



美国黑人诗歌研究

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前

言

P R E F A C E

如同许多其他国家一样,美国也是一个多民族国家。各个民族共同携手,积智汇聪,创造了今日美国的辉煌,使其成为当今世界头号强国,其经济、政治、科技、文化犹如一颗颗明珠,争辉夺艳。同其他民族一样,黑人对美国发展也做出了巨大的贡献。上世纪 50~70 年代,小马丁·路德·金博士领导的美国黑人争取民主、自由、平等的非暴力斗争震撼了全球,取得了胜利,他也因此获得了诺贝尔和平奖;当前,贝拉克·侯赛因·奥巴马成为美国历史上第一位黑人总统。此前,亦有多位黑人活跃在美国政坛,如美国前国务卿科林·卢瑟·鲍威尔和康多莉扎·赖斯等。而美国歌坛、篮坛等更是黑人的天下。

对作为文学的重要组成部分的诗歌,黑人也做出了巨大的贡献。他们的诗歌记录了黑人创造的美国文明,乃至世界文明,见证了美国的兴衰。现引用美国哈莱姆桂冠诗人之一兰斯顿·休斯的一首诗——*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*:

I've known rivers;

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers;

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like rivers.

据我们所知,现在国内还没有一部美国黑人诗歌译本,应该说我们是这一领域的先行者、实践者和创造者。我们编著的这本《美国黑人诗歌研究》,选入的都是美国黑人诗人中的佼佼者,代表着不同年代和不同流派的诗人,在美国诗坛占有一席之地。我们的目的是使国内外华人了解美国黑人诗歌,从而更加了解美国黑人对美国文化所做出的巨大贡献以及他们的过去、现在和未来。

本书介绍了近30位美国黑人诗人的100首诗歌,有长有短,长的记录了从《解放宣言》50年以后的美国黑人斗争的情况,长达80行;短的3~4行。书的结构为:诗人简介、原文、注释、译文和点评。注释、译文和点评全是我们根据自己的理解所做,“点评”更是其中的难点,对我们来说是挑战。我们愿意抛砖引玉,期待更多学者加入到美国黑人诗歌翻译和研究的行列。

最后需要说明的是,除了个别诗歌外,所选诗歌皆来自 *The Book of American Negro poetry* (Revised Edition) (edited by James Weldon Johnson, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1931)。该诗集每次出版,James Weldon Johnson 都写了很长的前言,详细介绍了美国黑人诗歌的形成、发展、特点及其在世界上的地位。为了使读者能准确、全面地了解美国黑人诗歌,我们决定以“A Brief Introduction to American Negro Poetry”为标题把这两个前言不做任何加工直接呈现给读者。此外,为了方便读者对美国黑人诗歌进一步研究,本书最后给出了原著的延伸阅读的相关内容。可能是为与黑人诗歌的独有特点相呼应,原诗集在体例上亦与一般英文学术著作有所不同。为了尊重原著,凡是出自原著的部分,本书都沿用了原文的体例。

由于水平有限,书中缺点难免,敬请各位学界同仁不吝赐教。

刘江 桑思民
2012年3月于大连

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LANGSTON HUGHES

兰斯顿·休斯

诗人简介

LANGSTON HUGHES was born in Joplin, Mo., February 1, 1902, the son of educated parents; his father was a lawyer and his mother a school teacher. A part of his boyhood he spent with his maternal grandmother at Lawrence, Kansas. This grandmother was first married to Lewis Sheridan Leary, one of the five Negroes with John Brown at Harper's Ferry, and one of the men killed during the raid. She afterward married Charles Langston, the grandfather of Langston Hughes. Charles was the brother of John M. Langston, the famous Negro orator, and at one time a member of Congress representing the State of Virginia.

