A Richard Wright Bibliography Supplement

by
Keneth Kinnamon

©
K.K.

No portion of this text may be reproduced in any manner without permission from the author.
In three ways the year 1985 was especially noteworthy in Wright studies. First, the international symposium on "Mississippi's Native Son" at the University of Mississippi brought together scholars and friends of Wright from around the world. Under Maryemma Graham's coordination this historic event was a resounding success. The New York Times gave it front-page coverage on 23 November (see item 120 below). Second, the dean of Wright scholarship, Michel Fabre, brought out a new book, The World of Richard Wright. In addition to two new and twelve previously published essays, this indispensable volume reprints Wright's early story "Superstition" and his published poems. As if this work were not enough, Fabre also published in 1985 an essay on Wright's poetry and the book La Rive noire, which contains a substantial chapter on Wright's response to Paris and his intellectual interests during his expatriation. Finally, 1985 was extraordinary for the quantity and quality of essays on Black Boy. Leading the list is Janice Thaddeus's well-researched, ground-breaking article, but Carla Cappetti, Yoshinobu Hakutani, John O. Hodges, and Herbert Liebowitz also contributed strong pieces. Such work constituted a fitting commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the publication of one of the greatest of American autobiographies.

1985


2. Adams, Timothy Dow. "I Do Believe Him Though I Know He Lies: Lying as Genre and Metaphor in Richard Wright's Black Boy." Prose Studies, 8 (September), 172-187. Argues that although W often
departs from autobiographical fact. BB is convincing in its narrative truth. It is a collective autobiography of black boys, in which "Wright creates a version of himself whose metaphor for survival and for sustenance is falsehood" (pp. 185-186).

Mentions briefly the play NS (p. 437).

Mentions the cover photograph of W.

Lists fifty-one items s.v. WRIGHT R, not all on W.

Lists the international symposium on W at the University of Mississippi. A photograph of W appears on the cover of this issue.

Announces both the proclamation and the international symposium on W.

Lists translations of AH into German, BB into French and Italian, LT into French, Q into French, and NS into Polish.


Announcement of the University of Mississippi conference, 21-23 November 1985.

Quotes from Governor Bill Allain's proclamation.

Full-page publisher's notice. Includes a photograph of W.

Poem mentioning W briefly.

Comments on W's departure from Mississippi and quotes from BB.

In a section on dialogue the authors quote and comment on a passage from BB (p. 396). Reprinted: 1991


Partial reprint of 1980.36.


Partial reprint of 1972.23.

18. _____, "Critical Change and Blues Continuity: An Essay on the Criticism of Larry Neal." Callaloo, 8 (Winter), 70-84.

Mentions Neal's essay on W and W's "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (p. 74).

Reprinted: 1988


Mentions briefly Ellison's "Richard Wright's Blues" (p. 40).


Poem mentioning W briefly.


Mentions briefly W and NS (pp. 866, 871).

Reprinted: 1986


Compares Petry and W on several points, concluding that she "moves beyond [his] naturalistic vision" (p. 115).


Reprint of 1972.


Mentions W briefly (p. 683).


Lists four articles on W (p. 104).


Comments on W's help in getting Allen published and introducing him to the negritude poets (p. 10).

Mentions W briefly.


Contains two paragraphs on the game of "playing white" in NS (pp. 247-248).


Mentions W's introduction to Algren's Never Come Morning and lists Algren's essays and reviews concerning W.


Reprint of 1976.43.


Mentions "the pace and drama of Richard Wright."


Lists "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" in two anthologies.


Contains a paragraph on the entrapment and journey motifs in W (pp. 61-62).


Mentions briefly W, his naturalism, his use by Alice Walker, and his relation to "a modernist sensibility."


Review commenting on Trudier Harris's treatment of "Big Boy Leaves Home." Mentions also NS.

37. Caldeira, Maria Isabel. "Jean Toomer's Cane: The Anxiety of the Modern Artist." Callaloo, 8 (Fall), 544-550.

Mentions W briefly (p. 549).


