



Allameh Tabataba'i University
Faculty of Persian Language and Foreign Languages
Department of English language and Literature

**Tragedy of Hybridity in
Euripides' Medea and Ibsen's Rosmersholm**

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For Master of Arts Degree in English Literature

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We hereby recommend that this thesis by

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Euripides' Medea and Ibsen's Rosmersholm**

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چکیده

الف. موضوع و طرح مساله (اهمیت موضوع و هدف): تحقیق حاضر به بررسی امکان پیدایش تراژدی با استفاده از نظریه التقاط می‌پردازد. یکی از موقعیت‌هایی که ممکن است به ایجاد تراژدی منتهی شود، هنگامی است که یکی از شخصیت‌های نمایش‌نامه از پیروی کردن از اصولی مانند اصول عقیدتی، سیاسی، اجتماعی و... سر باز زده و به مقابله با آن بر می‌خیزد. این حرکت تحت تاثیر خیالی شیرین صورت می‌پذیرد که در نتیجه آن شخص ارزش‌های ذاتی خود را فراموش کرده و به سمت کسب ارزش‌های در ظاهر ایدئالی حرکت می‌کند که او را نه با تمسک به زور بلکه با استفاده از ایجاد میل باطنی در شخص به سوی خود می‌کشانند. در این فرایند او به ارزش‌های بومی خود پشت می‌کند تا بتواند به ارزش‌های بیگانه نزدیکتر شود. اما انطباق کامل با ارزش‌های بیگانه برای او ممکن نیست و در نهایت به عنوان یکی از افراد آن گروه پذیرفته نخواهد شد. بحران هنگامی آغاز می‌شود که شخصیت نمایش‌نامه با رسیدن به آگاهی، همه خیال‌های واهی خود را بر باد رفته می‌بیند. در این شرایط او که به ارزش‌های بومی خود خیانت کرده است دیگر جایی در میان هم‌نوعان خود ندارد. در شرایطی که از هر دو سو طرد شده است، تبدیل به شخصی "هایبرید" می‌شود که تنها راه باقی مانده برای او، مبارزه برای بازپسگیری اصالتش است که این امر منتج به تراژدی التقاط خواهد شد.

ب. مبانی نظری شامل مرور مختصری از منابع، چهارچوب نظری و پرسش‌ها و فرضیه‌ها: در این تحقیق نگارنده تلاش کرده است تا با بکارگیری نظریه التقاط هومی بابا فرایند پیدایش تراژدی را در مدئا اثر اروپید و روسمرس هلم اثر هنریک ایبسن، بررسی کند. یکی از پرسش‌های مطرح شده در این تحقیق آن است که آیا نظریه التقاط در حوزه‌های دیگر، به جز آنچه توسط بابا مطرح شده است، ممکن است و دیگر آنکه آیا اصلا امکان پیدایش تراژدی التقاط وجود دارد.

پ. روش تحقیق: نگارنده در این تحقیق تلاش کرده است تا ابتدا با گسترش نظریه "التقاط" هومی بابا به بررسی فرایند التقاط شخصیت‌های دو نمایش‌نامه پردازد و سپس تراژدی حاصل از این شرایط را توضیح دهد.

ت. یافته‌های تحقیق: در شرایطی که شخصیتی در نمایش‌نامه به امید یکی شدن با ارزش‌های بیگانه به ارزش‌های بومی خود پشت می‌کند، از هر دو سو طرد می‌شود. بیگانگی با هر دو طرف و احساس خرد شدن زیر فشار نیروهای مخالف باعث می‌شود تا برای بازپسگیری اصالت و انتقام از هر دو طرف دست به اقدامی قهرمانانه بزند که همین امر منتج به پیدایش تراژدی التقاط می‌شود.

ث. نتیجه‌گیری و پیشنهادها: در این تحقیق تلاش نگارنده بر آن بوده است تا با بررسی دو تراژدی و با تکیه

بر نظریه هومی بابا به این نتیجه برسد که امکان پیدایش تراژدی التقاط وجود دارد. به دلیل گستردگی این بحث نگارنده به ناچار دامنه تحقیقات خود را به دو اثر محدود کرده است. می توان تراژدی التقاط را از زوایای مختلفی بررسی کرد. به عنوان مثال، بررسی ادبیات کشورهای که تجربه استعمار شدن را داشته اند می تواند یکی از این موارد باشد.

