“Mississippi’s Literary Heritage: Black and White and Read All Over” was an appropriate theme for three days of celebrating the multiculturalism of the state’s literature and history. The theme might also be interpreted as a fitting gloss on the two evening events that drew attention to the life and works of Richard Wright.

One of the special points Charles Reagan Wilson (University of Mississippi) made in his keynote address, “Two Centuries of Creativity in Mississippi: Black and White and Read All Over” was how the state failed, despite structural segregation, to prevent creative blendings. Other activities on the first day of the festival that cast light on the black presence in Natchez were a lecture by Ronald L. F. Davis (CSU, Northridge) on “The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720-1880,” a tour of the Museum of the Natchez Association for the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, and the premier of Prince of the Slaves, a play about the life of Abdul Rahaman Ibrahim (1762-1829), for forty years a slave on Thomas Foster’s plantation near Natchez. Acted by William W. Gwaltney (National Park Service, Hardy, VA) and Richard Pawling (History Alive, Reading, PA), the play gave immediacy to the conflicting perspectives of slave and master.

Activities on the second day especially pertinent to matters of African American history and culture were lectures on Stark Young’s use of race, war, and social change in his fiction by Robert C. Petersen and Jacquelyn Jackson (both of Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro) and “Let’s Go to the Movies: Richard Wright’s Native Son,” which included lectures by Charles G. Vakhkamp and Jerry Ward (see festival abstracts in this issue) and the showing of the 1987 film Native Son. Vakhkamp’s lecture included clips from the 1951 film in which Wright played the role of Bigger Thomas.

On day three, Clifton Taulbert, author of Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored and The Last Train North, made an impressive case for the importance of “anthropology of memory” in grasping the historicity of the South. His optimistic sense of how a black boy’s life history means something provided a fruitful contrast to the reality testing that is essential in Wright’s treatment of memory. Taulbert’s morning address was a challenging prelude to the closing event of the festival, “An Evening with Richard Wright.” Madison David Lacy, Jr. discussed the making of Black Boy, the film biography of Wright (see RWN, Fall/Winter 1993) and presented excerpts from the work-in-progress. It was originally planned that Julia Wright would present the first Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award during the evening. Unfortunately, Eudora Welty was unable to attend, so the audience viewed a videotape of her remarks upon receiving the award from former Governor William F. Winter. Thus, as many members of Wright’s family who still live in the Natchez area listened with pride, Julia Wright evoked her father’s presence as she poignantly spoke of “Black Boy’s Children.” Especially moving were her remarks about how Wright’s paternal love made childhood a treasured period in her life; equally moving were her comments on creative connections between Native Son and Black Boy and the relevance of these books to our concerns for the present state of childhood and youth.

The Natchez Literary Celebration is Mississippi’s most significant annual conference devoted to literature, history, and culture. Black and white and spread all over Natchez, this year’s festival paid generous tribute to the importance of the city’s most famous native son. Beyond celebration and tribute, of course, is the real value of such a festival: providing an occasion for public discussion of how the work and ideas of Richard Wright and many other writers are permanent elements of our daily lives.
Rite of Passage Published

RICHARD WRIGHT
Author of Black Boy and Native Son

RITE OF PASSAGE
Afterword by Arnold Rampersad


The Richard Wright Circle is now on the e-mail network and can be contacted at the following address:

rwc@lynx.neu.edu

Errata

The Fall/Winter Issue of the Newsletter carried the following misprints:

In the article “Film Biography of Richard Wright Nearly Complete” on page 2, Jean Pouillon’s and Constance Webb Pearlstein’s names were misspelled.

In “A Literary Debate” on page 4, Graham Greene’s name was also misspelled.

Our apologies.

Letter from the Editors

As we move into the fourth year of the Richard Wright Circle, we thank all our colleagues for supporting our work and for making special contributions to Wright scholarship and criticism. We ask that you continue your generous support by helping us to expand the range of items for the 1995 newsletters.