Analyzes BB and AH in relation to
The theme of W's autobiography is the conflict between "environment" (family, church, school, white racism, the Communist Party) and "personality." In developing this theme, W found useful the sociological "conceptualization of two important points of view: the informant and the participant-observer" (p. 36). Thus W was able to understand and render the sociology of his own existence.

Lists the 1984 article by Judith G. Brazinsky (p. 238).

Mentions W briefly (p. 132).

Mentions W briefly (p. 655).

42. [Childrey, Frank W., Jr.]. "Bibliographic Projects at the Center." The Southern Register: The Newsletter of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, 3 (Spring/Summer), 9.
Mentions briefly Michel Fabre's The World of Richard Wright.

Reports that BB will be one of the books given to participants.

Mentions W as one of the five writers "who established the state's literary reputation."

Describes the symposium at the University of Mississippi with comments on most of the papers and events.

Discusses Harper's treatment of W in Debridement and Images of Kin (pp. 162, 164).

Mentions briefly The Wright Poems (p. 286).

Mentions briefly the attack of Rep. Joseph Starnes of the Dies Committee on W (p. 61).

Thadious M. Davis. Detroit: Gale, pp. 257-265. 
Mentions briefly W as an influence on Plumpp (p. 258).

Review mentioning W briefly.

Mentions briefly BB (p. xxxiii).

Mentions W briefly.

Mentions W briefly.

Biographical entry mentioning NS and Q.

Mentions briefly W as autobiographer.


Discusses W's favorable opinion of Paris, his interest in existentialism and his relation to Sartre and de Beauvoir, and his connections with African intellectuals in Paris.

Traces W's poetic impulse throughout his career: the agit-prop verse of the thirties (mentioned briefly), the prose-poetry of TMBV and BB, the "Celebrations" project, and the haiku at the end of his life. Emphasizes W's nature mysticism, spiritual quality, and symbolic imagination, noting parallels with blues, spirituals, Baudelaire, Whitman, and the Bible.

Contains reprints of 1970.54, 124, 282; 1971.103, 110, 111; 1973.132; 1975.71; 1977.122; 1978.95; 1980.84, 87; two previously unpublished essays, "Wright's South" and "Wright, Negritude, and African Writing"; W's early story "Superstition"; and W's published poetry. The "Introduction" (pp. 3-11) reviews the essays included within the framework of W's life and career.

60. ______. "Wright, Negritude and

Discusses W's relationship to Présence Africaine, Alioune Diop, Peter Abrahams, George Padmore, the First and Second Congress of Negro Artists and Writers, the Société Africaine de Culture, the American Society of African Culture, and various African writers. W served as an intermediary between Africans and African Americans. He supported the political struggle against colonialism but showed little interest in African literature. Includes comments on BB, BP, and WML.


Partial reprint of 1978.93.


Examines W's generally negative attitude toward his native region. Formed by the South, his feelings were at times ambivalent, but the pain of racism overcame rural pleasures. Fabre treats BB, TMBV, LD, and shorter works, as well as W's opinion of Faulkner.


Partial reprint of 1980.94.

64. Ferris, William. "Director's Column." *The Southern Register*, 4 (Fall), 2.

Mentions the W symposium at the University of Mississippi and Michel Fabre's *The World of Richard Wright*.


Argues that "Wright was influenced by O'Neill in his creation of Bigger Thomas and Mary Dalton, in his attacks on religion and leftist political movements, and perhaps even in certain surrealist elements in the setting of Native Son." Fleming adduces many details to support the connection while admitting that Wright also used other sources, literary and social.


Review mentioning Lewis A. Lawson's treatment of Q.


Reprint of 1972.

46 (December), 374-375.
Review of *Afro-American Fiction Writers After 1955* noting the absence of W from this volume.

Comments on W's work on the Writers' Project (p. 71) and on Brown's review of NS (p. 109). Mentions W elsewhere.
Reprinted: 1994

Mentions W briefly (p. 24).

