

River Crossers Searching
for Home in Caryl
Phillips's Works

卡里尔·菲利普斯作品中“渡河人” 对家园的追寻

李永梅 著

山东大学出版社

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前言

本书是在我的博士论文基础上修改而成的,其内容是探讨英国作家卡里尔·菲利普斯作品中不同历史时期“渡河人”和家园的关系,通过分析作家的历史叙事,得出对既定的历史要进行反思,铭记历史,才能走出困境的主题。

卡里尔·菲利普斯(1958~)出生在加勒比海地区。他的创作生涯以戏剧写作开始,但随后他的小说创作成就超过了戏剧。迄今为止,菲利普斯创作了十部小说、四个舞台剧、两个电影剧本及一个广播剧、三部非小说文集、两部选集,此外他还做过编辑,是《卫报》、《泰晤士报文学评论副刊》等报刊杂志的撰稿人。他的大部分作品,特别是小说获得过不同的奖项,其中《遥远的海岸》(2003)一书就获了四个奖项;堪称其代表作的《渡河》(1993)获得1993年布克奖的提名,并在1994年获英国詹姆斯·泰特·布莱克纪念奖。菲利普斯不仅是一位用英语创作的卓越的黑人作家,而且已成为一位写作领域宽广的多产作家,无怪乎《纽约时报》这样评价他:“菲利普斯已证明自己为同时代人中最佳和最多产的作家,”称他为“我们时代的文学巨人之一”。

在来自前大英帝国殖民地的作家中,卡里尔·菲利普斯是当代英国文学中的一位举足轻重的人物。凭借其作品,尤其是小说,他给以现实主义为基石的文学传统增添了新的形式和主题。他的这种创新继承了同样来自于西印度群岛的上一辈移民作家的文学精神,例如威尔逊·哈里斯、乔治·莱明和塞缪尔·塞尔凡,但在来自加勒比海地区的作家中,除V. S. 奈保尔之外,菲利普斯是另一位较早被公认为属于英国文学“主流”的作家。

菲利普斯对英国文学的贡献主要表现在两个方面：一个方面是在菲利普斯的小说中。碎片般的故事取代了传统的线性叙事，过去与现在相层叠，迥异的地点相关联，这种支离破碎恰好反映了处于离散、错位中人物的生活状态。菲利普斯早期带有自传因素的小说中不时穿插着“闪回”，如果说这些小说还算得上是完整的故事，那么其后期的小说则直接把彼此孤立但又富有抒情的声音放在了一起。这些声音由于性别、种族、阶级和时间的原因而相互隔绝，然而它们又都有痛苦和失败的共同经历，并且对未来怀有一种本能的期望。另一个方面，菲利普斯小说的主题拓宽了英国小说的领域，对现存的社会秩序提出了质疑，同时强调长期以来英国小说所忽视的内在异质性。菲利普斯的小说关注传统历史学所排斥的人物，重现了西方社会刻意掩盖的历史，比如跨越大西洋的奴隶贸易的真实历史。在20世纪90年代之前的英国小说中，奴隶制及“他者”在英国要么被故意忽略，要么被当做次要问题，然而他们在菲利普斯的作品中却成了核心问题。菲利普斯作品形式与主题上的创新恰当地反映了他所受到的影响，体现了他对现有传统的依附与超脱，这种传统既是英国的、非洲的、美国的，也是加勒比海的。

尽管菲利普斯取得了不小的成就，但是他似乎并没有赢得应有的关注。这固然有菲利普斯作品题材对现在的读者过于“陈旧”的因素，但最主要的原因或许是由于作者的身份：作为非洲人的后裔，菲利普斯生于加勒比海地区，长于英国，现定居美国。对于手中握有的这四张身份名片，菲利普斯反复诉说自己处处有家但毫无归属的境况：“我认识这个地方，感觉就像在家里一样，但我不属于这里。我既是这里的一员，又不是这里的一员。”事实上，菲利普斯本人的处境，尤其是他的不停地跨越国界的行为恰好反映了黑人的生存现状。另外，虽然小说《渡河》备受好评，获得了布克奖提名，但却不是最后的获胜者，因此普通读者对他的关注相对较少也是情理之中的。

