

哈佛 蓝星双语名著导读

Today's Most Popular Study Guides

土生子 Native Son

〔美〕 Richard Wright 原著

Selena Ward 导读

Dave Purcel

季文娜 翻译

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H319.4/I

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

土生子/(美)赖特(Wright, R.)著;季文娜译. —天津:天津科技翻译出版公司, 2003.9

(哈佛蓝星双语名著导读)

书名原文:Native Son

ISBN 7-5433-1652-8

I. 土… II. ①赖… ②季… III. 英语-对照读物, 小说-英、汉 IV. H319.4:1

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2003)第 032596 号

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著作权合同登记号:图字:02-2003-9

哈佛蓝星双语名著导读:土生子

TODAY'S MOST POPULAR STUDY GUIDES

责任编辑:陈妍华 窦月梅

美术编辑:朱爽蕾

出版者:天津科技翻译出版公司(天津市南开区白堤路 244 号 邮编 300192)

电 话:022-24314802

传 真:022-24310345

E - mail: tstbc@public.tpt.tj.cn

印 刷:Leefung-Asco Printers Holdings Limited

发 行:全国新华书店

开 本:850mm × 1168mm 1/32 印 张:6.5 字 数:153.1 千字

版 次:2003 年 9 月第 1 版 印 次:2003 年 9 月第 1 次印刷

书 号:ISBN 7-5433-1652-8/H·52

定 价:9.00 元

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致读者

亲爱的读者，在这个多元文化的世界里，渴望知识，钟情文学，热爱英语的你是否想过站在巨人的肩膀上摘星呢？

你手上这本蓝色小册子正是风行全美的哈佛蓝星笔记，是哈佛学生们将名著阅读与文学学习融会贯通，编写而成的名著导读本。它们以经典性和流行性并存的名著为素材，以明晰的风格和地道的语言而著称。每一本都包括著作的创作背景，人物分析，主题解析，篇章讲解，重要引文释义，作品档案，并且附有相关的思考题，推荐的论文题，阅读后的小测验，要点注释，以及推荐阅读篇目。

这样的编排使你不仅仅停留在对名著内容上的了解，更可迅速、全面、深入地掌握著作的全部资料，同时也满足了对文化做进一步了解和研究的需求。蓝星精辟、明晰的编写风格将“半天阅读一本名著”的想法变为现实，帮你在有限的闲暇内阅读更多的书，在地道的语言环境中迅速提高英语水平，丰富文学内涵，增加谈资。

天津科技翻译出版公司精挑细选了50本蓝星笔记，由我外语界资深专家张滨江教授、刘品义教授主持翻译和审校工作，天津外国语学院教授、副教授以及部分优秀青年教师进行翻译，陈法春教授、阎玉敏、常子霞副教授和李晓霞讲师协助部分审校，共同合作、精心制作成为“哈佛蓝星双语名著导读”，既保留了原书特点，并对文中的知识要点做了注释，更加适合你的需要。

蓝星闪耀，照你前行！

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CONTEXT

Richard Wright was born on September 4, 1908, on a farm in Mississippi. He was the first of two sons born to Nathan Wright, an illiterate sharecropper, and Ella Wilson Wright, a schoolteacher. When Wright was a small child, his father abandoned the family to live with another woman. Wright's mother subsequently became chronically ill, and the family was forced to live with various relatives. During one particularly tumultuous period, Wright and his brother spent a month in an orphanage. The family eventually settled with Wright's grandmother. Though Wright attended a Seventh-Day Adventist* school where his aunt taught, he rebelled against religious discipline, much like the character of Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*.

The illnesses suffered by Wright's mother drained the family financially, forcing Wright to work a number of jobs during his childhood and adolescence. Despite sporadic schooling, he became an avid reader and graduated as valedictorian of his junior high school. Financial troubles worsened, however, and Wright was forced to drop out of high school after only a few weeks to find work. Shortly before the beginning of the Great Depression*, the family moved to Chicago, where Wright devoted himself seriously to writing.