Analyzes the sociolinguistics of "The Man Who Lived Underground," with comparisons to NS and Q. While underground, Fred Daniels is "empowered ... through metalinguistic struggle," but he "dies because he does not possess a voice with which to secure his existence in the face of aboveground oppression."

Analyzes Bigger's conflicting selves to demonstrate that "a major achievement of NS consists of showing the confusion which oppression can foster in its victims, a confusion in which the various alternatives for remedy tend to cancel each other out" (p. 107).

Contains numerous comments on W and NS in relation to such novelists as George Wylie Henderson, George Washington Lee, Waters Turpin, William Attaway, and Saunders Redding.

Discusses W's fictionalization of autobiography in BB (pp. 300-301).

Argues that BB is a sociological autobiography, not an autobiographical novel. W is spokesman and representative in the work of "the voiceless Negro boys," oppressed by white racism. In opposition to such a society, W turned inward to create a self, and "in so doing he discovered the new world" (p. 75).

Lists NS and UTC.


89. Hodges, John O. "An Apprenticeship to Life and Art: Narrative Technique in Wright's *Black Boy*." *CLA Journal*, 28 (June), 415-433. Analyzes BB as a *bildungsroman*. In addition to the genre's usual theme of the development of self-consciousness, W's book has the task of exposing Southern racism in all its brutality.

90. Hogue, W. Lawrence. "History, the Feminist Discourse, and Alice Walker's *The Third Life of George Copeland*." *MELUS*, 12 (Summer), 45-62. Compares briefly the notion of psychological liberation through violence in Walker's novel and NS (pp. 52-53).


98. Jařab, Josef. "Black Aesthetic: A Cultural or Political Concept?" Callaloo, 8 (Fall), 587-593. Mentions BB briefly (p. 588).


102. Kiernan, Maureen Brigid. "Novelists/Scenarists: Four Case Studies of Writers Adapting Their Own Fiction to Film." Dissertation Abstracts International, 45 (May), 3350A.
Abstracts a 1984 University of Illinois dissertation. NS is one of the four.

103. Klotman, Phyllis R. "'Tearing a Hole in History': Lynching as Theme and Motif." Black American Literature Forum, 19 (Summer), 55-63.
Contains three paragraphs recounting "Big Boy Leaves Home."

Quotes and comments on nineteen of W's haiku, explains their relation to his illness, notes his reading of R. H. Blyth's Haiku, and discusses briefly other American writers of haiku.


Review article on books on Faulkner mentioning W several times and quoting Faulkner on W (p. 90).

107. [Levine, Stuart]. "Obnafrucebpitroas." American Studies, 26 (Spring), 47-49.
Mentions briefly A. Robert Lee's pamphlet Black American Fiction Since Richard Wright.

Review commenting on the work's treatment of W.

Mentions W as an influence on Cruz (p. 76).

Places BB in the context of black autobiography. Its "central motif ... is hunger" (p. 72), for words as well as food. Liebowitz analyzes W's style in numerous passages, finding it "intuitive, lyrical, morose, tender, haughty, tormented, didactic," but always artful. Also considers W's treatment of family and society in BB.
Reprinted in revised form: 1989

Study questions to accompany "The Man Who Killed a Shadow."

College Press, pp. 92-104.

After background information on race relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the authors quote extensively from BB and provide numerous study exercises.

113. Logan, Maureen F. "Star-Crossed Platonic Lovers, or Bowdler Redux." English Journal, 74 (January), 53-55.

Mentions BB briefly.


Lists nine items on W and cross-references to eighteen other items dealing partially with W.


Paragraph on the story with suggested questions and a reference to Brignano (1970.68).


Mentions W briefly.


Comparing Cross Damon to Frederick Douglass, Dr. Miller in The Marrow of Tradition, and the protagonist of Invisible Man, Maduka studies "his confrontation with the power structure ... in three parts: first, an examination of his socio-political consciousness; second, a study of the various strategies deployed by him in confronting the system; third, the significance of his political activism" (p. 61).