在通读菲利普斯作品的基础上，笔者发现“渡河”是其中反复出现的一个主题，并且“渡河”的行为直接影响人物此后的命运，不论“渡河人”的动机如何，他们对家的眷恋与追求是相似的。“渡河”的行为既指时间上，又有空间上的含义，大多数的人物都有“渡河”的经历。所以，

“渡河”既是真实意义上的,也有跨越种族界限的比喻意义。综合国内外有关菲利普斯的学术研究成果,笔者注意到,国外的学术著作有五部,国内有两篇硕士论文、两篇学术文章,没有博士论文和专著。在笔者读过的批评著作和文章中,除了菲利普斯本人写过一篇题为“跨越边界”,以及一位评论者针对其文章写的一篇呼应的文章外,并没有其他的文章或论文探讨“渡河人”的状况。本书通过分析“渡河人”渡河前的期望、渡河的苦难历程、渡河后的遭遇和结局,以及更为广阔意义上的渡河,揭示了“渡河”的普遍性。这是本书的第一个创新点。

对家园的追求一直是文学作品的主题,菲利普斯的作品也不例外。尽管在他看来,家是“谜一样的难题”,他不止一次地称“你是哪里人?”为“存在问题的问题”和“有密码的问题”,但是值得注意的是,作者也同他作品中的人物一样在身体力行地探寻着“家园”的真实含义。作品中的人物大多以悲剧收场,尽管最后总会在凄凉中透出一点儿希望,而作者却依然在昔日的环大西洋“三角地区”穿梭着,离开了生他(西印度群岛)、养他(英国)的地方,定居在美国。他处处有家,却又感到无处为家,这或许就是“渡河人”的真实写照。“渡河”是一个永不止息的、流动着的过程,即使一个人物倒下了,其身后的家人后备军仍在翘首期盼着能有朝一日会到宗主国去。大多数的评论文章谈到了“渡河人”的移位之苦,但是没有涉及他们对家园的不懈追求。所以,从“渡河人”的角度来关注他们对家园的追求,是本书的第二个创新点。

因此本书以“渡河”为切入点,结合文本和相关理论,从四个方面来分析人物在追求家园和身份归属上所面临的困境。它们分别是:在奴隶制下黑奴失去家园及艰难地重建家园、移民对“英国梦”的追寻、白人“渡河者”,以及在更广阔意义上的“渡河”。

本书的第一章探讨了较早的黑人渡河,即跨越大西洋奴隶贸易中被迫渡河的非洲人。历史是菲利普斯一直关注的焦点,特别是奴隶制这段历史。第一部分首先分析了菲利普斯在20世纪后期重述贩运黑奴的目的。在菲利普斯看来,奴隶制造今仍然是一个大家有意回避的主题,所以菲利普斯致力于挖掘被官方历史所排斥的各种声音,既有奴隶的声音,也包括种植园主女儿的声音。奴隶制绝不仅仅是黑人的历

史,它同样也是白人的历史。第二部分追溯了奴隶制的历史。对于那段不光彩的贩奴史,英国没有勇于承认自己所扮演的角色,而是极力地掩盖和否认。其实在菲利普斯看来,那或许就是英国社会的“万恶之源”,也正是从奴隶制开始,才有了此后的大英帝国子民源源不断地移向他们的期望之地——英国。第三部分详细分析了菲利普斯作品中黑奴的生存状况。正是由于暴利的驱使,黑奴贸易迫使无辜的非洲人踏上了不归的横渡大西洋之旅,就像《渡河》中所描绘的那样,他们承载着非洲父亲的期望,像折断的树枝在异国的土地上艰难地生长。第四部分探讨了奴隶制的遗产,包括种族主义及非白种人在21世纪所要面临的民族身份问题,当代英国的焦虑可以从奴隶制那里找到根源,然而人们对这二者之间的关系的探讨却远远不够,正是这些促使菲利普斯重述奴隶制这段历史。