In 1934, Wright became a member of the Communist Party and began publishing articles and poetry in numerous left-wing publications. Still his family's sole financial support, Wright took a job with the Federal Writers' Project helping research the history of blacks in Chicago. In 1937, he moved to New York,

来龙·去脉

1908年9月4日，理查·赖特出生于密西西比河畔的一个农场上。赖特的父亲内森·赖特是个目不识丁的佃农，赖特的母亲叶拉·威尔逊是个教书匠，他们有两个儿子，赖特是家中的长子。小时候，赖特的父亲抛弃了家人去找另外一个女人了。后来赖特的母亲得了慢性病，一家人不得不靠寄住亲戚家生活，居无定所。当境况十分动荡不济时，赖特兄弟二人甚至在孤儿院待过一个月。最后赖特一家还是在祖母那里安顿下来。尽管赖特在他姑母教书的一所耶稣复临主义教会学校里读书，但他仍反抗那些宗教戒律，这种举动恰似《土生子》里的别格·托马斯。

赖特母亲的病最终还是拖垮了全家，赖特年少时不得不做好几份工来补贴家用。赖特的学业断断续续，但他仍对读书如饥似渴，初中毕业时还作为学生代表致毕业演讲词。然而赖特的家境越发窘迫，他高中入学才几个星期，就被迫辍学去找工作。经济大萧条前夕，赖特一家搬往芝加哥居住，从此赖特真正开始了他的创作生涯。

1934年赖特加入了共产党并开始在许多左翼出版物上发表文章和诗作。赖特一人要撑起一个家，所以他参与了作家联合会的研究项目，负责研究芝加哥黑人的历史面貌。1937年他移居纽约州做了一家共



where he was Harlem editor for the *Daily Worker*, a communist newspaper. Around this time, he wrote and published *Uncle Tom's Children*, a collection of short stories that addresses the social realities faced by American black men. The novel—like its namesake, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—was banned or censored in parts of the United States.

However, it was Wright's 1940 novel, *Native Son*, that stirred up real controversy by shocking the sensibilities of both black and white America. The reaction to *Uncle Tom's Children* had disappointed Wright—though he had worked hard to describe racism as he saw it, he still felt he had written a novel “which even bankers' daughters could read and feel good about.” With his next work, *Native Son*, he was determined to make his readers feel the reality of race relations by writing something “so hard and deep that they would have to face it without the consolation of tears.” The protagonist of the novel, Bigger Thomas, hails from the lowest rung of society, and Wright does not infuse him with any of the romantic aspects or traits common to literary heroes. Rather, given the social conditions in which he must live, Bigger is what one might expect him to be—sullen, frightened, violent, hateful, and resentful.

In his essay “How Bigger Was Born,” Wright explains that Bigger is a fusion of men he had himself known while growing up in the South. Confronted by racism and oppression and left with very few options in their lives, these men displayed increasingly antisocial and violent behavior, and were, in effect, disasters waiting to happen. In Chicago, removed from the terrible oppression of the South, Wright discovered that Bigger was not exclusively a black phe-

产党报纸,《工人时报》哈莱姆区的编辑。这一时期他创作并出版了一部反映美国黑人面临的社会问题的中篇小说集《汤姆叔叔的孩子们》。在美国的部分地区,这一小说集和与其同名的小说比彻·斯托的《汤姆叔叔的小屋》一样被列为禁书。