Adnee Bradford’s “Principles and Methods of Teaching Wright” in this issue is the first of what we hope will be a series of brief articles on teaching in the schools and colleges. How many universities, for example, have undergraduate courses or graduate seminars devoted exclusively to Wright’s works? Have any of you designed challenging research units on the relation of Wright’s works to such categories as law, class, philosophy, race, gender, or psychology? Have your students raised any perplexing questions that ought to be shared with colleagues? We depend on you to supply such information for the newsletter. Reports on the teaching of Wright in African, Asian, and European countries are also needed.

We would like to publish very short essays from members on textual problems, on the kinds of annotations we may need to prepare to help students in the future, and on new directions for critical and theoretical exploration. Sometimes interesting material on Wright will appear in publications that are not circulated nationally. Please send citations that Kenneth Kin-namon might use as he continues to update his comprehensive Wright bibliography.

We always want to know about your work-in-progress, especially book-length studies, and essay collections or special issues of magazines you may be editing. In short, we are asking that members of the Circle become active contributors to the newsletter. Its future does depend on you.

Maryemma Graham
Jerry W. Ward, Jr.
Reed talked at length on "down cised his freedom of Reed added that certain critics are Spring, his most recent books. He also talked about Richard Wright. In characteristic style, Reed denounced those critics who focus attention on Wright’s personal life instead of his vast literary achievements. He cited the 1992 Paris “Conference on African Americans in Europe” to show how some scholars assailed Wright and his expatriate friends.

I thought that attacks on William Gardner Smith, Chester Himes and Richard Wright were outrageous. It was like some kind of Klan inquisition … Like some kind of orgy of bashing African American men writers who are dead and gone. I never knew that this would actually happen when I was writing Reckless Eyeballing [Reed’s seventh novel]. There’s a scene in that book where they dig up a corpse of this guy and read his misogynous crimes before him. Certainly it’s a bizarre turn of events.

He reiterated his point later in the interview:

It was an inquisition over there … [Various participants] were trying to find who these guys dated and all that. It was a sickening display. Their obsession is the same obsession as the Klan’s. … That black men come on to white women, that Jewish men are pimps.

Reed added that certain critics are “down on Wright because he exercised his freedom of choice.”

During one of his two lectures Reed talked at length on Japanese by Spring, his latest novel, and suggested that Wright’s haiku poetry served as an inspiration for this text. When asked to expound on his remarks, Reed added: “I’ve read some of his Japanese poetry. But it was really the idea of his turning to Asia. Asia has always been an inspiration to me . . .”

After eight novels, five collections of poetry, four collections of essays, and four plays, Reed has grown restless:

I didn’t want to write another book just in English. There is only so much that I can do with that language. So I’ve started studying other languages.

"Wright is a giant . . .
[He] should be considered one of the greatest American novelists.”
-Ishmael Reed

For Reed, Wright’s willingness to explore other cultures and art forms, and his ability to speak French, stands as one of Wright’s greatest accomplishments. “He was versatile,” Reed said. “That he studied Japanese culture toward the end of his life is amazing.” According to Reed “most writers write the same thing over and over.” Few artists follow the example of Miles Davis, who “got criticized for going through different phases.”

These comments led us to multiculturalism, which Reed discussed at length. Reed lambasted “right wing think-tanks,” whose agents have tried convincing the public “that multiculturalism is a racist movement.” He pointed to writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne to show that white Europeans had their place in a multicultural environment. Hawthorne “was writing about the contributions of Native Americans at the same time other white men were killing Indians,” Reed quipped. And as for Wright?

He is a forerunner of the multiculturalists because the thing that he was doing [turning to Africa and Asia] is very much in vogue now. He more so than anyone in his generation.

Reed identifies satire as “one of the styles and techniques I use [in my work],” but he believes that critics are too quick to label his writing as satirical. “I think my stuff is comic,” Reed stated in the interview. “If you look at the tradition of African American literature, the oral tradition, you’ll find that the comic mode is used . . .”

“Where does Wright fit in?” I asked.

“Laud Today is funny,” he replied.

