

国民阅读经典

# 死者对话

从卢奇安到兰多

牛红英 编著

精选五位作家笔下的70篇死者对话（英文版）  
帮助读者领略这种奇特文体的魅力



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## 前 言

死者对话是西方对话体文学传统的一个子传统。它的开创者是古罗马时代的卢奇安。在世的人下到冥府,与死去的人在冥府对话,是荷马史诗《奥德赛》里的著名情节。卢奇安并非这类故事的首创者。但是,以对话体文学形式创作生者与死者之间、死者与死者之间在冥府的各种杂谈,却是卢奇安的首创。卢奇安的死者对话有30篇,均为简洁隽永的精品。他作为此类对话文学范型的开创者,达到了后来者难以企及的高度。

尽管知道难以比肩卢奇安,后世的一代又一代作家仍然难以抵挡这种文学形式的魅力,忍不住一试身手。时光流逝,很多此类作品曾经风靡一时,但最终沉入历史长河的底部,被世人遗忘。只有少数幸运者,如17-18世纪的法国作家丰特奈尔和费讷隆,18世纪的英国作家林特尔顿和18-19世纪的英国作家兰多,等等,还有一定的知名度和读者群。如果说卢奇安笔下的死者对话简短精巧、隽永深刻,丰特奈尔和费讷隆的死者对话简洁有余、深刻不足,那么林特尔顿和兰多笔下的死者对话就变得长短不一、精巧不再了。丰特奈尔、费讷隆、林特尔顿和卢奇安一样,直接以“死者对话”命名自己的著作。兰多则改用“想象的对话”,并将对话场所由冥府移至人间,以示区分。丰特奈尔直接将自己的《死者对话》献给前辈卢奇安。费讷隆、林特尔顿和兰多也将前辈卢奇安纳入自己笔下的对话者中,向这位前辈致敬。

本书从以上五位作家笔下的死者对话中精选了70篇。为了纪念卢奇安这位了不起的开创者,本书将他的30篇短小对话全部选入。丰特奈尔著有36篇死者对话,由古代的死者对话、古代死者与现代死者的对话以及现代的死者对话三部分组成。费讷隆的死者对话有近70篇。林特尔顿共创作了30多篇死者对话。

兰多的死者对话超过 150 篇。后面三位作者都将笔下的对话分成了古人对话和现代人对话两部分。但是,人们最津津乐道的往往是那些已经出现在卢奇安笔下的古代人物的对话。丰特奈尔和费讷隆的死者对话各有 15 篇选入本书。由于林特尔顿和兰多笔下的死者对话篇幅较长,读来时有冗长之感,本书各选了 5 篇。

关于英文版本的选择,在此略作说明。卢奇安的作品在西方影响深远,英译本有不止一个。本书选用的卢奇安对话出自 1905 年由牛津的 The Clarendon Press 出版的 *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*。这是最为学界称道的版本之一。丰特奈尔和费讷隆作品的英译本极难寻觅。本书所选丰特奈尔 15 篇对话出自迄今为止能找到的唯一英译本,即 1754 年在格拉斯哥由 R. Urie 发行的 *Dialogues of the Dead*。所选费讷隆的 15 篇对话也出自迄今为止能找到的唯一英译本,即 1776 年在伦敦由 E. & C. Dilly 发行的版本。所选的林特尔顿 5 篇对话出自 1889 年在伦敦等地由 Cassell & Company 发行的版本。这是目前为止最为通行的英文版本。所选的兰多 5 篇对话出自 2007 年 CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform 版的 *Imaginary Conversations and Poems: A Selection*。

需要特别说明的是,这些作家创作或其作品被译为英文的年代距今都有些遥远了。彼时的英语和当下的英语,无论在语法、拼写还是标点符号的使用等方面均有很大差异。一些如今看来是错误的拼写、语法和标点使用,在当时或是正确的,或者是可以接受的。本书为了目录的整齐,将原来版本里题目的大小写略作了调整。此外,为方便读者,编者增添了关于所选作者、作品和对话角色的中文注释。其他方面,本书均尽可能保持了所选版本的原貌。敬请读者留意这种语言风貌的时代性差异。