Hughes attended the public schools of Lawrence. In his fourteenth year he moved with his mother to Cleveland, Ohio, where he was graduated from high school. In his senior year he was elected class poet. He next went to Mexico City and spent more than a year with his father, who had been located there for some time. He came to New York in 1921 and entered Columbia University. After a year there he had a break with his father and started out to earn his living. He worked first on a Staten Island truck farm; next he was a delivery boy for a New York florist; then he signed on as a member of the crew of a freight steamer and for two years voyaged to the Canary Islands, the Azores, and the West Coast of Africa. On his twenty-second birthday he shipped from New York for Europe. Three weeks later he found himself in Paris, practically broke. He got a job as doorman at a Montmartre cabaret. Later he became second cook at the Grand Duc, a Negro night club. Toward the end of the summer he went to Italy, and September found him stranded in Genoa. He worked his way back home on a tramp steamer, painting and scrub-

bing decks, reaching New York in November, 1924. Out of these varied experiences he wrote a number of poems.

On his return Hughes went to Washington, where he stayed a year, working in the offices of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, editor of the *Journal of Negro History*, and afterward as a bus boy at the Wardman Park Hotel. In this latter capacity he came into touch with Vachel Lindsay, who read some of his poems, and this led to the discovery of Hughes by the newspapers. In the following year his first volume, *The Weary Blues*, appeared. He then determined to resume his formal education. He entered Lincoln University and was graduated in 1929. In 1925 he won the first prize for poetry in the *Opportunity* contest, and in 1926, while he was a student at Lincoln, he was awarded the Witter Bynner undergraduate poetry prize.

It is natural, indeed inevitable, to juxtapose Hughes and Cullen. A comparison shows them to be of about the same age and winning national recognition at almost the same time. But the contrast is more striking. Hughes began to buffet the world in his teens. Before he was twenty — one he had experienced varied and harsh phases of life. The contrast between the work of the two young poets is as great as the contrast between the days of their youth. Hughes is a cosmopolite and a rebel, and both of these attributes are reflected in his poetry. As a rebel, he will not be bound by poetic form and traditions. As a cosmopolite, he takes his subject matter from any level of life that interests him. His forms are for the most part free, and his subject matter is often from the lower strata. Also, Hughes is the more objective. He is more apt than Cullen to portray life as he sees it rather than as he feels it. He is possessed of a sardonic quality that enables him to give the cynical twist that is seen in "Mulatto," "Cross," and other poems. Through this same quality he often lifts a poem clear above the level of its origin. This is well illustrated in the last ten lines of "Brass Spittoons." Consciously, race means very little to Hughes; nevertheless, like Cullen, he is largely motivated by it in his work, and cannot altogether escape it. From it he, too, achieves his finest and most vivid effects.

A great deal of Hughes's poetry is written in the Negro folk and jazz rhythms, the fundamental rhythms in which Vachel Lindsay experimented when he wrote "The Congo," "Simon Legree," "John Brown," and "General William Booth Enters Heaven." But Hughes has developed and perfected an in-

individual technique. There are poems, too—for example “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”—in which he shows himself a superb lyricist.

He published The Weary Blues in 1926, Fine Clothes to the Jew in 1927, and Not Without Laughter, a novel, in 1930, which won the Harmon Gold Award.

1

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS

黑人话说大河



原文

I've known rivers;

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates⁽¹⁾ when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled⁽²⁾ me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids⁽³⁾ above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln⁽⁴⁾
went down to New Orleans⁽⁵⁾, and I've seen its muddy
bosom⁽⁶⁾ turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers;

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like rivers.