Mentions briefly AH (p. 167).


Favorable review of Yoshinobu Hakutani's Critical Essays on Richard Wright and Charles T. Davis and Michel Fabre's Richard Wright: A Primary Bibliography.


Reports on the international symposium on W at the University of Mississippi, emphasizing the state's background of racism and recent changes. Includes statements on W by Ralph Ellison, Irving Howe, and others.


Madhubuti acknowledges W's great effect on him, mentioning BB, NS, O, and BP (p. 111).

122. [Miller, Wayne Charles]. "Editor's Column." MELUS, 12 (Summer), 1-5.

Mentions W briefly (p. 1).

123. Millican, Arthenia J. Bates. "Kalamu ya Salaam (Valery Ferdinand III)," in Afro-American Writers

Notes that Salaam won the 1971 Richard Wright Award for literary criticism given by Black World (p. 239).


Mentions Giovanni's reading of BB when she was a seventh grader (p. 136).


Mentions Michel Fabre's collection of essays on W.


Seven study questions on "The Man Who Was Almost a Man."


Biographical headnote.


Four topics concerning "The Man Who Was Almost a Man."


Relates W's story to Plato's parable in The Republic. Nash emphasizes W's anti-Communism and individualism. Provides a full plot summary.


Mentions W briefly (pp. 128).


Includes discussion of W relating BB, NS, "The Man Who Lived Underground," and Q to the traditions of the picaresque tale and the slave narrative. Nichols makes large claims for Q.


Contains a brief entry on W mentioning UTC and BB. Also mentions W s.v. Green, Paul Elliot.


Mentions W briefly (p. 115).


Mentions W briefly (p. 16).

135. Olney, James. "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," in

Uses W's influence on Ellison as a point of departure for a study of Hemingway's deeper influence, concluding that Invisible Man is "much more like Hemingway's Jake and Nick than like Bigger Thomas."


Contains an entry on W.


Lists NS and BB (pp. 552, 553).


Analyzes drafts of an interview statement by W about BB to show the generative function of repetition and metaphor. In the statement, reproduced as an appendix, W acknowledges the importance of his reading of The House of the Dead, Confessions of a Young Man, The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, and Sons and Lovers in helping him to understand his Southern experience.

Reprinted: 1991


Briefly contrasts BB and Hurston's Dust Tracks on a Road (p. 111).

141. ____. "The Literary Blues Tradition." Callaloo, 8 (Spring-Summer), 498-500.


Calls W Deveaux's "aesthetic grandfather" (p. 92).


Includes comparison of Miller's views to those W expresses in How "Bigger" Was Born, p. 235.

145. Ro, Sigmund. "'Desecrators' and 'Necromancers': Black American Writers and Critics in the Nineteen-Sixties and the Third World Perspective." Callaloo, 8 (Fall), 563-576.

Comments briefly on NS.

146. ____. "Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed., Black Literature and Literary Theory." American Studies in
Scandinavia, 17, 81-84.
Mentions W briefly.

Reprints an excerpt from BB with a brief headnote and four study questions.

Neal mentions W briefly (pp. 17, 22).

Lists twelve items on W with cross-references to seven others.

Includes a discussion of Bigger Thomas. He is not responsible for the social conditions driving him to crime, but he is responsible for his criminal acts (pp. 20-22).


Includes a list of W's books from 1954.

Mentions briefly W and Bigger Thomas (pp. 216, 220).

154. Scruggs, Charles W. "Finding Out About This Mencken: The Impact of A Book of Prefaces on Richard Wright." Menckeniana, 95 (Fall), 1-11.
Comprehensive treatment of the W-Mencken relationship, showing that the affinity was even stronger than that of the Harlem Renaissance writers. W responded to Mencken’s love of books, his satire on an anti-intellectual culture, his sense of wonder at the adventure of life, and his tragic view. Scruggs analyzes NS from a Menkenian perspective.