最后,感谢我的学生张书郁、刘佳、宋俊琴和李晓鑫。她们在我身体有恙期间,帮助我整理了部分文稿,对本书的出版做出了贡献。

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# I Dialogues of the Dead by Lucian of Samosata<sup>①</sup>

## Diogenes and Pollux<sup>②</sup>

*Diog.* Pollux, I have a commission for you; next time you go up—and I think it is your turn for earth tomorrow—if you come across Menippus the Cynic—you will find him about the Craneum at Corinth, or in the Lyceum, laughing at the philosophers' disputes—well, give him this message:—Menippus, Diogenes advises you, if mortal subjects for laughter begin to pall, to come down below, and find much richer material; where you are now, there is always a dash of uncertainty in it; the question will always intrude—who can be quite sure about the hereafter? Here, you can have your laugh out in security, like me; it is the best of sport to see millionaires, governors, despots, now mean and insignificant; you can only tell them by their lamentations, and the spiritless

---

① Lucian of Samosata(约125–180),中译名为卢奇安或琉善,是古罗马时代著名的思想家与作家。他的著作约有八十种,其中对话体作品占据近一半。《死者对话》是其中的重要部分。本节所选的30篇对话出自1905年由牛津的The Clarendon Press出版的*The Works of Lucian of Samosata*。这是最为学界称道的版本之一。

② Diogenes(约412 BC–324 BC),中译名为第欧根尼,古希腊哲学家,犬儒学派的代表人物。他的真实生平难以考据,但有很多与他相关的奇闻轶事流传于世。Pollux 此处可能指Julius Pollux,公元2世纪的一位修辞学家。卢奇安曾在别处嘲讽他刻意使用晦涩的语言,徒有虚名。

despondency which is the legacy of better days. Tell him this, and mention that he had better stuff his wallet with plenty of lupines, and any unconsidered trifles he can snap up in the way of pauper doles or lustral eggs.

*Pol.* I will tell him, Diogenes. But give me some idea of his appearance.

*Diog.* Old, bald, with a cloak that allows him plenty of light and ventilation, and is patched all colours of the rainbow; always laughing, and usually gibing at pretentious philosophers.

*Pol.* Ah, I cannot mistake him now.

*Diog.* May I give you another message to those same philosophers?

*Pol.* Oh, I don't mind; go on.

*Diog.* Charge them generally to give up playing the fool, quarrelling over metaphysics, tricking each other with horn and crocodile puzzles and teaching people to waste wit on such absurdities.

*Pol.* Oh, but if I say anything against their wisdom, they will call me an ignorant blockhead.

*Diog.* Then tell them from me to go to the devil.

*Pol.* Very well; rely upon me.

*Diog.* And then, my most obliging of Polluxes, there is this for the rich:—O vain fools, why hoard gold? why all these pains over interest sums and the adding of hundred to hundred, when you must shortly come to us with nothing beyond the dead-penny?

*Pol.* They shall have their message too.

*Diog.* Ah, and a word to the handsome and strong; Megillus of Corinth, and Damoxenus the wrestler will do. Inform them that auburn locks, eyes bright or black, rosy cheeks, are as little in fashion here as tense muscles or mighty shoulders; man and man are as like as two peas, tell them, when it comes to bare skull and no beauty.

*Pol.* That is to the handsome and strong; yes, I can manage that.

*Diog.* Yes, my Spartan, and here is for the poor. There are a great many of them, very sorry for themselves and resentful of their helplessness. Tell them to dry their tears and cease their cries; explain to them that here one man is as good as another, and they will find those who were rich on earth no better than themselves. As for your Spartans,

you will not mind scolding them, from me, upon their present degeneracy?

*Pol.* No, no, Diogenes; leave Sparta alone; that is going too far; your other commissions I will execute.

*Diog.* Oh, well, let them off, if you care about it; but tell all the others what I said.

## **Before Pluto : Croesus, Midas, and Sardanapalus v. Menippus<sup>①</sup>**

*Cr.* Pluto, we can stand this snarling Cynic no longer in our neighbourhood; either you must transfer him to other quarters, or we are going to migrate.

