A Community Built by Love and Death in Romeo and Juliet

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Abstract: *Based on historical processes, Ferdinand Tönnies proposes that the two ways of human bonding are community and society, and suggests that community is based on emotional will from a psychological and volitional perspective, while society is allowed to exist based on rational calculation and choice of interests. As human history continues to evolve, human bonding is more based on interests. But human beings have always been full of expectations and aspirations for a community life of mutual help. The West has always had the expression "Endless Shakespeare". Shakespeare's plays are all-encompassing, but they also contain a rejection of extreme humanism. The spirit of fraternity that transcends class and even race, such as the abandonment of personal grudges, has something in common with the idea of "community". Romeo and Juliet is not only about love, but also about love and death as a bridge to "community". The century-long reconciliation between the Capulets and the Montagues embodies the Western desire for a better society— a "community". Only by dissolving the gap between the "self" and the "other" and forming "a community with a shared future of mankind" based on the common responsibility of all human beings is the way out for the construction of the community.*

Keywords: Community; Romeo and Juliet; Shakespeare.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, "a community with a shared future of mankind", has been accepted by more and more countries and regions as a new development concept. More and more scholars have also paid attention to the important role of community consciousness for world development. The development of human society in the form of a community is not only an exchange in the fields of Western philosophy, political science and sociology, but also an exchange in culture and spirituality. The community is the ideal society that human beings constantly seek. Shakespeare's plays, as Britain's most famous literary models, have influenced the cultural spirit of Britain and even Europe since modern times. They have become bright stars of enlightenment in the world of European thought. The humanism and fraternity in his plays have much in common with the "a community with a shared future of mankind" of today. They echo each other and show the eternal value of human beings transcending time and space.

Romeo and Juliet is not only about love, but also about love and death as a bridge to "community". The century-long reconciliation between the Capulets and the Montagues embodies the Western desire for a better society, for a "community". In the early years of the Renaissance, Italy was divided up into several smaller city-states which often warred with one another. Rome was mostly ruins—but Padua and Verona came under Venetian control, and cities like Florence and Milan (sometimes called the "cradle of capitalism") flourished under early financial innovations spearheaded by the Medici clan of bankers and politicians. In the cities, politically powerful wealthy elites became patrons of the arts and a luxury class emerged quickly—but social inequality throughout the majority of the country was profound, and most of Italy belonged to the peasant class. Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy—but the play knowingly wags its finger at the warring Capulets and Montagues, wealthy families who can't look past their own insularity and haughty self-importance to be good to one another, or to allow their children the chance at real love. Shakespeare drew on many poems, novels, and myths in the construction of Romeo and Juliet—but the play also may very well have been a timely critique of Renaissance-era social inequality and the trivial concerns of the upwardly mobile elite. Only by dissolving the gap between the "self" and the "other" and forming a community with a shared future of mankind based on the common responsibility of all human beings is the way out for the construction of the community.

2. COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

According to Williams, community is a good warm word frequently invoked by citizens, social workers, and politicians. There is hardly any shadow to it. The word 'society," by contrast, is more ambivalent. On the one hand, "society" invokes something large and impersonal; on the other hand, something elitist and exclusive, as in the expression "high society" or, closer to home, the American Geographical Society (Apolloni,147). Based on historical processes, Ferdinand Tönnies proposes that the two ways of human bonding are community and society, and suggests that community is based on emotional will from a psychological and volitional perspective, while society is allowed to exist based on rational calculation and choice of interests. The community is an organism. In a community, people have the same obligation to support and comfort each other as the organs of an organism have to support each other. The existence of the community is not based on interests and therefore the community is trustworthy within it. Tönnies believes that community is the positive meaning of heralding mutual help and kindness, etc. Yet, there is a difference between good and bad society. Tönnies argues that community can be formed because there is a consensus among its members. This consensus is not artificially created. The community represents "the perfect unity of the human will", perhaps people are separated from each other, but the human will remain unified, and people, through their

own will, are united and affirmed by each other in an organic way. From this, three types of community are derived: blood community, geopolitical community and spiritual communities.

Blood community, a community formed by the union of people related by blood, is reflected in the relationship between mother and child, husband and wife, and between brothers and sisters, as well as in the relationship of authority. The original form of blood community is kinship, and it develops in the form of geopolitical community, which is a community based on common land and cultivated land. Besides, neighborhood is a universal feature of geopolitical community. Neighbors share common land and know each other well, and although this type of community is limited by common residence, it can be maintained by fixed gatherings and sacred rituals despite the separation of people from their place of residence. Spiritual community is the highest type of community, which is truly human. implies that people influence each other and work towards the same direction, and friendship is friendship is its expression.

3. COMMUNITY BUILT IN ROMEO AND JULIET

Shakespeare's plays were mainly created in the middle and late Renaissance period in Europe, when the old feudal society was overtaking the new capitalist society. At the beginning of the Renaissance, people were spiritually freed from the shackles of medieval thought, freed from the domination of "God" and began to pay attention to the feelings and needs of "man". These changes reflect the light of human emancipation and are undoubtedly worthy of recognition. However, with the development of capitalist society, some shortcomings emerged in the process of the development and growth of humanism. The over-emphasis on the rationality of human desire tended to make people equate indulgence with human freedom, and the expansion of worldly desires made people do whatever they could to achieve their goals. Shakespeare's plays were born in this period. On the one hand, his plays affirm the power of human beings, and add the positive factor of "things happen to people" on the basis of the traditional Western view of "fate", reflecting the inheritance of humanism; on the other hand, they also satirize the moral degradation brought by the development of capital and the prevalence of individualism, and insist on the moral vigilance while paying attention to human nature.