After thinking for a moment, he agreed that most of Wright’s other American writings stemmed from the Depression and reflected the times. “I think it was the market,” he added. “At first [Wright] was supported by the Socialists. And you know that’s a pretty humorless crowd. Then he was supported by the Existentialists. But Wright transcends these categories . . .”

Reed’s enthusiasm prompted one final question: “So [Wright] is still that inspirational to a number of . . . writers?”

Reed responded with the highest compliment:

Oh, sure. Absolutely. Wright is a giant . . . I read American Hunger and told Ellen [Wright’s widow] that I feel the book is contemporary, that it could stand for now. Black Boy, Uncle Tom’s Children—in my opinion those are flawless books. If you want to know what it was like to be a black person in the United States, then read him . . . Wright should be considered one of the greatest American novelists.

[The complete interview is scheduled to appear in MELUS during the coming year.]
Black Boy—A Literary Cleansing?

From early April till early May of this year, Fillmore High School in Ventura County, California was rocked by an earthquake of a very ominous type. The furor is over the traditional assignment of Black Boy to ninth and tenth grade English honors students in a school and in a community which has approximately three African-American families in a population that is 75% Hispanic, with the rest a mix.

After a stormy meeting of a special student-parent-faculty conference, eleven out of 68 students were “allowed” to read another book in the school library while Black Boy was being officially taught. Also, the high school officials had to decide that Richard Wright’s autobiographical record of childhood and youth would be read by eleventh graders rather than ninth and tenth grade honors students. Meanwhile, such incendiary titles as “Book Ignites Fillmore Controversy,” “Passages in Black Boy Raise Furor in Fillmore,” and “Black Boy not Blacklisted by School Trustees” bore witness to the intensity of a “literary cleansing” crusade mainly fueled by the fundamentalist minority which has already targeted classics such as Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck, Lord of the Flies by William Golding, and others.

In the case of Richard Wright, the very forces which had attempted to stifle the writer in the child were at work again to prevent the writer from being read. During the controversy, certain columns in the Ventura County press felt the need to discuss the moral pros and cons of exposing “our youth” to Mark Twain’s Adventures of Huckleberry Finn as well as the “propriety” in this context of Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare. And Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451? One wonders...

Julia Wright
July 5, 1994

Excerpts from Julia Wright’s open letter to the students, parents, and teachers of Fillmore High School concerning the relevancy of teaching Black Boy in today’s high schools.

Portions of the letter were published in the Los Angeles Times, May 10, 1994, under the title “Out of Blind Anger, Insight.”

Dear Students, Parents of Students, and Teachers of Fillmore High School,

Thank you for being so alive and sensitive to my father’s book Black Boy that, fifty years after it was written, you are heatedly and passionately able to debate and take sides for or against its perceived message. Your ability to throw yourselves into the controversy with such gut feelings says as much about the staying power of Black Boy as about the state of the society to which this record of childhood and youth has been transmitted down through the years.

What strikes me, as Richard Wright’s daughter but also as a parent and one-time teacher, is that in today’s underprivileged communities where poor minorities are still trying to survive, where the temptation to own a gun, to deal and consume crack, to belong to an armed “gang” has solicited our youngest children—where indeed some of our youngest children have been financially integrated into the drug economy—what strikes me is that some of us should choose to be morally horrified and sanctimoniously censorious of the desperate, isolated, bravado killing of a kitten by a hungry, illiterate “black boy” in the rural South early in our century.

Our children are no longer killing kittens, they are killing themselves. But the very fact that the recent controversy...

Continued on Page 5

Ralph Ellison, a towering presence in American fiction, author of Invisible Man, Shadow and Act, and Going to the Territory, a vastly influential thinker and cultural critic of twentieth-century America, has died at the age of 80.

Ellison was born on March 1, 1914 in Oklahoma City. He was educated in that city at the Frederick Douglass School, and in 1933 he began attending Tuskegee Institute where he studied music, intent on becoming a composer. Ellison moved to New York City in 1937 to study sculpture, and it was there that he met Richard Wright. Shortly thereafter he published a book review in New Challenge, and in 1938 he joined the Federal Writers’ Project. A year later Ellison published his first short story, “Slick Gonna Learn.”