引人深思的是,黑奴的后代子孙们非但没有远离夺走他们先辈、令他们永世无法相见的殖民者,反而被他们如磁石般地吸引,开始了到宗主国的寻梦之旅,这是第二章所要探讨的问题。本章首先简要回顾了那段著名的“帝国风驰号”(Windrush)海船运送移民的历史。英国朝野对历史采取遗忘的手段之一,就是把乘坐“帝国风驰号”海船的那代移民的到来看做是黑人第一次到达英国,从而否认贩运黑人的不光彩历史,达到把外来人排除在外的目的。但是从古到今,欧洲大陆,特别是英国,外来人的脚步从来就没有停止过,无论是出于获取暴利的动机,还是缓解劳动力匮乏的需求,英国“请入”的外来人——被贩运的黑奴及五、六十年代的加勒比海移民,都为英帝国的繁荣做出了卓越的贡献,但是他们的奉献不但没有得到认可,而且他们的“存在”被视为某些社会问题的根源。第二部分联系菲利普斯自身的经历,特别是对于“出身”这一敏感问题的苦恼,说明“渡河人”无处扎根的夹缝处境。笔者归纳了菲利普斯小说中形形色色的移民形象,宗主国为何具有如此的吸引力?这或许可以从米尔恰·伊利亚德的两种时间观念那里找到解释。本质上来说,“渡河人”的困境源于西方殖民主义的罪恶,殖民者掠夺财富的同时,以西方文化替代殖民地原有的脆弱的历史文化传统,只要文化消失了,其子民注定成为无根之木,四海为家,又处处无家。本

章同时也挖掘了“渡河人”悲惨命运的原因：一方面遭受宗主国的排斥；另一方面，因为自己抛弃了家乡，哪怕是再回到故乡，也找不到归属感。由此菲利普斯提出了一个“大西洋之家”的概念，这反映了移民的两难处境。

第三章专门讨论了白人“渡河”的情况。就像《渡河》中所表明的，“渡河”人群中不仅仅包括黑人，白人也同样在渡河，虽然情况与黑人有所不同。在贩运黑奴过程中黑人无疑是牺牲品，他们也许并没有意识到白人也没能幸免于难。黑奴的家国被隔断，处于边缘的白人也同样是有家难回，他们与黑人有着相似的遭遇。笔者所读过的评论文章中没有人提到白人“渡河”，这是本书的第三个创新点。本章第一部分追溯了欧洲人“渡河”的历史，利益驱动下的远洋航行打着传播文明的旗号，实则开启了他国成为附庸国的殖民历史，这为欧洲的经济繁荣打下了坚实的基础。第二部分分析了白人渡河进入“黑暗之地”——此处指非洲或加勒比海——的历程，正是在这“黑暗之地”，他们发现自己的尴尬身份和有家难回的境地；更加可悲的是，白人“渡河者”自己也是其同胞种族歧视的受害者，他们之所以在自己国度上无奈地迁移，到处漂泊，同样也是想找到一处避风港。正如《大西洋之声》中遭受家乡排斥的法官瓦林所认为的，“在（美国）南方我们没有黑人问题，我们有白人问题”。从时间的角度来说，奴隶制早已退出了历史舞台，但是其影响——以种族歧视为变体——在 21 世纪依然存在。如果白人主流社会不正确对待贩运黑奴的历史，那么将有更多的白人同黑人一样成为牺牲品。白人在自己家乡的放逐和寻家，正反映了人类所面临的共同处境。

