

**Intercultural Adaptation of *Oedipus the King*:
from Greek Tragedy to Taiwanese Environmental Theater**

Dr. Chin-Ching Lee, Assistant Professor of English

李晶菁

私立大葉大學英語系助理教授

Department of English, Da-Yeh University

Abstract

Globalization, a product of modernity that John Tomlinson defines as a “complex connectivity,” takes the global culture and economy as a wholeness by crossing the boundaries. However, the domination of western political and economic power bypasses cultural diversities of others; the unbalanced relation of the west vs. the east leads to cultural homogeneity and the disappearance, even deletion, of non-western subjectivity.

Roland Robertson proposed the idea of glocalization to connect the global products and the local context, with global standardization and local adaptation coexistent to produce new cultural connotations. Cultural glocalization is an indigenized and integrative mode of thinking and practice, which is likely to fight against the dominant Western thinking. Intercultural adaptation is a conscious invitation of foreign cultural elements into the local system; global culture is translated and transformed through local languages, tastes, and perspectives to get connected to the locality. In this sense, the premise of intercultural adaptation is the mutual accommodation of diverse cultures; new cultural connotations arise in the local context to display the cultural subjectivity and diversity. Intercultural adaptation is thus a dynamic process that demands mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance; it is a relational phenomenon based on equal and reciprocal exchange rather than threat and domination. Rowe and Schelling (1991) thus stated that from intercultural adaptation arises cultural hybridization, which delivers the unity or reconciliation of cultural interactants, and rejects dichotomy thinking of subject vs. object, one vs. other, etc.

This study is to take Golden-Bough Theater’s intercultural adaptation of Sophocles’ *Oedipus* as an example, in which humans’ universal problems regarding the ambiguous conflicts of free will and fate transcend national or cultural boundaries. As an environmental theater, the surrounding of the land and the viewers are all incorporated into the original Greek cultural item. Also, the conflict between free will

and fatalism is presented in the local dialect--in Taiwanese lyrics; martial arts and Taiwanese opera elements are incorporated to offer the local perspectives and identity, while the scenes that actors and actresses wear masks make the cultural boundaries vague. Here the theatrical performance is a product of intercultural adaptation, the cultural hybridity is a tactic to present subjectivity, and universal concerns of human inner fear and struggles are what make the theatrical performance significant and splendid. Intercultural adaptation is a venue to integrate diverse cultural items and to guide the cultural roots to the global routes.

Keywords: globalization, glocalization, hybridity, intercultural adaptation