



“Unified by Travels”: Space, Disorders, and Shakespeare’s Romances

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Abstract

The seventeenth century is an age when many travellers managed their explorations. Along with the development of political systems and the rise of British national imagination in addition to consciousness of multi-dimensional engagements, English people as pioneers in the early modern period started their travels over large segments of the world. Shakespeare’s Romances reflects early modern traveller outside England. Shakespeare’s Romance are one of the most prevailing plays in Renaissance that reveals the element of mobility, mainly through the development between the loss and construction of characters’ identity during travels which has provided a prerequisite and a necessary basis for later early modern writers.

Key words: Travel; Shakespeare; Space; Disorders

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INTRODUCTION

The word travel, according to the Oxford English Dictionary(OED), comes from “travail” via old French from medieval latin *trepalium* ‘instrument of torture’, from Latin *tres* ‘three’ and *palus* ‘stake’. Accordingly, the OED describes it as, painful or laborious effort. Pilgrims, missionaries, merchants, students and soldiers were the most likely to use sea travel during the Renaissance. As

trade and exploration increased during early modern time, Renaissance overseas travels became more popular at that time (Greer, 1986).

The four plays written by Shakespeare in the end of his career was generally known as the ‘romances’ assumes us with something of a mobility. On the one hand, *Pericles* (1607-8), *Cymbeline* (1609-10), *The Winter’s Tale* (1610-11) and *The Tempest* (1611) present a remarkable tendency owing to their mutual association on a set of diplomatic overseas activities and global explorations: the loss and the desire of a traveler; confused mutiple identities who, after enduring changes of space, finding certain identity through several times of travels; severe crisis during travels, twists of power, politics and resurrections of characters assumed disguised acts produced by some marginal figures. Such noticeable changes make the basic format of these latest plays reasonable to conform (Mottram,2008). On the other hand, the settings and plots of these plays is filled with locations so marginal, desolate and unvalued as to isolate undefined characters. Their desires, too, stem from understanding of certain identity, dealign with the ups and downs before, during and after travels. All these representations mark the plots of travelling out as among the most mysterious, if also most double-crossing, construction of mobilities in the Shakespeare space.

1. THE LOSS OF IDENTITY

With the change of traditional explorations center from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic oceans, British got this once in a blue moon opportunity, its explorative spirit was transferred into early modern imagination under the influence of ideological trend as explorer, which greatly promoted the rise of England as a rising global empire. British completed its transformation into early modern countries, meanwhile, took the road of the spatial occupation in a border geographic space. For

the British, the seventeenth century starts in a state of glorious orientation. The new route opened up narrowing the whole world, making the world a growing number of people see the other areas of resources. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the feudal economy of England was facing the danger of being marginalized to global trade flow. The economy of England was turning into a capitalist economy with further enhancement of global trade at the end of the century, which provided another necessary conditions for the nation like Britain. England ventures was indeed looking for a “global positioning”. With new sense of English identity, England was ready for actions in a global world. The adventure of English people instilled in many Englanders an interest in the New World, and had a strong impact on the aspects of English travels generally and establishment in relation to spatiality and power. This is the instinct source of English travellers in the seventeenth century unlike traditional pilgrims from the old times.

In this research, it will firstly analyze the variation of personal identity in the characters’ travels of Shakespeare’s plays. The manifestation of this variation can be recognized by two phases through the study of the plays. The first stage is the main characters’ descending identities on travels both at home and abroad, which can be represented as the loss and the ambiguity of their identities, for their desires cannot be fulfilled. This state represents its chaos through the disorders of morality, objects and sites. Identity had always played an important role in travel for the sake of distinctiveness, particularly in overseas ventures (Chambers, 1988). While the English aristocracy, soldiers, merchants and common people had long been instructed to the shared value of ordering relationship by status and observing this order, it is interesting to note that some Shakespearean characters – and the travels they designed to generate – outlines a more innovative and subversive project. This conflict of travel and individual identity leads to the second stage which the identity will rely on the replacement of the above disorders during travels. There are various ambassadors in Shakespeare’s plays. These ambassadors come and go to deliver their king’s messages. During travels, the messages which are passed to their homeland occasionally bring along occasions of conflicts and uncertainties such as relentless wars, heirless situations, and people’s rebellions. This chains of events are owing to the gradual fear and anxiety towards power in the course of traveling. The end of the travel in the plays is always accompanied by characters’ clarifying identities and an orderly political status.