*Pl.* Why, what harm does he do to your ghostly community?

*Cr.* Midas here, and Sardanapalus and I, can never get in a good cry over the old days of gold and luxury and treasure, but he must be laughing at us, and calling us rude names; ‘slaves’ and ‘garbage,’ he says we are. And then he sings; and that throws us out. —In short, he is a nuisance.

*Pl.* Menippus, what’s this I hear?

*Me.* All perfectly true, Pluto. I detest these abject rascals! Not content with having lived the abominable lives they did, they keep on talking about it now they are dead, and harping on the good old days. I take a positive pleasure in annoying them.

*Pl.* Yes, but you mustn’t. They have had terrible losses; they feel it deeply.

*Me.* Pluto! you are not going to lend *your* countenance to these whimpering fools?

*Pl.* It isn’t that; but I won’t have you quarrelling.

---

① Pluto, 中译名普鲁托, 是希腊神话中的冥王。Croesus (595 BC – 约 546 BC) 是古代吕底亚国王, 以富有著称。他在 公元前 546 或 547 年与波斯帝王居鲁士大帝的战争中被击败。这次战役对古希腊历史有重要影响。Midas, 中译名迈达斯或米达斯, 是小亚细亚古国佛里吉亚 (Phrygia) 国王。传说酒神狄奥尼索斯赐予他金手指, 即他的手指碰到的东西都会变成黄金。这就是 “the golden touch” 或 “the Midas touch” 的典故。Sardanapalus 是古代亚述国 (Assyria) 的最后一位国王。Menippus, 中译名梅尼普斯, 是公元前 3 世纪犬儒派哲学家, 善用讽刺手法写作。

*Me.* Well, you scum of your respective nations, let there be no misunderstanding; I am going on just the same. Wherever you are, there shall I be also; worrying, jeering, singing you down.

*Cr.* Presumption!

*Me.* Not a bit of it. Yours was the presumption, when you expected men to fall down before you, when you trampled on men's liberty, and forgot there was such a thing as death. Now comes the weeping and gnashing of teeth; for all is lost!

*Cr.* Lost! Ah God! My treasure-heaps...

*Mid.* My gold...

*Sar.* My little comforts...

*Me.* That's right; stick to it! You do the whining, and I'll chime in with a string of GNOTHI-SAUTONS, best of accompaniments.

## **Menippus, Amphilochus and Trophonius<sup>①</sup>**

*Me.* Now I wonder how it is that you two dead men have been honoured with temples and taken for prophets; those silly mortals imagine you are Gods.

*Amp.* How can we help it, if they are fools enough to have such fancies about the dead?

*Me.* Ah, they would never have had them, though, if you had not been charlatans in your lifetime, and pretended to know the future and be able to foretell it to your clients.

*Tro.* Well, Menippus, Amphilochus can take his own line, if he likes; as for me, I *am* a Hero, and *do* give oracles to any one who comes down to me. It is pretty clear you were never at Lebadea, or you would not be so incredulous.

*Me.* What do you mean? I must go to Lebadea, swaddle myself up in absurd linen,

---

① Amphilochus, 中译名安非阿刺俄斯, 希腊神话中的阿耳戈斯国王和预言家, 在希腊一些地方被作为医疗和算命之神加以崇拜。Trophonius 可能是一位古希腊英雄或神祇, 在希腊的 Boeotia 地区有对他的崇拜。

take a cake in my hand, and crawl through a narrow passage into a cave, before I could tell that you are a dead man, with nothing but knavery to differentiate you from the rest of us? Now, on your seer-ship, what is a Hero? I am sure I don't know.

*Tro.* He is half God, and half man.

*Me.* So what is neither man (as you imply) nor God, is both at once? Well, at present what has become of your diviner half?

*Tro.* He gives oracles in Boeotia.

*Me.* What you may mean is quite beyond me; the one thing I know for certain is that you are dead—the whole of you.

