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Announcements and Comments

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Announcements and Comments

BLACK STUDIES as a field of scholarship has matured very rapidly. The last dozen years have seen a flowering of important literary, historical, and sociological studies that have begun to fill the unsuspected and sometimes purposeful gaps in our knowledge of the experiences of black people in Africa, the Caribbean, and North and South America. While it has not always brought about social change in the ways that some hoped it might, it has provided an academic context for that change. This new scholarship has stimulated a major revision of textbooks, curricula, and academic disciplines. Afro-American and Caribbean Studies programs have joined African Studies in recording the active participation and contributions of black people. The record is rich and complex, and the study has figuratively just begun.

The present special issue of the *Colby Library Quarterly* was conceived as a means of illustrating that richness and variety. The essays represent a broad international perspective and include a translation of an Italian critic's study of black American prose, a study of a French West Indian writer's relationship to the Harlem Renaissance, a study of the effect of politics on the development of literary form in black Africa, an historical treatment of the black experience in colonial North America, and two studies of writings about African women. Hopefully, these essays will help open new perspectives into the intricacies of cross-cultural expression and expand the audience for this work.

The illustrations for this issue are all from works by black artists. Like the articles, these works of art illustrate something of the diversity of the black cultural milieu. The originals are all in the permanent collection of the Colby Museum of Art. The pictures on the front cover are of a wooden Bambara mask, which was made in West Africa in the nineteenth century. It is the gift of Mrs. Gertrude A. Mellon. The picture on the back cover is of a street in Paris. It is from a pastel by Henry O. Tanner (1859-1937), and is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Coburn Smith (Colby '24). The frontispiece is entitled "Protest Rally," and is from a gouache by Jacob Lawrence (b. 1917). It is a museum purchase from a grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust (D.F.A. Colby '76).

PATRICK BRANCACCIO
Guest Editor

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

PATRICK BRANCACCIO, the guest editor of this issue, is Professor of English and the new chairman of the English Department at Colby College. He is a graduate of Brooklyn College, with an M.A. from Ohio State and Ph.D. from Rutgers. He has been Chairman of the Black Studies Committee and Program at Colby from 1970 to the present. In 1974-1975 he was a Fulbright Senior Lecturer in the Malagasy Republic. He has published poems in various journals, including the *AAUP Bulletin*; he has published a variety of articles on American literature; and he has published an article in *Ba-Shiru* entitled "The Origins of Rhodesia: Myth as History and Fiction in the Work of Stanlake Samkange."

PIERO BOITANI teaches at the University of Perugia, in Italy. He is a graduate of Wittenberg University, Ohio. He holds a Dott. Lett. from the University of Rome, and Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. He has taught at Cambridge and at the University of Pescara, as well as at Perugia. In 1979 he has been a Visiting Fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge. He is the author of numerous articles, of *Prosatori Negri Americani del Novecento* (Roma, 1973), of *Chaucer and Boccaccio* (Oxford, 1977), and of *La Narrativa del Medioevo Inglese* (Bari, 1979).

CHIDI IKONNE is Assistant Professor and Acting Chairman of the Afro-American Studies Department at Harvard University. He has a B.A. from the University of Nigeria at Ibadan, and M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He has published articles on various aspects of black literature, and has completed a book on *Early Negro Literature, 1903-1926*.

BERNTH LINDFORS is Professor of African and English Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. His Ph.D. is from the University of Oklahoma. He is editor of the journal, *Research in African Literatures*, and compiler of a bibliography of *Black African Literature in English* (Gale). He is at work on studies of East African literature, and of South African performing groups in London in the nineteenth century. He has worked in Nairobi on a Social Science Research Council Grant. He is president of the African Literature Association.

RHETT S. JONES is Associate Professor of History and Afro-American Studies at Brown University. He has a B.A. from the University of Illinois, M.A. in Sociology from the University of Connecticut, and M.A. and Ph.D. from Brown. He has published in such journals as the *Third World Review*, *Studies in Black Literature*, *Association of Black Anthropologists' Newsletter*, and *Pan American Studies*. He is presently at work on a study of the ecological basis of slavery.

LINDA SUSAN BEARD is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame. She has a Ph.D. from Cornell. She has published reviews on Doris Lessing in *Research in African Literatures* and

in *African Book Publishers' Record*. Her dissertation is on Doris Lessing. She is at work, as co-editor, on an anthology of essays about African women writers, and on a bibliography of literature by African women writers.

ANDREA BENTON RUSHING is Assistant Professor of Black Studies and English at Amherst College. She has taught previously at Colby, at Harvard, at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and at Simmons. She is a graduate of Queens College, has an M.A. from Simmons, and is a candidate for the Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her dissertation is entitled *A Comparative Study of Women Protagonists in Anglophone African and African-American Fiction, 1965-1975*. She has published numerous articles and reviews about black literature, and is at work on a collection of short stories.

JHS

THE COLBY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES have renewed their active support of the Colby Library's Special Collections. At a June meeting, the Associates elected R. Mark Benbow, Roberts Professor of English, as president. Harold Pestana, Associate Professor of Geology, was named vice-president. The book selection committee is composed of Bertrand W. Hayward '33; Alfred King Chapman, Roberts Professor of English, Emeritus; Irving D. Suss, Professor of English; Wayne L. Smith, Associate Professor of Chemistry; and James M. Gillespie, Professor of Psychology. J. Fraser Cocks III, Curator of Special Collections, was chosen secretary-treasurer. The Associates will seek to extend the various collections of rare books through the income from dues.

At the June meeting, it was decided to raise dues to a minimum of \$10 per year. In order to make all of this money directly available to the Library Special Collections, it was decided that these dues would no longer include a subscription to the *Colby Library Quarterly*. The *Quarterly* will continue its interest in authors well-represented in the Special Collections, and will continue to carry announcements and comments by the Curator of Special Collections and by officers of the Library Associates. When dues notices are circulated, they will include subscription notices from the *Quarterly*. Subscriptions may be entered or renewed for an additional \$4 per year.

In October, the Associates sponsored a talk by Professor Feigon about his recent three week tour of the Peoples Republic of China. Accompanying the talk was an exhibit of photographs taken by Cathie Marqusee, one of the members of Professor Feigon's tour. The photographs will continue on display through January 31 in the Robinson Room.

J. FRASER COCKS III
Curator of Special Collections