为了更好地表达“渡河”的主题，菲利普斯采用了一系列的叙事技巧，这构成了更广阔意义上的“跨越”，这正是第四章讨论的主题。为清楚起见，笔者将叙事技巧归为两大类：一是声音类，如复调、主人叙事与奴隶叙事、腹语，菲利普斯正是凭着这些技巧来挖掘被湮没的声音。为了与“声音”相对照，笔者把另一类技巧称为“文本”，如互文性和旅游文学。菲利普斯正是使用了这些技巧模糊了小说与非小说的界限，又把自己的文本与前人的文本联系起来。所有这一切都是围绕着共同的主

题：“渡河人”去尝试建立家园。

通过以上的分析,笔者得出的结论是:透过“渡河人”失去家园到艰难地重建家园的过程,菲利普斯的作品反映了人类所面临的困境。随着国与国之间的交往,人口的迁移日趋频繁,并且是多方向、多地点地来回穿梭。由于“渡河人”的背景复杂,这就使得菲利普斯的作品具有了跨文化的国际视野。因此,探讨“渡河人”的境况,即黑奴的离散、随后的移民及白人的内部迁徙,能促使人们重新思考民族、民族主义、国家以及基于此上的人们身份。离散与移民是流动的,迁徙的人们总是在征途中,不断地跨越地理上、文化上和心理上的界限。他们的身份不再是单一的,而是一直处于建构中,这对于笃信身份、观念稳定不变的英国人不啻是极大的挑战。作为外来人,菲利普斯试图从母国的内部对有意缄默的英国白人社会发出振聋发聩的呐喊,希望人们来关注“渡河人”这一特殊群体。作品中提到了个别白人抽象的友好举动,但并没有惠及黑人,要更好地改善黑白对立的局面需要双方的努力,这或许是以后要探讨的问题。所以研究这位目前仍处于创作旺盛期的年轻作家很有必要,特别是他对历史和种族的责任感影响着越来越多的读者。“渡河”的历史犹如永不止息的河水,从过去流到今天,又流向未来,河的两岸人来人往,前面的人倒下了,后面的人仍在源源不断地渡河。重温那段历史,还历史以真实的面貌,倾听多个被压抑的声音,打破传统认识的局限,这或许是解决目前家园与归属困境的出路。

由于本书只是博士阶段的研究成果,有关内容还需要进一步深化,不足之处请读者不吝指教。

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Introduction

Caryl Phillips's exploration of the relations between black and white is nuanced, humane, and sympathetic. And his deep awareness of the historical process is combined with an exceptionally intelligent prose style—clear, unencumbered, and compassionate.

(*New Statesman and Society*)^①

In the history of the Nobel Prize in literature, the Great Britain has contributed many laureates, and the Great Empire with its colonial system transported its invented national canon all over the world. As many non-English writers have frequently noted, William Wordsworth's poem "daffodils" or Charles Dickens's "London" are more familiar to them than the landscapes outside their windows. Undoubtedly, many writings in English today derive from histories linked, at least in part, to Britain's colonial past. Writers from Africa, the Caribbean or the South Asia have for many years formed part of Britain's large and heterogeneous multicultural population, but are frequently sidelined as figures who speak only to minority ethnic interests.

In fact, the so-called national canon has already been built from the influence of "outsiders". Before the 1950s, Britain was already

① This magazine quotation is taken from the back cover of *Crossing the River*, which aptly summarizes the main elements of Caryl Phillips's work.