## Hermes and Charon<sup>①</sup>

*Her.* Ferryman, what do you say to settling up accounts? It will prevent any unpleasantness later on.

*Ch.* Very good. It does save trouble to get these things straight.

*Her.* One anchor, to your order, five shillings.

*Ch.* That is a lot of money.

*Her.* So help me Pluto, it is what I had to pay. One rowlock-strap, four pence.

*Ch.* Five and four; put that down.

*Her.* Then there was a needle, for mending the sail; ten pence.

*Ch.* Down with it.

*Her.* Caulking-wax; nails; and cord for the brace. Two shillings the lot.

*Ch.* They were worth the money.

*Her.* That's all; unless I have forgotten anything. When will you pay it?

*Ch.* I can't just now, Hermes; we shall have a war or a plague presently, and then

---

① Hermes, 中译名赫耳墨斯, 古希腊神话中的宙斯之子。他是宙斯的信使, 行路者的保护神, 商人的庇护神, 也是雄辩之神。他在罗马神话中的名字为墨丘利 (Mercury)。Charon, 也写作 Kharon, 希腊神话中的冥界摆渡人, 负责将死者用船渡过冥河, 进入冥界。

the passengers will come shoaling in, and I shall be able to make a little by jobbing the fares.

*Her.* So for the present I have nothing to do but sit down, and pray for the worst, as my only chance of getting paid?

*Ch.* There is nothing else for it;—very little business doing just now, as you see, owing to the peace.

*Her.* That is just as well, though it does keep me waiting for my money. After all, though, Charon, in old days men were men; you remember the state they used to come down in,—all blood and wounds generally. Nowadays, a man is poisoned by his slave or his wife; or gets dropsy from overfeeding; a pale, spiritless lot, nothing like the men of old. Most of them seem to meet their end in some plot that has money for its object.

*Ch.* Ah; money is in great request.

*Her.* Yes; you can't blame me if I am somewhat urgent for payment.

## Pluto and Hermes

*Pl.* You know that old, old fellow, Eucrates the millionaire—no children, but a few thousand would-be heirs?

*Her.* Yes—lives at Sicyon. Well?

*Pl.* Well, Hermes, he is ninety now; let him live as much longer, please; I should like it to be more still, if possible; and bring me down his toadies one by one, that young Charinus, Damon, and the rest of them.

*Her.* It would seem so strange, wouldn't it?

*Pl.* On the contrary, it would be ideal justice. What business have they to pray for his death, or pretend to his money? they are no relations. The most abominable thing about it is that they vary these prayers with every public attention; when he is ill, everyone knows what they are after, and yet they vow offerings if he recovers; talk of versatility! So let him be immortal, and bring them away before him with their mouths still open

for the fruit that never drops.

*Her.* Well, they *are* rascals, and it would be a comic ending. He leads them a pretty life too, on hope gruel; he always looks more dead than alive, but he is tougher than a young man. They have divided up the inheritance among them, and feed on imaginary bliss.

*Pl.* Just so; now he is to throw off his years like Iolaus, and rejuvenate, while they in the middle of their hopes find themselves here with their dream-wealth left behind them. Nothing like making the punishment fit the crime.

*Her.* Say no more, Pluto; I will fetch you them one after another; seven of them, is it?

*Pl.* Down with them; and he shall change from an old man to a blooming youth, and attend their funerals.

### Terpsion and Pluto<sup>①</sup>

*Ter.* Now is this fair, Pluto,—that I should die at the age of thirty, and that old Thucritus go on living past ninety?

*Pl.* Nothing could be fairer. Thucritus lives and is in no hurry for his neighbours to die; whereas you always had some design against him; you were waiting to step into his shoes.

*Ter.* Well, an old man like that is past getting any enjoyment out of his money; he ought to die, and make room for younger men.

*Pl.* This is a novel principle; the man who can no longer derive pleasure from his money is to die! —Fate and Nature have ordered it otherwise.

*Ter.* Then they have ordered it wrongly. There ought to be a proper sequence according to seniority. Things are turned upside down, if an old man is to go on living

---

① 根据对话内容,这里的 Terpsion 应该是一个普通人。