



June 1990

## Announcements and Comments

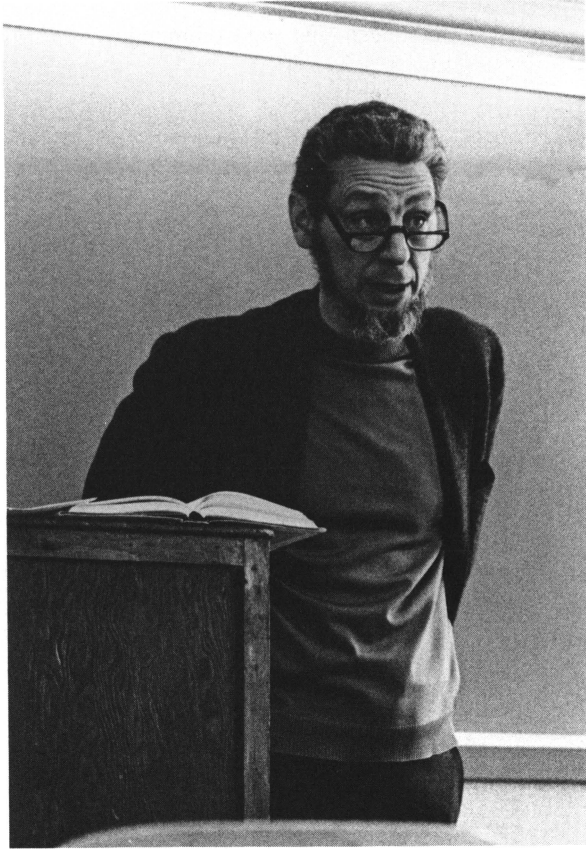
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R. Mark Benbow

## Announcements and Comments

THE CQ is planning two special issues in 1991. The March issue will focus on *Irish Woman Writers* and the editors welcome critical, sociological, or biographical articles that explore the contributions that Irish women have made to literature. The deadline is September 1, 1990; manuscripts should be sent to the guest editor, Marilyn Throne, English Department, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056. The December issue will be devoted to *Contemporary Irish Drama* and the guest editor is Anthony Roche. The deadline is June 1, 1991. Manuscripts are welcome and should be sent to Douglas Archibald in Waterville. We are tentatively planning issues in 1992 on the *London Stage* and *Irish Poetry after Yeats*.

The cover illustrations are from the collection of the Colby Museum of Art. The front cover is *Hamlet, Act I, Scene II*, an 1834 lithograph by Eugene Delacroix (1789–1836), purchased by the museum. The back cover is *Souvenir d'Italie*, an etching by Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1796–1875). It was a gift to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. A. A. D'Amico.

On May 25, 1990, R. Mark Benbow will celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday and be honored at the annual Colby faculty-trustee dinner upon his retirement after forty years of teaching. Mark came as an Instructor in 1950 and has been an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, and, since 1969, Roberts Professor of English Literature. He has also been Chair of the Department of English and Dean of Faculty and has served, in some instances many times, on all of the important, policy-making committees of the College as it has experienced four decades of substantial change.

It is as a teacher that Mark Benbow has made his greatest impact upon generations of Colby students and upon his colleagues in the department and the College. It has been brilliant, demanding, inspiring teaching, deeply informed by his own scholarship: critical articles, editing, and, recently, historical research. He has twice been a fellow of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington and has spent his last two sabbatical leaves, and most of his time away from teaching, compiling a major, computerized register of the citizens of London and company, parish, and governmental activity between 1550 and 1603.

The essays in this volume are both a tribute to Mark and a suggestion of the kind of serious and sustained work he inspired in his students. It is a pleasure and an honor to be able to publish them and to dedicate this volume to him. He will continue his work and continue to be a presence at Colby. So we do not have to say "Farewell," but we want to say "Hail" and "Thanks."