注释

(1)the Euphrates: 幼发拉底河, 注意复数, 前加定冠词。另外, 诗中 the Congo(刚果河)、the Nile(尼罗河)和 the Mississippi(密西西比河), 河流前要加定冠词。

(2)lull: 使平静; 使安静

(3)the pyramids: 金字塔

(4) Abe Lincoln: “Abe”属昵称,表亲切。

(5) New Orleans: 新奥尔良

(6) bosom: 人的胸部,尤指女人的乳房。

译文

黑人话说大河

我了解河流:

我了解一些同世界一样久远的河流

和一些比人类血管中的血流还要古老的河流。

我的心灵变得与河流一样幽深。

旭日初升,我沐浴在幼发拉底河,

我在刚果河畔搭建茅屋,潺潺河水催我入睡。

我俯视尼罗河,在尼罗河边建起了金字塔。

我听到密西西比河在歌唱,阿伯拉罕·林肯

率军南下新奥尔良,

看到她混浊的胸脯在落日时变得金黄。

我了解河流:

远古幽深的河流。

我的心灵变得与河流一样幽深。

点评

从结构上,本诗分五节,第一节是叙事,也是主题节。第二、五节重复,属抒情,有了对河流的了解才能抒情。另外诗歌是情景交融的文学体,第三节是写景,景如画。第一行,“I’ve known rivers”是全诗的主题,用“have known”表示不但“了解”,而且含“experience”的意思,讲诗人亲身观察过许多大河,尤其是诗中提到的四大河流。诗人感受到河流是人类文明的摇篮,也是黑人文明的摇篮。休斯把“血管”和“河流”相比这是惯有的事,但用“artery(动脉)”更多,“vein”是静脉,这在中外作家的作品里到处可见,血管遍布全身,河流遍布全球,无论从形状上还是从功能上都相似。这体现了诗歌的 visual imagery(视觉意象)。感受河流要用心(灵)(soul)去感受。第二、五节用的时态和第一行一致。“deep”这个词用得妙!几乎美国所有作家都在写“woods”,有人分析这是作家的“返古”情怀,“古”体现对“woods”上使用“deep”来描写,如 Robert Frost 的 *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy*

Evening 中的“The woods are lovely, dark and deep”表达森林幽深,一望无际。我想写河流亦然。这里的“deep”表示时间上的久远,我想也有“特点”之义,指人和无生命的事物皆如此,如“a deep professor”中的“deep”表“资深(mutual)”。另外是否表示黑人越来越成熟,将要登上历史舞台,如以后美国出现了小马丁·路德·金、鲍威尔、赖斯和奥巴马总统。黑人有了“deep”的特点,在诗人的“image”里出现了四大河流这一雄伟画卷。

第三节在篇幅上是全诗的核心,属于描写,从远到近,由古至今。幼发拉底河、尼罗河及刚果河是古代文明的象征,而密西西比河是现代文明的象征。第一行用了“dawns were young”,“dawn”是一天的开始阶段,修辞上是部分代替整体,它代表一天,另外表示世界历史正处于发力期,很有深义。第二行用了“lull”,从语音层面看,/l/属旁流音,表“滑动”,也就是入睡者从“清醒”状态进入“睡眠”状态。用“Abe Lincoln”主要从音节考虑,另外表示亲切。“bosom”是女人的胸脯,河流是大地的母亲,也是人类的母亲,也就是“母亲河”。诗中用了“golden”和“muddy”,我想是否在暗示西方的工业化初期的污染。而“golden”有什么内含?一方面表示“落日的辉煌”,另一方面是否含有工业污染治理得到了进步之意。这点使我又想起了中国改革开放在取得进步的同时,污染严重,因此外国媒体在报道此事时用了“East Black”,在修饰上属于仿拟(parody),因为“东方红”是“East is Red”。

从译文上看,标题取“黑人话说大河”属仿照中国的媒体节目《话说长江》。“lull me to sleep”译为“催我入睡”,使人感受如同“催眠曲”的效果。“bosom”译为“胸脯”而不是“胸膛”,因为后者含阳刚之义。另外“ancient”和“old”要有不同的译法,一为“久远”,另为“古老”。

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BALLAD OF THE LANDLORD⁽¹⁾

房东民谣



原文

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung⁽²⁾ a leak.
Don't you'member⁽³⁾ I told you about it