Recent criticism of Shakespeare’s late plays has begun to engage in spatial particulars expression of Stuart’s dynasty and family within the plays. Studies to name only these vital analyses, have studied the various ways travelling conditions stems throughout and between personal, political and Shakespearean texts.

Gaston’s study, for example, has demonstrated possible causes in which Shakespearean’s family may have originated in the age of Stuart’s which may have provided probable explorations around the world comparable to Shakespeare’s textual sources, as well as possible accordances between personal-political events in the life of James I and his family and some particular global stories. Additionally, Stewart describes what he finds as dramatic ‘forces’ of the dilemma to find one’s own identity as a part of the country during travels as well as to help unite England and Scotland in the plays. These studies aims to identify the means by which Shakespeare’s late plays participate in the format of a Romance to resolve those losses, crises, disorders out of spatial displacement with the help of travels led by characters.

A play such as *Pericles*, however, presents an extremely problematic cases of spatial forces in Jacobean England because unlike the specifically, English and European places of *The Winter’s Tale* and *Cymbeline*, or the New World setting of *The Tempest*, *Pericles* roots in a variety of mixed locations and spaces (Boyce, 2005). By picturing a variety of Eastern Mediterranean cultures, Shakespeare enlarges the dilemma that characters often found themselves in a woeful predicament. I suppose here that in making a ‘liminal space’ so mixed upon locations whose relevance to Europe is reasonable, and by emphasising the drama’s marginality through the narrator Gower, Shakespeare tries to destroy the characters’ identities. Studying *Pericles*’s marginal settings as for England to identify them as a part of European culture as well as in some ways to make sure characters’ identities during travel during plays.

These global activities and imperial perceptions about the places in *Pericles* inhabits complete the characters’ intention to representations of the crisis of its identity in the period of England’s global exploration in the seventeenth century, yet the responses to travels are key to the play. *Pericles* encounters five places and cultures in addition to his native Tyre and every one of these places has encountered many crises and problems. Antioch surely provides the purest example of a multi-functional space, as well as a home yet a wasteland. Tyre, then, becomes recognizable with Antioch, and its ruler, *Pericles*, becomes allied to Atiochus. The king’s intention is, geographically speaking, *Pericles*’s as well; consequently, Antiochus’s travels concerning political power also speak of *Pericles*. That *Pericles* confronts his dilemma of Antiochus’s daughter in geographical terms furthurs the political relation between these two. *Pericles* seems to reinforce his desire to make it clear that he need to find his own situation in the dominant center of political power.

Most of Shakespeare’s plays can not be included in the genre of travel writing. In the light of studies of travel, it is my contention that the study of the idea of exploration in Shakespeare’s texts necessarily involves the politics of England and European countries and the particular

ways in which discourses of travel are associated in relations of confused identities within mixed space. Travel and exploration are not only for the aim of politics, and consequently it becomes indispensable to do research within their particular historical contexts at that time. This is not to suggest that there is an informal relationship operating between the historical setting, but rather that the changing atmosphere from one set of explorations centering on savage wilderness to another be seen as an upheaval that is historically determined into the issues about foreign relations and politically specific. Although the desire to travel of the characters in Shakespeare’s Romances is viewed as the journey to one’s self, the origin of this desire comes mostly from the responsibility through travels. To probe the political implications of this loss of desire to search, explore and capture the identity crisis outside England and even Europe, we might consider the plots in those Romances. It is for this reason that a sixteenth and seventeenth century traveller like Francis Drake not only travel to overcome those exhausted labors during travels, but also to transform this kind of personal disorders into national will.

This proposed project on travel in the plays of Shakespeare will no doubt offer a new perspective on Shakespeare. Shakespeare was considered, by some critics, to be resistant to change as we could see from his history plays and Roman plays, for he placed a high value on the preservation of social order and distrusts disorders. However, this view is somewhat a misunderstanding of Shakespeare. Even though Shakespeare himself has broken away from convention by leaving Stratford-upon-Avon for London, in a sense he does not object to changes along with challenges which is essential in order to understand Shakespeare’s plays. This project will give an extensive research on the plays of Shakespeare to find out Shakespeare’s idea of national identity among these political relationships: relationship between King and his heirs; relationship between king and his subjects; relationship between king and his people. It can also help to explain why many of Shakespearean plays touch on various different areas and countries in which to demonstrate the English ambitious imagination and exploration in early modern time.

