



Richard Wright: The Life and Times

Hazel Rowley

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Consistently an outsider—a child of the fundamentalist South with an eighth-grade education, a self-taught intellectual, a black man married to a white woman—Richard Wright nonetheless became the unparalleled voice of his time. The first full-scale biography of the author best known for his searing novels *Black Boy* and *Native Son*, *Richard Wright: The Life and Times* brings the man and his work—in all their complexity and distinction—to vibrant life. Acclaimed biographer Hazel Rowley chronicles Wright's unprecedented journey from a sharecropper's shack in Mississippi to Chicago's South Side to international renown as a writer and outspoken critic of racism.

Drawing on journals, letters, and eyewitness accounts, *Richard Wright* probes the author's relationships with Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, his attraction to Communism, and his so-called exile in France. Skillfully interweaving quotes from Wright's own writings, Rowley deftly portrays a passionate, courageous, and flawed man who would become one of our most enduring literary figures.

"Splendid. . . . *Richard Wright* is well written, prodigiously researched, and nicely paced, a compelling evocation of the man, his craft, and the different worlds through which he moved."—Michael J. Ybarra, *Wall Street Journal*

"A welcome and illuminating work . . . [Rowley] does an outstanding job. . . . Rich and revealing."—Megan Harlan, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"A magnificent biography, subtle and insightful. . . . Rowley writes with style and grace, and her research on Wright is prodigious."—Howard Zinn, *The Week*

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