然而,1904年赖特的小说《土生子》因同时触动了美国的白人和黑人而真正引起了轩然大波,争议四起。人们对《汤姆叔叔的孩子们》的反应令赖特大失所望,尽管赖特在书中真实地表现了他眼中所看到的种族歧视,可他仍然感到这部小说太过浅显直白,“即使是才智平庸的富家小姐也看得懂”。而在下一部作品《土生子》中,他决意通过犀利深刻的笔锋表现种族关系的现实,让自己的作品“含义隽永,而不只是赚人眼泪”。该小说的主人公别格·托马斯在社会的最底层发出了呐喊。赖特丝毫未给他注入文学作品中英雄所共有的浪漫主义神态或品质。相反,在别格生活的那种社会条件下,他必定表现得郁郁寡欢,战战兢兢,有着暴力倾向,满腹的仇恨和对现实的不满。

在《别格是怎样出生的》一文中,赖特写到自己在南方长大,对周围的人耳濡目染,而别格就是那些人的缩影。他们都遭遇了种族歧视和压迫,几乎没有自由选择生活道路的权利。他们都有强烈的反社会意图和暴力倾向,事实上他们已对社会构成了一种一触即发的灾难性威胁。逃离了美国南部的种族压迫的赖特来到芝加哥时发现,“别格”不仅仅代表黑人自身的一




nomenon. Wright saw, just as Bigger does in *Native Son*, that millions of whites suffered as well, and he believed that the direct cause of this suffering was the structure of American society itself. *Native Son* thus represents Wright's urgent warning that if American social and economic realities did not change, the oppressed masses would soon rise up in fury against those in power.

Disenchanted over the Communist Party's attempts to control the content of his writing, Wright quietly split with the Party in 1942. He continued to be active in left-wing politics, however, and was the subject of intense FBI* scrutiny throughout his life. In the late 1940s, Wright moved to Paris with his wife and daughter. He became deeply interested in the philosophical movement of existentialism, often socializing with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, two of the movement's leading figures.

Though Wright continued writing, his career never again reached the heights it attained when *Native Son* and *Black Boy*—his popular autobiographical novel—were published in the early and mid-1940s. Wright died of a heart attack in 1960. Today he is honored as one of the finest writers in African-American literature, a tremendous influence on such eminent contemporaries and followers as Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison, among many others. 

种现象。正如《土生子》中的别格所看到的一样，赖特看到成千上万的白人也是受害者，他相信让他们受煎熬的直接原因就是美国的社会结构本身。《土生子》发出了赖特急切的警告声：如果美国的社会与经济现状不加以改变的话，受压迫的民众早晚有一天会愤怒地起来反抗压迫者。

赖特清醒地认识到共产党要控制他文学创作的思想内容，他于1942年暗自退出了共产党。但他仍继续活跃于左翼的政治活动中，一生都处于美国联邦调查局的严密追踪下。在20世纪40年代末，赖特带着妻子和女儿移居巴黎。从此他对存在主义哲学产生了浓厚的兴趣，与两位存在主义哲学运动领袖人物——让·保罗·萨特和西蒙纳·德·伯瓦，往来密切。

赖特一直没有停止写作，但他后期的创作再也没有像20世纪40年代中前期他最著名的自传体小说：《土生子》和《黑孩子》出版时那样辉煌了。赖特1960年死于心脏病。赖特被誉为最优秀的美国黑人文学作家之一，他的作品对许多同时代作家（如，拉尔夫·艾里森、詹姆斯·鲍德温和托尼·莫里森等）以及后来的杰出作家的创作产生了深远的影响。 

PLOT OVERVIEW

Bigger Thomas, a poor, uneducated, twenty-year-old black man in 1930s Chicago, wakes up one morning in his family's cramped apartment on the South Side of the city. He sees a huge rat scamper across the room, which he corners and kills with a skillet. Having grown up under the climate of harsh racial prejudice in 1930s white America, Bigger is burdened with a powerful conviction that he has no control over his life and that he cannot aspire to anything other than menial, low-wage labor. His mother pesters him to take a job with a rich white man named Mr. Dalton, but Bigger instead chooses to meet up with his friends to plan the robbery of a white man's store.