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

The seventeenth century of Britain is a time characterized by turmoil and great change. At the threshold of the seventeenth century, when James I ended the prolonged war with Spain in 1604 and led a new translation of the Bible in 1611, it became clear that this age brought the hope of something glorious. At the same time, this era experienced the English Civil War and the Interregnum. In the revolution period, the king became the open enemies of the people, and the country was divided by the struggle for political and religious liberty accordingly, so was

the literature. British literature of this period was very much concerned with the tremendous social upheavals of the time. Furthermore, as a result of Shakespeare’s contemporaries’ early experiences for merchandising, working and travelling overseas people tend to make use of dramas to express their political standing. On the one hand, there was a closely link with the buildup of English wars which the situation is full of invasion and violation. Consequently, some of travellers were full of support for the Stuart line. On the other hand, travellers’ experience of overseas raise people’s awareness about national imagination and imperial construction based on one’s marginal status all the time. In the history of place and space, the close of one of the most critical centuries was marked by the year 1600. Philosophers’ discovery of space problem again and their statements deepened the connotation of space and widened the extension of space along with the marginalization of space. In other words, finite space gradually becomes infinite space (Casey, 126). The value of space is of great importance, of space put forward and clarify make the spirit of national adventure is able to deepen, the justification of colonial expansion is able to build. The forming of English explorations is closely related with its geographical position and spatial imagination as well as its lust for conquest.

We tend rather to talk about travel writing as a part of an empire. The critical cliché to describe the central character’s movement through an act suggests an intention between the loss of self-awakening and a bit of travelling. Even the word ‘loss’ carries the voice of ‘construction’ usually symbolize a balanced force in the political term of the seventeenth century. The sea-voyage in *The Tempest* defining what revives a travel out of marginal space. The action of the play depends on an upside and down reshaping symmetry, a situation, remarkably like a joke of a winner. Adding to the two rulers, King of Naples and the right Duke of Milan, two brothers, Sebastian and Antonio. Prospero disgrammatizes the play’s travel as well as banishment as, for instance, both two brothers end up being merciless and relentless, something brothers and sisters are cursed for doing this. Each two sides stand for two different style of governing skill.

Significantly, the asymmetries and imbalances break down. In the early modern time, the seeking of British identity is the reason why the British Empire got the backbone of the survival and sustainable development power. As to the trends of Shakespeare’s instance of how to keep a ordered space during travels from the perspective of exiles and presentation about the enacting of national spirit, both of which have discussed the feasibility and practicality. As a matter of fact, the England travellers make attempts to achieve the generation of their attempted actions. Therefore, during the generation and reinforcement of travels among different characters, the global needs an enabling environment. For the pursuit of political system in the global world, a diplomatic officer

becomes a very useful tool for Shakespeare to demonstrate his ideological imagination on a global level (Ackroyd, 2006).

From Shakespeare's late plays, it is clear that England launched out into exercising the feasibility of global thinking from the late sixteenth century on. English travellers explore and engage within neighboring areas even many other parts of the world. Many characters in Shakespeare's Romances are either banished or condemned to life-long exile (Rubiés, 2000). This is a way of disapproval. This successive control was designed to demand more self-identity and greater sway over those marginal places. As a matter of fact, the dream of the English rulers who rely on their pioneers, in effect, was virtually translated into reality in the late sixteenth century. It is crucial to begin by noting that the English requires a model as national imagination. This self-image model is often described as a formidable and omniscient nation. Moreover, this powerful country is best represented by these travellers, pioneers around the world, who are to be involved in the course of external explorations, broadcasting a national ideology. Like the crews in *The Tempest*, soldiers in *The Winter's Tale*, ambassadors in *Cymbeline*, helpers in *Pericles*. The thing in which they believe is the construction of identity in the mobility of national will. As it is in disorder personally politically, so it is in foundation of reconstruction. All of these causes for the travel will help England seekers build national imagination in early modern England, which will be vital to strengthening the relationship between the nation and its travellers. From the point of mobility, the argument of this paper is grounded on two perspectives: personal identity in the family tradition and national ideology in geographic space. These two perspectives represent approaches from the angle of time and space respectively.

