

RICHARD WRIGHT IN CONTEXT

Richard Wright was one of the most influential and complex African American writers of the twentieth century. Best known as the trail-blazing, best-selling author of *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, he established himself as an experimental literary intellectual in France who creatively drew on some of the leading ideas of his time – Marxism, existentialism, psychoanalysis, and postcolonialism – to explore the sources and meaning of racism both in the United States and worldwide. *Richard Wright in Context* gathers thirty-three new essays by an international group of scholars relating Wright's writings to biographical, regional, social, literary, and intellectual contexts that are essential to understanding them. It explores the places that shaped his life and enabled his literary destiny, the social and cultural contexts he both observed and immersed himself in, and the literary and intellectual contexts that made him one of the most famous Black writers in the world at mid-century.

MICHAEL NOWLIN is Professor and Chair of the English Department at the University of Victoria in Canada. He is the author of *Literary Ambition and the African American Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Racial Angles and the Business of Literary Greatness* (Palgrave, 2007).

RICHARD WRIGHT
IN CONTEXT

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Abbreviations

- “BNW” “Blueprint for Negro Writing.” *Richard Wright Reader*. Eds. Ellen Wright and Michel Fabre. New York: Harper & Row, 1978. 36–49.
- BP *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954.
- CC *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference*. Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1956.
- CRW *Conversations with Richard Wright*. Eds. Keneth Kinnamon and Michel Fabre. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993.
- EM *Eight Men*. 1961. Reprint. New York: Harper Perennial, 1996.
- EW *Early Works: Lawd Today!, Uncle Tom’s Children, Native Son, “How ‘Bigger’ Was Born.”* Ed. Arnold Rampersad. New York: Library of America, 1991.
- HTOW *Haiku: This Other World*. Eds. Yoshinobu Hakutani and Robert Tener. New York: Arcade, 1998.
- LD *The Long Dream*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958.
- LW *Later Works: Black Boy (American Hunger), The Outsider*. Ed. Arnold Rampersad. New York: Library of America, 1991.
- PS *Pagan Spain*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957.
- RWP Richard Wright Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature. Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library.
- SH *Savage Holiday*. 1954. Reprint. New York: Award Books, 1965.
- TMBV *Twelve Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States*. Photo direction by Edwin Rosskam. New York: Viking, 1941.
- WML *White Man, Listen!* New York: Doubleday & Co., 1957.

Richard Wright's Works: A Chronology

- “Blueprint for Negro Writing” (1937); first published in *New Challenge*.
Uncle Tom's Children (1938); reissued in 1940 with the addition of “The
 Ethics of Living Jim Crow” and “Bright and Morning Star.”
Native Son (1940); Wright's initially submitted, unexpurgated version
 first published in 1991, for the Library of America volume *Early
 Works*.
- “How ‘Bigger’ Was Born” (1940); first published in the *Saturday Review
 of Literature* (June 1940), then as a pamphlet by Harper & Brothers to
 accompany the book, incorporated into printings of the novel begin-
 ning in 1942.
- Twelve Million Black Voices* (1941)
- “I Tried to Be a Communist” (1944); first published in the *Atlantic
 Monthly*; reprinted in 1949 in *The God That Failed*, ed. Richard
 Crossman.
- “The Man Who Lived Underground” (1945); first published in the
 anthology *Cross Section*, ed. Edwin Seaver; reprinted in *Eight Men*
 (1961).
- Black Boy* (1945); Wright's initially submitted, two-part version first
 published as *Black Boy (American Hunger)* in 1991, for the Library of
 America volume *Later Works*.
- The Outsider* (1953); Wright's initially submitted, longer version pub-
 lished in 1991, for the Library of America volume *Later Works*.
- Black Power* (1954)
- Savage Holiday* (1954)
- The Color Curtain* (1956)
- Pagan Spain* (1956)
- White Man, Listen!* (1957)
- The Long Dream* (1958)

Posthumous Publications

Eight Men (1961)

Lawd Today! (1963); re-edited, unexpurgated version first appears in the Library of America volume *Early Works*.

American Hunger (1977); the second part of the original *Black Boy*, published separately before being reintegrated into *Black Boy* (*American Hunger*) for the Library of America volume *Later Works*.

Rite of Passage (1994)

Haiku: This Other World (1998)

A Father's Law (2008)

Byline, Richard Wright: Articles from the Daily Worker and New Masses (2015)