



Richard Wright: The Life and Times

Hazel Rowley

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Richard Wright: The Life and Times Hazel Rowley

The first full-scale biography of the author of *Black Boy* and *Native Son* -- written with the dramatic drive of a novel.

"Writing," Richard Wright once said, "is my way of being a free man." In this authoritative and engaging biography, Hazel Rowley chronicles Wright's extraordinary journey from a sharecropper's shack in Mississippi to international renown as a writer, fiercely independent thinker, and outspoken critic of racism.

The child of the fundamentalist South with an eighth-grade education, a self-taught intellectual in the working-class Communist Party of the 1930s, a black man married to a white woman, and an expatriate in France after World War II, Wright was always an outsider. Skillfully interweaving quotations from Wright's writings, Rowley portrays a man who transcended the times in which he lived and sought to reconcile opposing cultures in his work. She draws on recently discovered material to shed new light on Wright's relationships with Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, and others, and on his self-imposed exile in France (widely blamed for his so-called decline as a writer). In this lively, finely crafted narrative, Wright -- passionate, complex, courageous, and flawed -- comes vibrantly to life.

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