“home” to a number of influential literary migrants, such as C. L. R. James and Jean Rhys. In the 1950s, the “mother country” was colonized in reverse by the experimentations of a number of talented West Indian writers who represented Britain through different eyes. Included amongst them are V. S. Naipaul, Samuel Selvon, George Lamming, Wilson Harris, Beryl Gilroy and Andrew Salkey, now all major award-winning international figures. In 1981, Salman Rushdie won the Booker Prize for his novel *Midnight's Children*. This moment in the history of the prize heralds more writings from “outsiders” or migrants within Britain such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Timothy Mo, Caryl Phillips, Ben Okri, Abdulrazak Gurnah and Romesh Guneseckera (all shortlisted authors or winners of the prize in later years) as well as many others who preceded or have followed them. Some writers have optimistically seen such shifts as evidence that perceptions of what constitutes contemporary British writing have finally begun to change. After all, this new generation has clearly vibrated the mainstream, reinvented “Englishness” and crossed what seemed previously to be the impassable boundaries of culture, race and class.

Among the writers from the so-called periphery of the former British Empire, Caryl Phillips has become one of the major figures of contemporary English literature and has contributed through his works, fiction in particular, to the formal and thematic renewal of a literary tradition that used to be essentially realistic and was occasionally given to parochialism. Naturally this originality is already typical of some of Phillips's West Indian predecessors in Britain, like Wilson Harris, George Lamming and Samuel Selvon. But among the writers of Caribbean origin, Phillips is the earlier one to be recognized as belonging to the “mainstream” of British literature, with the exception of Trinidadian V. S. Naipaul who

writes in a more conventional vein.

Caryl Phillips was born in St. Kitts, in the Eastern Caribbean, on 13 March 1958, and immigrated to Britain with his parents when he was only three months old. Growing up in Leeds, in a white working-class area, and then moving to Birmingham, the young Phillips developed a unique sensitivity to the predicament of the outsider, which has remained to this day one of the hallmarks of his writing. After he graduated from Oxford in 1979, and especially a short journey to the United States in 1978, Phillips decided to become a writer. His growing-up experience enhances his resistance to all forms of exclusion, and above all arouses in him the need to come to terms with “the cultural confusions of being black and British” (*The European Tribe* 2). The following travels to the Caribbean in 1980 and another one to Europe in 1984 made him even more conscious of the richness of his multicultural background—including African, European and the Caribbean ancestry, which resulted in the following years in a prolific and original production. His earlier writings contain a variety of types. First are three stage plays, *Strange Fruit* (1981), *Where There Is Darkness* (1982), and *The Shelter* (1984) which address the West Indian experience in Britain and the relationship between the black man and the white woman. Following the stage plays is a screenplay, *Playing Away* (1987) which centers on a cricket game between an inner city West Indian team and their rural English opponents. The third type includes two novels, *The Final Passage* (1985) and *A State of Independence* (1986), which deal respectively with the experience of the post-war Caribbean migration to Britain and with the emergent neo-colonialism in a Caribbean island on the edge of independence. And finally is a travel narrative, *The European Tribe* (1987), which Phillips describes in the preface as “a notebook in which I have jotted various thoughts about a Europe I feel both of

and not of” (ix). This book of non-fiction poignantly points out that the Eurocentricism is the very core of racial clashes, although it may arouse controversy, this non-fiction together with *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) and *A New World Order* (2001) constituting “an interesting complement to his occasionally understated novels, providing them with a more radical and political subtext” (Ledent, *Caryl Phillips* 9).

With the wide range of travels, Phillips began his second writing period at the end of eighties. *Higher Ground* (1989) marks the turning point in his writing, followed by *Cambridge* (1991), *Crossing the River* (1993) and *The Nature of Blood* (1997). The four novels receive great critical acclaim and win him major awards, and Phillips broadens the scope of his fiction. While his first two novels concentrate on the tense interplay between the Caribbean and Britain through the figures of migrants, the later novels deal with wider-ranging topics. *Higher Ground* and *Crossing the River* are about the African slave trade, and span the history of the African diaspora, in Africa, the New World and Europe. *Cambridge*, set on a nineteenth-century Caribbean plantation, handles slavery and the complexity of the master/slave relationship. And *The Nature of Blood* encompasses the Jewish Holocaust, the persecution of Jews in the fifteenth century, the plight of an Othello-like figure in the sixteenth-century Venice, and abandonment of Ethiopian refugees in contemporary Israel. In the nineties, Phillips's talents were also reflected in criticism and editing area, for example, he was editor of the *Faber Caribbean Series* from 1998 to 2000, and he has contributed to many newspapers, magazines and journals, especially *The Guardian* and *The Times Literary Supplement*, covering criticism on other writers as well as his own works. His two oft-mentioned anthologies are *Extravagant Strangers: A Literature of Belonging*