Anger, fear, and frustration define Bigger's daily existence, as he is forced to hide behind a facade of toughness or risk succumbing to despair. While Bigger and his gang have robbed many black-owned businesses, they have never attempted to rob a white man. Bigger sees whites not as individuals, but as a natural, oppressive force—a great looming “whiteness” pressing down upon him. Bigger's fear of confronting this force overwhelms him, but rather than admit his fear, he violently attacks a member of his gang to sabotage the robbery. Left with no other options, Bigger takes a job as a chauffeur for the Daltons.

Coincidentally, Mr. Dalton is also Bigger's landlord, as he owns a controlling share of the company that manages the apartment building where Bigger's family lives. Mr. Dalton and other wealthy real estate barons are effectively robbing the poor, black tenants on Chicago's South Side—they refuse to al-

情节·览

故事发生在 20 世纪 30 年代的芝加哥。一个 12 岁的黑人男孩名叫别格·托马斯，他出身贫寒，没上过学，住在芝加哥南区一栋拥挤不堪的破房子里。一天早上他醒来看见一只大老鼠在屋里横冲直撞，他追赶那只硕鼠，用一只平底锅将它拍死了。20 世纪 30 年代的美国到处充斥着严重的种族歧视，生活在这一时代的别格深信他的命运不由他掌控，而且他知道除了做些卑微下贱的工作，不能奢求得到其它工作。母亲催促他到一个名叫道尔顿的白人那里做工，别格不愿去，反倒想和他的朋友们去筹划抢劫一家白人开的商店的事。

别格的生活充满恼怒、恐惧和挫败。他不得不装作坚强，否则他时刻面临崩溃。别格他们一伙已抢劫过许多家黑人开的商店，却还未尝试过要抢劫一家白人开的店。别格从不把白人看做个体的人，只当他们是一种天然的压迫势力——一种巨大的无形的白色势力，直压得他难以喘息。别格害怕与白人发生正面冲突，但他不敢坦言自己的恐惧，反倒是把跟他一伙的一个朋友狠狠修理了一番，达到了阻止这次抢劫计划实施的目的。在别无选择的情况下，他当了道尔顿先生的司机。

巧的是，道尔顿先生也算是别格一家间接的房东。因为道尔顿先生对一家公司有控股权，而该公司就恰好掌管着别格一家住的公寓楼。道尔顿先生和其他一些地产大亨们对在芝加哥南区租房子住的穷



low blacks to rent apartments in predominantly white neighborhoods, thus leading to overpopulation and artificially high rents in the predominantly black South Side. Mr. Dalton sees himself as a benevolent philanthropist, however, as he donates money to black schools and offers jobs to “poor, timid black boys” like Bigger. However, Mr. Dalton practices this token philanthropy mainly to alleviate his guilty conscience for exploiting poor blacks.

Mary, Mr. Dalton’s daughter, frightens and angers Bigger by ignoring the social taboos that govern the relations between white women and black men. On his first day of work, Bigger drives Mary to meet her communist boyfriend, Jan. Eager to prove their progressive ideals and racial tolerance, Mary and Jan force Bigger to take them to a restaurant in the South Side. Despite Bigger’s embarrassment, they order drinks, and as the evening passes, all three of them get drunk. Bigger then drives around the city while Mary and Jan make out in the back seat. Afterward, Mary is too drunk to make it to her bedroom on her own, so Bigger helps her up the stairs. Drunk and aroused by his unprecedented proximity to a young white woman, Bigger begins to kiss Mary.

Just as Bigger places Mary on her bed, Mary’s blind mother, Mrs. Dalton, enters the bedroom. Though Mrs. Dalton cannot see him, her ghostlike presence terrifies him. Bigger worries that Mary, in her drunken condition, will reveal his presence. He covers her face with a pillow and accidentally smothers her to death. Unaware that Mary has been killed, Mrs. Dalton prays over her daughter and returns to bed. Bigger tries to conceal his crime by burning Mary’s body in the Daltons’ furnace. He decides to try to use the Daltons’ prejudice against