Quotes from BB in an endnote (p. 34).

Quotes from BB to illustrate black anti-Semitism.

Discusses W's use of Poe's "The Black Cat" as a source for NS. Considers also W's use of the color white.
Includes publication data on the two works translated into Norwegian (NS and BB), a survey of reviews, and a summary of four University of Oslo theses.

Mentions W briefly.

Mentions Bigger Thomas and NS.


Review noting Lawson's reprinted essay on Q.

Comments on Burgum and Margolies on W's short stories (p. 35) and lists a few others in a bibliography (p. 53).

Applies the ideas of "Blueprint for Negro Writing" to black writing after W, finding the essay prophetic and perspicacious (except for overlooking womanist literature). Also praises NS.

The concluding pages of BB seem to define the experiences narrated to that point, changing the work from an "open" autobiography, in which the writer attempts to speak the painful truth, to a "defined" autobiography, in which the writer resolves tensions and provides a teleological structure. AH, however, continues in an "open" mode. The explanation, as revealed in unpublished papers, is that the hopeful conclusion of BB was added so that the work would be selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club. Thaddeus also analyzes the relation of the epigraphs of W's autobiography (BB and AH) to its imagery.

Davis discusses his friendship with W, their association in the League of American Writers, his introduction of photography to W, and his reading galley proof of NS, "part of which was left out by the publisher as too pornographic for that era" (p.

168. A MELUS Interview: Etheridge Knight. MELUS, 12 (Summer), 7-23. Knight comments on the lack of a sense of place in W, referring to his life and to Q (p. 15).

169. Traylor, Eleanor W. "'And the Resurrection, Let It Be Complete': The Achievement of Larry Neal (A Biobibliography of a Critical Imagination)." Callaloo, 8 (Winter), 36-69. Mentions W briefly (pp. 38, 53, 56, 58, 59).


172. Walls, Doyle W. "The Clue Undetected in Richard Wright's Native Son." American Literature, 57 (March), 125-128. In the particular sense, whites in the novel fail to detect the Black English verb form in Bigger's ransom note ("Do what this letter say."). In a general sense, they fail to recognize his humanity.


Black Women's Fiction; Sigmund Ro.
Rage and Celebration; Essays on
Contemporary Afro-American Writing;
William Luis, ed. Voices from Under:
Black Narrative in Latin America and
the Caribbean; Joe Weixlmann and
Chester J. Fontenot, eds. Studies in
Black American Literature. Volume I:
Black American Prose Theory." Modern
Fiction Studies, 31 (Summer), 420-
424.

Review mentioning Fabre's
biography of W and Sekora and
Baker's article on Douglass and W.

180. ______. "The Old South, 1815-
1840," in The History of Southern
Literature. Ed. Louis D. Rubin, Jr.,
Blyden Jackson, Rayburn S. Moore,
Lewis P. Simpson, and Thomas Daniel
Young. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State
University Press, pp. 81-91.
Mentions W briefly (p. 91).

181. Westling, Louise. Sacred Groves
and Ravaged Gardens: The Fiction of
Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, and
Flannery O'Connor. Athens: The
University of Georgia Press, pp. 38-
39.
Mentions briefly BB.

182. White, John. "William L. Van
Deburg, Slavery and Race in American
Popular Culture." Journal of
American Studies, 19 (April), 138-
139.
Review mentioning W briefly.

183. Williams, John. "Afro-American
Literature in the 20th Century: The
Achievement of Intimacy. Michael G.
Cooke." The Black Scholar, 16
(July/August), 66-67.
Review mentioning W briefly.

184. Winterowd, W. Ross and Patricia
Y. Murray. "Model: Personal Essay-
Commentary," in their English:
Writing and Skills. Teacher's
edition. San Diego: Coronado
Publishers, p. 28.
Quotes a paragraph from the
hospital episode of AH with a
prefatory note and two study
questions.