صحت اطلاعات مندرج در این فرم بر اساس محتوای پایان نامه و ضوابط مندرج در فرم را گواهی می نمایم

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To My Beloved Family

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Abstract

In the present thesis, Homi K. Bhabha's theory of "hybridity" is applied on two tragedies, Euripides' *Medea* (431 B.C.E) and Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (1886), one from ancient Greek and the other from the modern era. One occasion in which tragedy can occur is when the protagonist of the play moves from obedience to a code (religious, ideological, political and even geographical) towards defiance and towards an enchanting illusion that is set down for him. This idea incurs the tragic hero not by force, but by a kind of magnetism and hypnosis which gains control over the mind of him and persuades him to act, not against his will, but according to the inclinations he represses deep inside. This situation is similar to the concept of "mimicry" as Bhabha defines it, when the colonized people try to imitate the powerful colonizers in order to be like them; in the process of "mimicry" they have to betray their native values in order to approach the ideal alien values. But a total approach is never possible and they will never be accepted as one of the aliens. The crisis occurs when the protagonist's illusions are shattered, and he has no way back; because he is a traitor to his native values. The protagonist now is a "hybrid", who not only sees his future impossible, but also his whole past life destroyed in retrospect and all the nobility taken from him. In this thesis, first Euripides' *Medea* will be studied in the light of the process of hybridity of its protagonist Medea and the way she fights to get back the only thing that is left for her, which is her honor. Then, Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* (1886) will be discussed to show how Rosmer, its protagonist, becomes a hybrid person by betraying his tradition and even worse by the disillusionment with the ideals which was set down by Rebecca. Further, Rebecca's "revers-mimicry" and her hybridity will also be discussed. In both of the plays, although there is no return to order again from that point, the leading characters do not endure the calamity passively, but instead act against it to retrieve their lost nobility. This is the point when the tragedy of a hybrid person befalls his life.

چکیده

تحقیق حاضر به بررسی امکان پیدایش تراژدی با استفاده از نظریه التقاط^۱ هومی بابا^۲ می‌پردازد. به همین منظور تراژدی مدئا نوشته اروپید و روسمرس هلم نوشته ایبسن به عنوان دو نمونه مورد مطالعه قرار خواهند گرفت. یکی از موقعیت‌هایی که ممکن است به ایجاد تراژدی منتهی شود، هنگامی است که یکی از شخصیت‌های نمایش‌نامه از پیروی کردن از اصولی مانند اصول عقیدتی، سیاسی، اجتماعی و... سر باز زده و به مقابله با آن بر می‌خیزد. این حرکت تحت تاثیر خیالی شیرین صورت می‌پذیرد که در نتیجه آن شخص ارزش‌های ذاتی خود را فراموش کرده و به سمت کسب ارزش‌های در ظاهر ایدئالی حرکت می‌کند که او را نه با تمسک به زور بلکه با استفاده از ایجاد میل باطنی در شخص به سوی خود می‌کشاند. این موقعیت مشابه تعریفی است که بابا از مفهوم تقلید^۳ ارایه می‌دهد. به عقیده او، در تقابل استعمار شده و استعمارگر، گروه اول تلاش می‌کنند تا با تقلید از استعمارگر به مانند آنها به جایگاه قدرت برسند. در این فرایند تقلید آنها به ارزش‌های بومی^۴ خود پشت می‌کنند تا بتوانند به ارزش‌های بیگانه^۵ نزدیکتر شوند. اما انطباق کامل^۶ با ارزش‌های بیگانه برای تقلید کنندگان ممکن نیست و در نهایت به عنوان یکی از افراد گروه قدرتمند پذیرفته نخواهند شد. بحران هنگامی آغاز می‌شود که شخصیت نمایش‌نامه با رسیدن به آگاهی، همه خیال‌های واهی خود را بر باد رفته می‌بیند. در این شرایط او که به ارزش‌های بومی خود خیانت کرده است دیگر جایی در میان آنها ندارد. در شرایطی که از هر دو سو طرد شده است، تبدیل به شخصی "هایبرید" می‌شود که تنها راه باقی مانده برای او، مبارزه برای بازپسگیری اصلتش است که این امر منتج به تراژدی التقاط خواهد شد. به همین منظور، تراژدی مدئا نوشته اروپید و روسمرس هلم نوشته ایبسن با تکیه بر نظریه التقاط بابا بررسی خواهند شد.

¹ Hybridity

² Homi Bhabha

³ Mimicry

⁴ Native values

⁵ Alien values

⁶ Total identification

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1. Chapter one: Introduction

Hybridity is a term which was for the first time used extensively by Homi Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha discusses different concepts such as mimicry and hybridity in a post-colonial context. He believes that mimicry is at best a half representation, and as a result it would end in similarity which is not totally the same. When Bhabha discusses about a group of people who are “almost the same but not quite”, it can embody his concept of hybridity. A group of people whose position toward both their own values and also the alien values is imprecise and because of their inherent differences, total identification or classification within any group is impossible for them. In this situation the hybrid, live in between two sets of values; to follow the alien values they have to betray their own values, but at the end they cannot internalize the alien values and will be rejected as “others”.

