationship between Zhou Ping and Si Feng was revealed that Zhou Puyuan mistakenly thought that Lu Shiping would tell the whole story, so there was a narrative link that made Zhou Ping kneel to recognize her mother. When these two “big discoveries” were broken, the overall plot was pushed to a climax, bearing on the front of the various “small discoveries” bedding, finally broke out, the sudden turn effect is very strong. From the perspective of Poetics honoring the gods of purity in ancient Greece, we can see that they touch the bottom line of incest and finally lead to a tragic end. The play Oedipus King, similar to ancient Greece, has the same incest plot and is a key factor in its tragedy.

In the face of love, they have desire and pursuit, but they have unbreakable ethical barriers. When they can be found, the hope of life is destroyed instantly. Under the conflict of ethical “great discovery”, the characters cannot accept the reality. No matter when the big secret is buried in the play, it will eventually be found, making the drama covered with the color of tragedy. In fact, it is precisely because of this “great discovery” contradiction that the plot of the drama is more wonderful and more readable, rather than telling this is a straightforward story.

## **3. “Continuous discovery” under the climax of the plot of “Thunderstorm”**

In the play, the discovery of continuous truth pushes the plot to a climax, bringing the dramatic conflict to a critical moment, and welcoming the most attractive part of the play. Every “discovery” in the drama “Thunderstorm” is interlinked with cause and effect. At the end of the play, all the truth for each character is concentrated and found, and “continuous discovery” constitutes the climax of the whole play.

In the plot of the drama “Continuous Discovery”, all the characters focus on the same environment and learn the truth. Shi ping stop daughter with young master zhou ping together, but learned that her daughter has three months pregnant, so going to hide from the fact that they are brother and sister let them fly away, but numerous Yi appear exposure with zhou ping of love, make four phoenix that zhou ping want to escape the truth, the master was loud noise to the sitting room, mistaken for shi ping said the secret is zhou ping mother, so zhou ping mother, zhou ping learned the truth, moreover LuGui also know the truth. The analysis of this series of truth produces “continuous discovery”, the atmosphere of the plot is more and more thick. In “continuous discovery” below also is full of coincidence, accidentally come to see the daughter of the servant but the master in the home is the lover of 30 years ago, master gives the gun of young master to defend oneself, became the tool that young master commits suicide however, the wire that the garden breaks became the place where four phoenix and two young master Zhou Chong dies however. The coincidental consequences of “continuous discovery” make its tragic color natural and logical.

The “continuous discovery” under the climax of *Thunderstorm* makes full use of the “discovery” and “sudden turn” skills of Poetics to make its climax repeated and catch the eyes of readers. The characters in the play are different from the audience by not seeing the whole thing from an omniscient perspective. They need to accept the “discovery” step by step to understand the story and the mystery and their relationship with others. When a series of such “discoveries” hit the characters together, the shock and collapse of the characters will become more intense, even to extreme actions, and finally lead to tragic results.

## Epilogue

From Aristotle’s “poetics”, the “discovery” is also used by “*Thunderstorm*” to prove “poetics”. Its “discovery” makes “*Thunderstorm*” shine brilliantly and become a classic in the history of Chinese drama. In the narrative, “small discovery” sets the following, sets the suspense, and increases the rationality of the plot after; “great discovery” brings the climax to the plot, reflecting the amazing facts; “continuous discovery” gives people step by step, step by step shocking feeling, let the contradiction gradually quickly explode, reaching the highest point of the drama. The “discovery” of “poetics” has inspired many excellent dramas in later generations, and the in-depth analysis of “*Thunderstorm*” will also give innovative ideas to the later drama creation.

## References

- [1] Aristotle. *poetics* [M]. Luo Niansheng, the translation. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1962:13-14.
- [2] Cao Y. Preface to the daily translation of *Thunderstorm* [M]. cao yu. The spirit of the tragedy. Zhang Jing, the translation. Beijing: Jinghua Publishing House, 2006: 13-14.
- [3] Zhang J. The ension of text and screen: An adaptation of *Thunderstorm* [J]. Contemporary film, 2013 (09).