In 1942 Ellison began editing the Negro Quarterly, and three years later he received a Rosenwald Grant which enabled him to write Invisible Man, the novel that subsequently won him a National Book Award. After living in Rome for a short period, where he continued his writing, Ellison began a teaching career in the United States that culminated in his appointment in 1970 to the position of Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at New York University. In that year he was also awarded the Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the minister of cultural affairs in France, and in 1975 he was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Mr. Ellison also sat on the advisory board and was a founding member of the Richard Wright Newsletter, and his hard work and dedication to African American literature, culture, and history will be greatly missed by the members of the Richard Wright Circle, the African American community, and the literary community in general.
versy around Black Boy centers around my father’s childish killing of a stray kitten should be worthy of all our attention. For there is one significant difference between today’s apparently senseless boomeranging of our children’s murderous violence against themselves and my father’s deliberate autobiographical rendering of his own childish animal slaying: today’s violence on TV and in videos goes largely unexplained and unredeemed, whereas Richard Wright lucidly used the kitten episode to communicate his childhood despair, his unrelieved physical hunger, his rebellion against a drunken father who could communicate better through the violence of his beatings than through words. The very act of writing honestly about the acting out of one’s own murderous impulse towards a creature perceived as weaker than oneself replaces bravado with bravery, senselessness with a search for meaning, blind anger with insight. It is less the act than the account of the act that commands our fascination: the kitten who benefited from its own weakness, dependence, hunger, disobedience, and inarticulateness—all negative values which prevent survival in the racial jungle. “Cats can’t talk,” Wright wryly comments in Native Son. If, unlike the kitten, the child had been able to find the words to say his rage, he might not have killed. Instead, he would have cried out: “Daddy, I want to do to the kitten what you are doing to me. And what you are doing to me is being done to you by cruel giants out there.” The writer that child grew up to be was finally able to say these things.

Richard Wright confesses against the grain. He writes with the sincerity of rebellion about the misery of a mutilated childhood—choked like the kitten. He wanted the world to know that as a barefooted kid in the racial maze of the deep South, he was an alcoholic even before he knew what the word meant because his mother worked in white folks’ kitchens and was left to roam a violent, segregated world without a meaningful compass. An infant learns how to walk and talk; it is his birthright. But leaning the oppressor’s language with one’s mother’s milk is a double-bind in itself. Learning to walk and stretch in a spatial environment crisscrossed with color bars and segregation lines is a feat in itself. The child who was to grow up to be Richard Wright began very early to appropriate the forbidden, hidden meanings of language and the tabooed immensity of space. In the first pages of Black Boy, we see little Richard Wright lifting the veils of hypocrisy from adult words (much in the way a small child challenges the adult duplicity of servile courtiers in Andersen’s “The Emperor’s New Clothes”). In the same spirit of healthy exploration of an unhealthy environment, the child sets fire to the curtains which are placed between him and the world beyond his segregated cage: he needs to test the arbitrary bars of that cage and his growing, normal intellectual curiosity is abnormally inflamed by surrounding racial taboos, illiteracy, and bigotry. Perhaps it was in the very killing of a kitten he was initially moved to protect and feed that the writer was born in the child.

The real-life cat who benefited from the mature feelings of reparation and tenderness which surfaced during the writing of the kitten episode was called Knooby and was loved so dearly that he was taken into exile almost as a member of the family: “We have a cat in the kennel. We have a car in the hold. How rich we are…” [Idem, July 30, 1947]

There is something powerfully healing in the act of taking a live cat out of the racial hell where the writer, as a child, was driven to kill one. I would sincerely wish, whenever Black Boy is taught, for the whole story of Richard Wright’s love for cats to be told. The pain of that early animal sacrifice is charted in writings prior and contemporary to Black Boy. I believe we owe the presence of a white cat (“two green burning pools—pools of accusation and guilt—stared at him”) as the sole mute witness of Bigger’s crime, less to the influence of Edgar Allen Poe than to the traumatic memory of the kitten the author killed as a child. And in “The Horror and the Glory”—the second part of the newly restored edition of Black Boy—amongst the most haunting passages is one evoking the dog victims of animal experiments as they were then practiced in one of Chicago’s main hospitals: “Now and then a devocalized dog lifted his nose to the ceiling and howled. . . . Perhaps there was [in Brand and Cooke, the writer’s co-workers at the hospital] a vague psyche pain stemming from their chronically frustrating way of life, a pain whose cause they did not know: and, like those devocalized dogs, they would whirl and snap at the air when their pain struck them” (Black Boy, HarperCollins, 1993, p. 363).