(1997), and *The Right Set: A Tennis Anthology* (1999). The former is a revelatory and compelling anthology of pieces by British writers born beyond Britain's shores, which questions the myth of a homogeneous British tradition, and the latter is a volume on tennis.

Phillips leads a brilliant writing and teaching career, which has taken his reputation worldwide. He teaches in many universities from Sweden and Poland to India and Australia, and now is a professor at Yale University since 2005. In the twenty-first century, Phillips enters the third phase of writing, including fiction and non-fiction, a screenplay and a stage play. The first type includes two non-fictional works, namely, *The Atlantic Sound* (2000) and *A New World Order: Selected Essays* (2001). *The Atlantic Sound* is an account of a journey Phillips made to three vital hubs of the Atlantic slave trade: Liverpool in England, Elmina on the west coast of Ghana, and Charleston in the South of America. And *A New World Order* contains essays about some typical figures and events in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean and Britain, the triangular area. His screenplay *The Mystic Masseur* (2001) is an adaptation of V. S. Naipaul's eponymous novel. More recently, there are three novels, *A Distant Shore* (2003), *Dancing in the Dark* (2005) and *Foreigners* (2007). *A Distant Shore* addresses the contemporary Britain, which is reluctantly coming to terms with the social and cultural changes. In this respect, this novel may represent a departure from the rest of Phillips's fiction, which, with the exception of *A State of Independence*, is always set in a more or less distant past, even if it is obviously related to the present. *Dancing in the Dark*, mostly located in New York at the turn of the twentieth century, delineates a moving life of Bert Williams and the dilemma that plagued the successful career of the black performer of Caribbean origin. Phillips's third novel in this period, *Foreigners*, seems to imply a

bleak answer to the status of the blacks—always foreigners, through three different stories. And the stage play, *Rough Crossings* (2007), tells the heroic story of the resettlement of a group of former slaves in West Africa, and theatrically explores identity, home and what it means to be free. It may be added that in May of 2009 Phillips published a new novel, *In the Falling Snow*, which focuses on the plight of a white-collar, middle-aged black, and reveals the street violence in the multicultural London.

Phillips is not only one of the most accomplished black novelists writing in English, but also a writer fast becoming known as one of the most productive all-around men of letters anywhere. Most of his works have won near-universal praise and a shelf of prizes. The awards and honours he has won are as follows: Essence Literary Award Finalist for *Foreigners* (2007); PEN/Beyond Margins Award for *Dancing in the Dark* (2006); Honorary Fellow, The Queen's College, Oxford University (2006); Caribbean American Heritage Award for Outstanding Contribution to Literature (2004); Hurston/Wright Legacy Award Finalist in Fiction for *A Distant Shore* (2004); Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book for *A Distant Shore* (2004); Pen/Faulkner Award for Fiction Finalist for *A Distant Shore* (2004); National Book Circle Critics Finalist in Fiction for *A Distant Shore* (2004); Mar Del Plata Film Festival, Argentina Silver Ombu for Best Screenplay *The Mystic Masseur* (2002); Fellow at the Centre for Scholars and Writers, New York Public Library, New York (2002); Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (2000); The University of the West Indies Humanities Scholar of the Year (1999); Lannan Literary Award (1994); James Tait Black Memorial Prize for *Crossing the River* (1994); Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Residency (1994); The Booker Prize shortlist for *Crossing the River* (1993); The (London) Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year for