LETTER FROM JULIA WRIGHT

In this inaugural issue of the newsletter, we are proud to share an excerpt from a letter received from Julia Wright:

"I think the project of a scholarly society to sustain and buttress academic interest in my father's life and work is a challenging and timely one. I hope that in time this Society may be able to link up with a rather informal network we have been working with at this end, here in France where Richard Wright spent a third of his life. Meanwhile, as a daughter of his, I would be honored to become one of the founding members of the Richard Wright Circle.

My only reservation is that voiced by my own father when he was faced with excessively closed academic circles: I would enjoy seeing the "Circle" extend its goals to a practical and dynamic insertion of Richard Wright's life, message and work into the mainstream of our Black community life and the nation's cultural centers of Black History. An example of this concern lies in the gaps to be filled ... of Civil Rights and Black History landmarks as recently published by the New York Times. Certainly some of the houses Richard Wright once lived in in the South as well as other landmarks of his unique itinerary would be worth researching and marking (the monument dedicated to him last year in Natchez is an encouraging beginning) not only for our own historical memory-building but also for our young Black generations who are increasingly at risk today and who need to be reminded of their everyday life that most historical Black models and father figures also started from scratch. These are the beyond-the-campus concerns I believe my father would have wished to see addressed by scholars not solely in his own honor but for the sake of our young native sons and daughters whose motivation for intellectual, artistic, scientific or humanitarian achievement is so often cruelly discouraged at too early an age."

"DOING THE (W)RIGHT THING!"
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF RICHARD WRIGHT'S CLASSIC NOVEL
NATIVE SON
CELEBRATED AT SYMPOSIUM AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

(Boston, MA) -- Richard Wright's classic novel Native Son was commemorated at a special symposium, "'Doing the (W)right Thing': The 50th Anniversary Celebration of Native Son" at Northeastern University in Boston, May 4-5, 1990.

Noted writers, scholars, students and friends of the late author attended this unique symposium that took a look at his extraordinary life and sojourn from Natchez, Mississippi, where he was born in 1908 as the son of a sharecropper, to Paris where he died an expatriate in 1960. The symposium analyzed the impact of Native Son and Wright's other literary and journalistic work and explored issues such as teaching his and other African-American writers' works in secondary schools and colleges. Speakers were Joyce Scott, James Nagel, Hope Davis, Joyce Ann Joyce, Mae G. Henderson, Bernard Bell and Clyde Taylor. Poet Samuel Allen and novelist George Lamming, both of whom knew Wright, also spoke.

A special celebration dedicated to Wright and Sarah Vaughn was held featuring poet Michael Harper, Bill Lowe and Boston area musicians, including vocalist Semenya McCord.

LIBRARY OF AMERICA TO PUBLISH EDITION OF WRIGHT'S WORKS

The Library of America will publish an edition of Wright's works in two companion volumes. Expected publication date is Fall 1991. Arnold Rampersad, professor of English and director of the Program in American studies at Princeton is the editor. This edition presents Wright's works in authoritative new texts. According to the publisher, these are "based on an exhaustive examination of manuscripts and printed sources" and
CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of the Richard Wright Circle

1. This society shall be known as the Richard Wright Circle.

2. The object of this society shall be to stimulate and promote interest in the works and ideas of Richard Wright and to facilitate scholarship and criticism on Wright's works.

3. The Richard Wright Circle is open to any teacher or scholar who supports the aims and objectives of the Circle as evidenced by his or her work, i.e. academic, professional, or scholarly. In addition, members may be chosen from the following groups:
   a) Graduate students working on the M.A. or other advanced degrees on Richard Wright or related topics.
   b) College seniors working on an honors thesis about Richard Wright or related topics.
   c) Retired persons and independent scholars.

4. Dues for membership shall be set at $10.00 per year with any change to be voted upon by the general body. Graduate students and college seniors are exempt from paying dues.

5. The Richard Wright Circle shall hold at least one meeting a year at a time and place to be announced.

6. The Richard Wright Circle shall publish a biannual newsletter and organize sessions at regularly held professional gatherings.

7. The following persons are Advisory Board Members/Charter Members of the Richard Wright Circle: Margaret Walker Alexander, Samuel Allen, Michel Fabre, Donald Gibson, Joyce Ann Joyce, Kenneth Kinnamon, George Lamming, Abdul Jan Mohamed, Eleanor Traylor, and Julia Wright. Conveners are Maryemma Graham and Jerry W. Ward, Jr.

RICHARD WRIGHT CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

You are invited to become a member of the Richard Wright Circle, which is an international association of scholars, teachers, students and other persons who have sustained interest in the life and works of Richard Wright.

As a fitting tribute to the fiftieth anniversary of Native Son, the Circle is dedicated to promoting the teaching of Wright's works in undergraduate and graduate programs, encouraging textual scholarship and preparation of critical editions, galvanizing a network of international scholars to facilitate scholarship and criticism on Richard Wright's literature.

Each member will receive a biannual publication, "Richard Wright Newsletter," containing brief research and archival notes, letters of inquiry, information about new directions in criticism and scholarship, and items on conferences around the country.