I do know for a fact, for having spoken to and interviewed many young students of Black Boy on both sides of the Atlantic, that children usually heave a sigh of relief when they read Black Boy: they freely identify (if they are in touch with their own childhood feelings) with my father’s irresistible childish testing of the ways of the world. “I enjoyed Black Boy because the kid is in it is naughty.” How many times have I heard this admission—and each time I smile. Only children know how violent and rebellious they are within, how criminal they are in their nightmares, how much they have to repress their “naughtiness” under adult and school pressure. That is also, perhaps, the reason they love the world of fairy tales, as my father did. An imaginary world peopled with giants, witches, cauldrons, and chopped off dancing-
shoes mirrors the violence and the cruelty in may of our children’s fantasies. And the fascination for fairy tales is generally encouraged because children need to find meaningful, unchildish mirrors of their own untamed wildness in order to work through its excesses. Most fairy tales and books like Huckleberry Finn and Black Boy will perennially fulfill such a need. Not so long ago, I heard that certain moral rearmament lobbies even had their doubts about “Little Red Riding Hood.” Too violent, they claim. I would answer: let “Little Red Riding Hood” and Black Boy live long and vividly in the imagination of children grown spiritually thin and undernourished on a meager diet of sitcoms, Rambo, Nintendo, child-sized guns, and the internalized hopelessness identified with so many of their parents. One of the main problems of our youth today is still pent-up and misdirected rage. I therefore, believe that the more educational space our children can be given to ponder and discuss the messages of writers who were able to X-ray their own violence, the less these children will act out their rage in kitten-like mindlessness.

Sincerely Yours,

Julia Wright

Principles and Methods of Teaching Wright in Multicultural Contexts

by Adene M. Bradford

Winston-Salem State University

“Principles and Methods of Teaching Wright in Multicultural Contexts” was the topic of my presentation on Richard Wright at the 1994 CLA Convention, held in Durham, North Carolina. The substance of the paper was based upon research conducted with high school English teachers and students of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

By way of questionnaire, one for teachers and one for students, I sought to achieve the following: (1) determine the extent to which English teachers teach and by inference encourage the study of works by Wright, (2) identify specific works most often taught, (3) examine the pedagogical implications of including literature by Wright as an integral component of a multicultural curriculum, and (4) describe the attitude of students as a result of their involvement with Wright and works by him.

Eleven English teachers and one media coordinator, representing seven schools, 88% of the high schools in the system, participated. Teachers in turn selected classes and/or individual stu-
Abstracts from Natchez Literary Celebration
June 3, 1994

“Cinematic Ironies: Native Son as Literature and Film”

Richard Wright’s Native Son, one of the most important American novels of the twentieth century, may also be understood as a hypertextual phenomenon. The “native son” of Wright’s title is embodied or represented in six versions: the 1940 and 1991 editions of the novel, the 1941 and 1968 dramatic versions, and the 1951 and 1987 films. These versions, as presentations and misrepresentations of Wright’s intentions, challenge us to engage Wright’s ideas. The films invite us to speculate on cinematic ironies, the interpretations that occur in the process of transforming literature into film and that may direct us to motives that deepen or distort what Wright might have intended. Special interpretive problems are occasioned by Wright’s acting the role of Bigger Thomas in the 1951 film (imposition of the autobiographical) and by the audio-visual miscues in the 1987 film. Our effort to understand Native Son becomes richly ironic as the cinema on screen intersects with the cinema in our minds.