Generally, tragedy is the movement from obedience to a code, toward defiance and disobedience. This definition of tragedy is in line with what Homi Bhabha defines as mimicry and as a result, hybridity. To practice this theory the researcher applied it on *Medea* by Euripides and *Rosmersholm* by Henrik Ibsen.

Medea is an Asian who helps Jason, who is a Greek, to win the Golden Fleece by killing her brother and betraying her father. She does this because she loves Jason, but with such doing she is considered as a traitor to her homeland. She leaves her country and goes to live with Jason in Greece. There, is the only place she can live on, because she cannot go back to her own country; further more in Greece she has the support of Jason who is native person. In order to be accepted among Greeks, she begins to acquire new values which are alien to her. But, for the fact that she is not a native Greek, she is rejected by them. At this stage she finds both her past and future impossible. Because she cannot endure the humiliation, she takes revenge on those who betrayed

her. By taking a bloody revenge she creates the tragedy of a hybrid person who wants to retrieve her nobility.

Johannes Rosmer of Rosmersholm has almost the same condition. He used to be a clergy man and an heir of a long tradition of conservatism. But under the influence of Rebecca, who enters Rosmersholm as the companion to the mentally sick Mrs. Rosmer, he transforms to liberalism. As a result, the conservative party who was once his supporter rejects him as a traitor to their values. On the other hand, when late in the play he realizes that all of the ideals that he were mimicking under the influence of Rebecca were merely illusions, he finds himself a hybrid. He finds the best solution in committing suicide in order to stick to the ideals that he had, just in mind and to prove himself as a noble person to whoever rejected him.

The same condition happens for Rebecca in the play, who steps in Rosmersholm to achieve her liberal ideals. But the Rosmersholm atmosphere weakens her faith in the values with which she brought with herself to Rosmersholm. She tries to mimic Rosmersholm's noble way of life, but because she is not innately apt for that and she cannot internalize them she goes with Rosmer to death in the millrace.

1.2. Methodology

This thesis is library oriented and is based on the theory of hybridity in its broad sense. In the second chapter of the present thesis, Bhabha's definition of "mimicry" and "hybridity" will be discussed. In chapter three a general background will be given about Euripides' *Medea* and the process of her mimicry will be discussed in detail. In the next part of this chapter the situation of *Medea* as a hybrid person and her tragedy of hybridity will be analyzed.

Chapter four starts with a general overview of what happens in *Rosmersholm* and proceeds to the detailed discussion of Rosmer and Rebecca's mimicry. Later in the chapter the condition of Rosmer and Rebecca as hybrid characters that create tragedy will be discussed comprehensively.

In the last chapter, using the stated reasons in the previous chapters, the researcher will defy some critics who consider not the two works as true tragedies.

1.3. Definition of the Key Terms

Hybridity

Hybridity has been used in many fields, including linguistic, cultural, political racial and other areas. In literary domain, it was Homi K. Bhabha who used it extensively to discuss colonizer/colonized relations and their mutual creation of a third type. He concentrates on explicating the cultural process in which two seemingly simple groups clash and their differences from each other are produced.

Here what the researcher means is an extension of the term to other areas, not only in colonizer/colonized relation. The process of hybridity is movement from obedience to a code, no matter if it is ethical, political, cultural, economic, geographical or any other, to a kind of defiance or denial of one's own past life to achieve something more attractive and luring on the surface. The result would be a hybrid person with a mixed background.

Mimicry

Hernandez (2010) believes that mimicry refers to the process of “doubling” and imitating. But, Homi Bhabha discusses that mimicry is not simply imitating the colonial power, rather it refers to the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and those who are colonized. Bhabha further discusses that, consciously or unconsciously, the colonial power encourages its colonial subject to mimic them, although the result would never be the same as the object of imitation. Building on the concept of mimicry explained by Bhabha, the researcher aims to expand the concept to any kind of imitation which is imposed on the imitator.

Native values

By this term, the researcher means the old and the long known traditions and values of the protagonist which are attacked and destroyed by his own hands under the influence of the alien values.

Alien values

These values are extrinsic to the protagonist and are thought to be more valuable than the native values. In a conscious or unconscious process, these values take the place of the native values and reject them as not acceptable.

Magnetism

Magnetism here means, the ability of one person to gain control over the mind of another, not against their will, but actually through persuading them to act with their own consent.

Illusion

Here specifically means the promised ideals merely formed to be shattered at the moment of insight, leaving the tragic character bare-handed.