This is a special opportunity to be apart of an interpretive community devoted to Wright's works. Don't miss out!

Complete the information below and send a $10.00 check or money order for a one year membership to the Richard Wright Circle.

NAME ________________________________ ________________________________

ADDRESS ________________________________________________________________________

TELEPHONE NUMBER (W) ______ (H) ________________________________

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN WRIGHT STUDIES ________________________________

OTHER SCHOLARLY AREAS __________________________________________________________

LATEST PUBLICATION (optional) ___________________________________________________

Send form and dues to: Dr. Maryemma Graham, Northeastern University, English Department, 406 Holmes, Boston, MA. 02115; (617) 437-4549.
and gender nostalgia, popular culture, the politics of remembrance, authenticity and the imagined past.

The volume will represent a variety of approaches and methodologies which are either cross-ethnic in their coverage or address broad theoretical issues in literature and ethnicity.

MLA VOLUME:
APPROACHES TO TEACHING NATIVE SON

The editor of the proposed MLA volume, Approaches to Teaching Wright’s Native Son, is seeking potential contributors. For further information please contact: James A. Miller, Department of English, Trinity College, Hartford, CT 06106.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The following is a cumulative bibliography of works published in the last three years. Members are encouraged to forward additional citations that are omitted. The full bibliography will appear annually as a separate publication of the Richard Wright Circle.

BOOKS


ARTICLES


texts have been selected for reprinting that predate the many editorial changes forced upon Wright.

Volume One contains Uncle Tom’s Children, Lawd Today! and Native Son along with two essays written by Wright, “How Bigger Was Born,” which discusses the “genesis, themes and treatment of Native Son” and “The Ethics of Jim Crow.” In editing Native Son, Rampersad returned to the text of Wright’s bound page proofs, and restored several passages and an entire scene to the work which due to their sexual nature, had been excluded at the request of Wright’s publisher.

Volume Two presents the autobiographical Black Boy and Wright’s political novel The Outsider. Black Boy is being printed complete for the first time. The original second part of the story known as American Hunger, which traces Wright’s experiences in Chicago has been restored. It had been cut at his publisher’s insistence and unpublished until the 1970s. The “master copy” of Wright’s manuscript for The Outsider was used to restore entire passages to the story which had been removed in-house by the publisher.

According to information provided by Max Rudin, Associate Publisher of the Library of America, this edition is the result of a systematic examination of Wright’s manuscripts undertaken for the purpose of determining his original desires and interests. Wright was frequently the victim of censorship due to the sexual or racial nature of many passages which were deemed too controversial. These two volumes, says Rudin, “treat Wright’s works with the respect they deserve, and make the volumes even more fascinating for general readers as well as scholars.”

Richard Wright Circle members can order the volumes at a 20% prepublication discount after August 15, 1991 from The Library of America, 14 East 60th St., New York, New York 10022; (212) 308-3360. Indicate whether you want the boxed set ($70) or a single volume ($35).

The Richard Wright Newsletter is published biannually.
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Editorial Assistant; Kelley Norman
Production Assistant; Kathleen Reilly
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The editors welcome all news relevant to the life and work of Richard Wright. The Richard Wright Circle is supported by the Departments of African-American Studies and English at Northeastern University.

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UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND EUROPE

The Centre d’Etudes Afro-Americaines at the Sorbonne Nouvelle (Michel Fabre, director), The Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi (William Ferris, director) and the W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University have organized a conference entitled “African Americans and Europe.” The conference will be held Wednesday February 5th to Sunday February 9th 1992 in Paris as a part of the Parisian observance of Black History Month.

The conference will cover the experiences of African-American writers, artists, musicians, entertainers, professionals, soldiers, and political leaders in European countries—their perceptions of themselves, European influences upon them and their influences upon Europe and the reception of their work there. Although the topics cover a variety of occupations and countries, the main emphasis will be placed on France and on writers, and will therefore be of special interest to those individuals concerned with Richard Wright’s works and life.

June 1991 is the deadline to submit a proposal to participate in discussions, to chair a session or present a paper. Those interested please contact Michel Fabre, Institute du Monde Anglophone - 5 rue de l’Ecole de Medecine, 75006 Paris, France. Fax(1) 43 25 74 71.

OTHER VOICES:
AMERICAN WOMEN OF COLOR WRITERS
CONFERENCE

“Other Voices” will be held on May 28-31, 1991 at the Carousel Hotel, Ocean City Maryland. If you are interested in attending or receiving information about the conference please write to: Tom Erskine or Connie White, Department of English, 1101 Camden Avenue, Salisbury State University, Salisbury, MD 21801.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, INQUIRIES, ETC.

MEMORY IN MULTI-ETHNIC AMERICAN LITERATURE

Amritjit Singh of Rhode Island College is presently working on an anthology of essays that explore the uses of memory in multi-ethnic American literature. The volume is intended to be of interest both to scholars in the field and students of American and ethnic studies.

The volume will include topics such as the construction and narration of the past, collective and/or generational memory, oral storytelling and the role of the storyteller, folklore, the post-modern poetics of memory, memory and work, memory