Jerry W. Ward, Jr.
Tougaloo College

From Page 6

for them “seeing is believing.” Students and teachers alike praise Wright’s candor; he is an author “who tells it like it is, without sugarcoating the truth.” In the same vein, one student wrote that Wright “does not makeup his stories because they are real.” Students also appreciate the historical vision they gleaned of black life in the early 1900’s, the problems black youth faced decades ago that have some connections to those they face today.

A teacher respondent, intrigued by the “Bigger Thomas Complex,” views it as an opportunity to have students study in-depth the character himself—what he does or does not have in common with contemporary youth. Above all this teacher adds, “Bigger is depicted in such a way that all of us are made to feel that we need to reach out to him.” A student, reaching out to the protagonist in some way, praises him for his willingness to work to keep his family together. Native Son was the topic of a research paper.

While most teachers surveyed enthusiastically embrace the idea of teaching Wright and expressed a desire to receive assistance in order to pursue this goal, at least two of them perceive Native Son to be a work too difficult and too lengthy to expect a certain mastery on the part of students they currently teach.

Students, citing areas problematic to their study of Wright, ranked his use of the dialect among their most salient concern. One teacher describes the attitude of the students regarding the dialect “exhausting.” Other students, not necessarily bothered by the language, complained about the literature in general, accusing the author of being unrealistic, exaggerating the truth. They were in the minority, however.

Despite such mixed reviews as those just mentioned, students overwhelmingly expressed an interest in further study of Wright’s works. Moreover, they desire to continue their study of Wright in their English classrooms as opposed to doing so on their own. Their teachers, by the same token, interested in becoming better prepared to teach the literary tradition of Wright, requested workshops and bibliographies, critical reviews, small group discussions, and a course in African-American Literature to achieve this goal, this enabling their students to delve more confidently into the body of literature Richard Wright gave to the world.

“An Overview of Two Film Versions of the Famous Novel Native Son”

There are significant differences between the two film versions of Native Son and in their faithfulness to the original. Such differences serve as a basis for helping us understand how social attitudes and aesthetic sensibilities change over a period of time. A movie made in 1951 for theatrical release presupposes an audience quite different from that of a 1987 movie made for television. Neither film, of course, can command the same public which received Richard Wright’s original novel in 1940. These differences in medium, audience, and date reveal to us some important aspects of the relationships between the arts and society.

Charles G. Vahlkamp
Centre College

Richard Wright Touring Theatre Heads Out This Fall

The Richard Wright Touring Theatre takes its first adaptation of a Richard Wright novel, “The Man Who Lived Underground,” on tour this September with an engagement in Cleveland. Founded by Donald Marshall and Nelson E. Harrison, the Wright Touring Theatre produced “The Man Who Lived Underground” last year for Pittsburgh’s City Theatre (see Richard Wright Newsletter, Spring/Summer 1993). Following that success, Marshall and Harrison have plans to adapt the remaining stories from Wright’s Eight Men and to take them on tour around the country. An adaptation of “The Man of All Works” has already been completed and will be the next piece produced.

Anyone considering sponsoring a production of the Richard Wright Touring Theatre in a college, community, and/or school district, or for more information, please contact

Richard Wright Touring Theatre
c/o Dr. Nelson E. Harrison
P.O. Box 477
Pittsburgh, PA 15230-0477
Fax/phone (412) 441-4545
**Abstracts from College Language Association Convention April 14, 1994**

**“Haunted by Innocence: The Debate with Dostoevsky in Wright’s ‘Other’ Novel, The Outsider”**

The pervasive influence and great popularity of Wright’s *Native Son* have tended to overshadow his later novel *The Outsider*, in which he successfully resolves the earlier novel’s ideological conflicts and achieves a sophisticated exploration of philosophical ideas and a narrative of sustained tension. Close examination of the novel reveals that it is heavily influenced by *Crime and Punishment*. Wright models several aspects of his novel on Dostoevsky’s presumably to indicate his debt but also to call attention to his variations on his mentor’s theme. He extends Dostoevsky’s analysis of the criminal haunted by guilt. Wright’s protagonist is the “ethical criminal,” who must assert ultimate self-will to achieve his identity and freedom but who finds himself stranded in a private world without any shared values or the possibility of love. The originality and force of Wright’s approach lie in his depiction of the murderer who never discovers any limit to his “right” to any action but who nonetheless becomes horrified not at his guilt but at his very innocence.