It is well known that the Renaissance began in Italy. In the early days of the Renaissance, Italy was divided into several small cities, which were constantly at war with each other. The story of Romeo and Juliet took place in Verona, a small Italian city. Romeo and Juliet belonged to the Montague and Capulet families respectively. According to Tönnies' classification of communities, the Montagues and Capulets are two separate communities bound by blood ties. In other words, the family is the smallest community. The two communities, the Montagues and the Capulets, have a long-standing grudge and are two completely opposing communities. At the beginning of the story, the two families meet on the streets of Verona and start an armed fight:

> Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy washing blow.
> What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?
> Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.
> I do but keep the peace. Put up thy sword,
> Or manage it to part these men with me.
> What, drawn and talk of peace? I hart the word,
> As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.
> Have at thee, coward (1.1.57-63).

The discord between these two communities directly affects the normal functioning of the whole city and the normal life of people:

> Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
> By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
> Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,
> And made Verona's ancient citizens
> Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments
> To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
> Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate;
> If ever you disturb our streets again,
> Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace (1.1.80-88).

It also reflects the chaos throughout the city caused by the long-standing discord between the two communities, which has hindered the city's forward development.

But Romeo and Juliet's love for each other gave the two communities the opportunity to connect. Every year, the Capulets throw

a masquerade ball. The Montagues are, of course, not invited. When Romeo was 17 years old, he happened to hear that the girl he liked was going to the Capulets' banquet. In order to get a glimpse of the girl he liked, he and his friends put on masks and mixed into the Capulets' banquet. However, Romeo enters the banquet but falls in love at first sight with Juliet, the only daughter of the Capulets. 13-year-old Juliet is as beautiful as a fairy and is the protagonist of the banquet. Romeo falls in love with her at first sight and comes forward to express his love, and Juliet is also attracted by Romeo's handsome appearance and the two fall in love with each other. But because of the incompatibility of the two communities, the love between Romeo and Juliet is destined to end in tragedy. The discord between the two communities caused a huge obstacle to the development of Romeo and Juliet's relationship. For example, in the street, Romeo and Juliet's cousin Tybalt met and had an armed fight, Tybalt killed Romeo's friend, resulting in Romeo's anger, in order to avenge his friend killed Juliet's cousin Tybalt:

> This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,
> My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt
> In my behalf; my reputation stained
> With Tybalt's slander - Tybalt, that an hour
> Hath been my cousin. O sweet Juliet,
> Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
> And in my temper softened valour's steel!
> O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead.
> That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,
> Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.
> This day's black fate on moe days doth depend,
> This but begins the woe others must end(3.1.100-111).

Tybalt's death deepened the divide between the two communities, which already had long-standing grievances. But out of love for Romeo, Juliet chooses to forgive Romeo for his transgressions. This leaves hope for a reconciliation between the two communities. In order to avoid the marriage arranged by her father and Romeo together, Juliet faked her death. When Romeo knew the news of Juliet's death, he could not accept and chose to go with her. While taking fake death drugs to wake up, Juliet found her true love Romeo has died. Juliet eventually also chose to die for love. Because of love, Romeo and Juliet chose to die. But the love between them builds a bridge between two originally opposing communities. And their deaths also contributed to the eventual establishment of the whole community.

> This letter doth make good the Friar's words,
> Their course of love, the tidings of her death;
> And here he writes that he did buy a poison
> Of a poor pothecary, and therewithal
> Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.
> Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague?
> See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
> That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
> And I for winking at your discords too
> Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished (5.3.286-295).

The death of the two children also made the two families realize that so many years of hatred and rivalry brought only harm and sacrifice. Finally, Shakespeare ends the whole story with the reconciliation of the two families:
O brother Montague, give me thy hand.

> This is my daughter's jointure, for no more
> Can I demand.
> But I can give thee more,
> For I will raise her statue in pure gold,
> That whiles Verona by that name is known,
> There shall no figure at such rate be set
> As that of true and faithful Juliet.
> As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie,
> Poor sacrifices of our enmity!
> A glooming peace this morning with it brings,
> The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
> Go hence to have more talk of these sad things;

Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:

For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo (5.3.296-310).

The Montague and Capulet created two separate communities based on blood ties. Although located in the same place, the two families did not form a geo-community because they hated each other for a very long time. As the two communities are pitted against each other, the people of the entire city are living in a state of chaos. Frequent armed fights led to the death not only of people among the two families, but also of other innocent civilians. Only if the two families live in peace can the whole city continue to grow. Before the death of Romeo and Juliet, the two families did not establish a field with common beliefs and values. This means that both families cared only about their own interests and had different values. But Romeo and Juliet died for love, and their deaths brought consensus to the communities that originally disagreed with each other. Communication is only effective when a new community is established. And this time the community formed is none other than the spiritual community.

4. CONCLUSION

The development of modern commercial society and the state meant that the family-based community was far from being able to support the further development of the world. The development of modern science and technology has provided new opportunities for the construction of a larger community. The development of modern information technology and technology has broken the traditional geopolitical restrictions on individual communication, and the local differences caused by time and space are rapidly shrinking. It also provides a possible path for human beings to achieve a higher level of unity. The concept of "a community with a shared future of mankind" was born. "A community with a shared future of mankind", as a value community, is the embodiment of people's belief that the destiny of all mankind is shared, and it is a recognition that arises spontaneously on the basis of value consensus, just as Tönnies' highest form of community is embodied in an ethical and spiritual community, which is inclusive of individual identity and belief. "A community with a shared future of mankind" provides Chinese ideas for world development. In Romeo and Juliet, it can be seen that this concept is not without foundation in the West. Romeo and Juliet is more than a love story; it contains the philosophical wisdom of Shakespeare. This wisdom coincides with contemporary value needs and points the way to human development.

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