The overarching fact of the Romances is centrality by means of spatial occupation. A key element in the generation of foreign explorations is historical tradition, by means of which later generations inherit the ideology and culture of its forbears, along with its customs for implanted functioning. It refers not only to the cultural legacy of practicing the national awareness, but also asks for enlightening and assembling the new national pride for the current in the pre modern time. The general point which I hope emerges from these brief descriptions is that in travels it is necessary to engage actively with space, and to make into a whole. The construction of identity as a distinct political ideal, with a set of classic texts and a variety of active ambassador practices, was the orientation of the seventeenth century. Through the blending process of conflicts and involvement to keep organized, ensure rightful inheritance of global conquest of England. Through historical culture and tradition to strengthen construction of identities in the Romances, gradually establish rightful tradition. The England travellers held

this invisible force as well as a kind of direction to guide the way during travels. The direction of national imagination played a dominant role in the course of spatial disorders in Shakespeare's Romances. From time's perspective, the travelling legacy passed down through historic tradition and provided direction for England travellers.

The issue of identity in Shakespeare's Romances confirms the predominance of a unifying Britain. Thus Britain used its spatial predominance to establish global hegemony, after a great historic transition from the medieval times to the early modern period. The dominant atmosphere of travel laid a solid foundation to the formation of the Englishers' identity. Also the England national spirit promoted the British explorations in the new world within the scope of the diplomatic political activities. The rising sense of national ideology defended England travellers' activities. In a word, overseas national explorations and travels laid the basic role of geographic space and justified the movement toward the rulers and exiles in the place of the global world as they claimed. The construction of identity turned out to be the rightful activities in space. The Romance disordered space and the ordered space were created by Shakespeare together as new liminal space. These two spaces were presented to the English world. As if they were calling a variety of travellers from England to travel across the sea for occupy and dominant. Shakespeare conformed to the historical trend of the times as well as to meet the early modern English readers' expectation. Under such framework, it stood the reason that the England travellers claimed to be help restore order in early modern time and other explorers in the global world. Among this mix of space to the region, generations of English travellers and the explorers of the region to be ordered and to be defined, under the vivid identity of the characters they needed a historical cultural and convincing power to guide them, school them. This was how they consolidated their spatial authority by constructing political power in the process of building identity in Shakespeare's late plays.

The unifying process of the mobility of Englishmen to travellers of plays was likely to be closely linked with the conflicts between the disordered and the mixed space. Through the blending process of conflicts and involvement to keep organized, ensure rightful claim of political dominance of the British explorations. Through different families and causes of the two forces to strengthen construction of identity, the British gradually establish its rightful authority over the imbalanced. The two contrasting forces tended to be conflicted played a dominant role in the course of unifying identity in Shakespeare's four plays. In making this claim, British travellers firmly tied their relation of ruling to political dominion such as king's reunion. The English in Shakespeare's Romances started to justify their liminal thinking on assertion of right that the ambassadors and

travellers had no choice but to return to their intrinsic unification. This attitude was lasting and would gradually infuse into the key link of the identical unification. A mass of identities by travellers or by the wanderers and the indication of global mobility of fascination were essentially related. In the early modern conquest, political power was in great request to continue to lie with the British global business, with power prevailing at this time. At the time of the early British global expansion among the New world, British ruling system extended to a broader space and become well fined and well established. This all owed to the generation of British global awareness, which was the prerequisite and foundation to the seventeenth century of any parts of the world.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper is to explore the variation of personal identity in characters’ travels of Shakespeare’s plays in early seventeenth century, so as to conclude a common view about the imbalanced process of the individual identity and the global trend of history in the seventeenth century. While the English aristocracy, soldiers, merchants and common people had long been instructed to the shared value of ordering relationship by status and observing this order, it is interesting to note that some Shakespearean characters – and the travels they designed to generate – outlines a more innovative and subversive project. This conflict of travel and individual identity leads to the second stage which the identity will rely on the replacement of the above disorders during travels. The generation of ordered space out of liminal disorders, then, provides a new pattern for comprehending the evolution of early modern era. As discussed previously, the significance of unifying space can reveal the sense of rules for the English, and the mobility of travellers in geographic space reflects the rules and spirit of a early modern nation. Hence, through the travels from the very start and afterwards, we can catch sight of the national imagination of the England travellers and

get close enough together that they start to practice their political sense with a justified ordered strategy which emerges a clear embodiment of historical progress.

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