Michael F. Lynch
Kent State University-Trumbull

**“Literary Art and Marxist Doctrine: Sustained Tensions in Uncle Tom’s Children”**

Richard Wright’s first major publication, *Uncle Tom’s Children*, presents a highly conflicted text, one attempting to wed the practical application of Marxist doctrine with the expansive possibilities of literary art. First reading the collection for its adherence to John Reed Club doctrine, this paper examined the ways in which the collection advances and celebrates Marxist ideology. Yet, attending to thematic and symbolic tensions, this paper also examines the ways in which Wright’s pursuit of literary art destabilizes and ultimately dismantles the overt vision of Marxist dialectics. While the collection seeks to celebrate Communism through a smooth progression toward salvation in party ideology, this collection unwillingly signifies on dogma (both naturalistic and Marxist), and seeks to privilege an artistic vision free of limitations. Finally this ongoing tension between positivist progression and artistic complexity anticipates Wright’s formal break with the Communist Party and his self-conscious pursuit of artistic autonomy.

Mark A. Sanders
Emory University

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**Publication Notice**


This collection of Fisher’s letters includes five she wrote in 1944 to Richard Wright regarding the Book-of-the-Month-Club edition of *Black Boy* and letters to Harry Scherman and J.W. Lane regarding Wright’s work.
Calls for Papers

The Mississippi Quarterly is planning to publish its second special issue on Richard Wright, focusing on “International perspectives on Richard Wright.”

The Issue will emphasize analyses of Wright’s life, work, international reputation, and trans-cultural significance, as viewed from outside the United States. The editors, Jack B. Moore (University of South Florida) and Michel Fabre (University of Paris III) seek ideas and contributions particularly from writers and scholars who ordinarily reside outside the United States, who are citizens of other countries.

Please send enquiries, ideas, abstracts, or submissions to:

Jack Moore
English Department
Cooper Hall
University of South Florida
Tampa, Fl 33620
USA
Fax 813-974-2270

Date for final submissions has not yet been determined.

Announcement: Critical Essays on Native Son

Kenneth Kinnamon invites submissions of previously unpublished essays on Native Son for the volume, Critical Essays on Native Son, that he is editing for the Critical Essays on American Literature series, which now numbers over a hundred volumes with James Nagel as General Editor. The purpose of this series is to make available the most important reprinted criticism on a given subject together with three or four original articles. The volume editor provides an extensive introduction surveying scholarship on the subject. Submissions should follow the Chicago Manual of Style, with endnotes but without bibliography.

Send submissions to:

Kenneth Kinnamon
University of Arkansas
Department of English
333 Kimpel Hall
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Deadline for submitting essays is July 1, 1995.

Renewal Notice

As you receive this issue of the Richard Wright Newsletter, we want to remind you that it is time to renew your membership in the Richard Wright Circle. The yearly $10 membership fee runs for one calendar year and entitles you to two issues of the Newsletter: spring/summer and fall/winter. In order to receive the next issue, you need to fill out and send us the form on the back page (to insure that we have your latest address) along with a $10 check or money order. Please remember that your membership dues still constitute the primary funding for the Circle and Newsletter; without them, the Circle cannot continue to function or to publish the Newsletter. Your cooperation in helping us to maintain the Circle and Newsletter is greatly appreciated.
Richard Wright Circle Membership

For a one year membership to the Richard Wright Circle, send the information below and a $10 check or money order to Maryemma Graham, Northeastern University, 406 Holmes Hall, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 373-4549; Fax (617) 373-2509; E-mail rwc@lynx.neu.edu

NAME ____________________________________________________________

ADDRESS _________________________________________________________

TELEPHONE (W) ____________________________ (H) ___________________

AREA OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN WRIGHT STUDIES ___________________

OTHER SCHOLARLY AREAS ____________________________________________

LATEST PUBLICATION(S) ____________________________________________