1.4. Thesis Statement

This thesis studies the possibility of creation of tragedy among “hybrids”, where the result can be even more tragic; because the tragic character is not only banished from his own land, like Medea, but also from the land of refuge too. This state is doubly more tragic than what we have in the common definition of tragedy. The tragic character has no place to go, excommunicated as a traitor to his native values, he is considered as an “other” in the land of refuge, too. Total identification with the new values is impossible and as the tragic character strives more to acquire the alien values, he is more alienated from both sides. Humiliated by both sides, he sees all his nobility gone. He needs to do something In order to regain the long lost nobility. But there is no compensation here, no turning around; both parties have turned their backs to him.

Death is the only solution that Rosmer of *Rosmersholm* finds to take revenge on both sides and retrieve his nobility by drowning himself and Rebecca in the millrace. Likewise Medea in Euripides’ *Medea* chooses to murder her own dear children in order to take revenge on Jason who robbed her of all she had, leaving her with no face to go back to her native land

1.5. Aim of the Study

The aim of the present thesis is to study the conditions of a person who has become hybrid for any reason. Because the hybrid person is stuck in between two opposing forces and is like a wanderer who has no place to go, the researcher aims to show that in this condition he is apt to create tragedy. He is not accepted neither among his native people nor alien people. He has also lost his nobility during the process of transformation. The tragedy of the hybrid person befalls his life when he decides to act against this situation in order to retrieve his nobility. The inevitable result of this situation is a painful tragedy that the character bears in order not to be devoured by the two opposing forces. The researcher attempted to answer the following questions in the present study:

1. Is hybridity possible in other areas rather than what Bhabha expressed?
2. Is the tragedy of hybridity possible to occur?

1.6. Delimitation

Lack of related literature and related books was one of the most disturbing limitations which were felt during the process of writing the thesis. There are many books available which are written both about, hybridity and tragedy. But it is hard to find many books or any other references which have applied the theory of hybridity on tragedy. Another difficulty was the expansiveness of this area of the study. Thus, in this thesis, the research is done on just two tragedies. Due to the expansiveness of the subject, the researcher limited the study to the analysis of just two types of hybridity.

1.7. The Review of the Related Literature

Euripides is known as the dark tragedian. He experiments in detail the crushing of human lives under the disasters that gods willfully place upon them. Or, if gods do not intentionally involve the human beings in hardships, they, at least, keep distance and sit idly and watch them as they wreck themselves. No Euripidean hero approaches Oedipus in stature. Freedom, which is an ideal for Aeschylus, becomes the means of irony in Euripides' plays. It is stated in Tragedy (2009):

The Euripidean gods, in short, cannot be appealed to in the name of justice. Euripides' tendency toward moral neutrality, his cool tacking between sides (e.g., between Pentheus versus Dionysus and the Bacchantes) leave the audience virtually unable to make a moral decision (¶ 5)

Many critics believe that Euripides in his tragedies did not conform to the general outline of tragedy. For example, McDermott (1989) writes about *Medea*:

Turbulence in assessment of the play issues from and centers on the character of Medea herself. Simply put, the quandary is this: what to do with a tragic protagonist who is at once heroic, sympathetic, and morally repugnant. Medea, as protagonist, is clearly majestic: she is empathetically cast by the playwright in the mold of the tragic hero; the power of her wrath and will inspires admiration and awe. As an outcast, she further draws from audience (as from the chorus) an instinctive sympathy. Yet her actions in the course of the play range from deceitful to utterly repellent (p 2).

McDermott (1989) later continues:

If one takes Euripides' propensity for deformations as a fundamental principal of his art and, essentially, as a purpose in itself, many of the classical problems in Euripidean criticism disappear or are at least alleviated. If Euripides aims at anomaly, uncertainty and confusion, then when he achieves it we need not assume dramatic flaws or authorial failure to make himself clear – because he did not set out to clarify in the first place. ... Euripides has created confusion, therefore it is Euripides' purpose to create confusion (p 5).

There are different versions of the myth of Medea, which can be found in ancient mythographers and commentators as well as in the survived fragments of the lost epics. According to T. F. Gould, C. J. Herington (1977):

One account had Medea kill her children unintentionally (she was trying to make them immortal and something went wrong with the formula); in another the children were killed by Corinthians in a revolt against Medea, whom they had appointed queen of Corinth, and yet another Medea killed Creon, left her children in the temple of Hera, and fled to Athens – whereupon Creon's kinsmen killed the children and spread the rumor that Medea had done it. At least two of these versions (and probably more besides) were available to Euripides, but he made his own by combination, addition, selection (p 194).

In the Euripides' version Medea is not only the queen, but also a refugee in Corinth. Deserted by his husband Jason, she has to leave Corinth, but she kills Jason's bride, the bride's father Creon, king of Corinth, and her own children, whose bodies she leaves in the temple of Hera before she departs for Athens. T. F. Gould and C. J. Herington (1977) believe that, as it is obvious from the evidences, the murder of the children by Medea herself is Euripidean invention.