R. MARK BENBOW

I CAME to Colby College, which I had picked from a book, planning to major in Business Administration and to minor in Spanish. I was already acquainted with poetry: It had been written about a hundred years earlier by men with three names—John Greenleaf Whittier, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell. (My small-town grade school in Western Pennsylvania had offered perhaps the last opportunity in America for an eighth grader to memorize “The Vision of Sir Launfal.”) English at Colby College was an unexpected revelation. Quickly it became evident that this was the only major worth considering: obviously there—in literature—one could find out most about all the important things there were for a human being to learn. For literature encompassed not only what was true but also what was believed to be true; it expressed not merely what can be said in formulas but also what can only be conveyed by symbols and by metaphors, by ironies and indirections. My time at Colby was during the great era in the American classroom of T. S. Eliot and the metaphysical poets: I was very lucky to be taught these by a newish recruit to the Colby English department from Yale, Mark Benbow. He was already a superb teacher.

English at Colby in that era was supervised by the legendary Alfred King Chapman. Chappie had of course craftily seen Benbow’s value. In order, however, that beginning majors have a secure footing before being exposed to the siren calls of New Criticism and the metaphysical conceit, Chappie saw that the sophomore year was given to year courses in social and cultural English History, with Frederick Gillum, and in the five Romantic poets, studied according to the biographical method, with Chappie himself. This course also concentrated on Romantic style, and at the final we were able to identify the authors of passages of Romantic poetry we hadn’t before seen.

In our junior and senior years we were then released to take whatever six semester courses we liked. But Chappie choreographed us all to come together in the same classroom again as seniors for a year course in Shakespeare with Benbow. This was the culmination of the English major, and something much envied by our friends in other fields. There through the unfolding patterns of imagery that expressed the noble Renaissance cosmology this serious, impassioned teacher would show us the movement of great ideas of human anguish and of human joy. He enabled the poetry to speak to us and to lodge itself in our minds, where the splendor of the verse rang through our young lives and the profundity of its matter waited to bloom years later for our grown-up understanding. My senior year was spectacular, because Benbow had also agreed to direct me in a Senior Scholar paper on T. S. Eliot.

Naturally I wanted to go on to Yale, where he had gone, to study what he had studied. And so I did. And I still think that *proper literature* is what Benbow taught—Shakespeare and Milton and seventeenth-century lyric poetry. (Fate called me into another century—the eighteenth—which is much more comfort-

able all round to live in—but I often peep enviously at the poetry over the fence.) This issue of the *Colby Quarterly* honors Mark Benbow's contribution to Renaissance studies in his own archival historical scholarship and in the research and criticism of his students who have gone on to become academics, librarians, and university teachers. None of us, I daresay, has been so able as our own teacher to give to the range of our students who blunder into our classrooms so rich and so lasting a gift.

YVONNE NOBLE  
Canterbury, England

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

YVONNE NOBLE (Colby '56) received her Ph.D. from Yale University. She is presently Visiting Professor of English at New York University. A specialist in eighteenth-century studies, she has published in *PMLA*, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, and *Studies on Voltaire and the Enlightenment* and is the editor of *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Beggars' Opera*.

DANIEL TRAISTER (Colby '63), Assistant Director of Libraries for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, received his Ph.D. from New York University and his M.L.S. from Columbia University. He has published articles on sixteenth-century poetry in *Studies in English Literature* and *Studies in Philology*; he also publishes in the fields of rare books librarianship and book history. He is currently Chair of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association.

DOUGLAS GREEN (former visiting Assistant Professor at Colby) is currently Assistant Professor of English at Augsburg College, Minneapolis. His work on Renaissance drama has been published in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, *Shakespeare Newsletter*, and other journals.

JOSEPH CANDIDO (Colby '67) received his Ph.D. from Indiana University and is currently Associate Professor of English at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. His articles on Shakespeare and Renaissance drama have appeared in *Philological Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Shakespeare Studies*, *English Studies*, *Studies in English Literature*, and other journals. He is the co-compiler of the Garland annotated bibliography of *Henry V* and is currently co-editing the New Variorum edition of *King John* for the MLA.

BARBARA HOWARD TRAISTER (Colby '65) received her Ph.D. from Yale University and is Professor of English at Lehigh University. Her work on Renaissance literature and Renaissance medical history has appeared in *Renaissance Quarterly*, *Medical History*, and other journals. A book, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in English Renaissance Drama*, was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1984.

MICHAEL E. MOONEY (Colby '69) received his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and is Professor of English at the University of New Orleans. His articles on Shakespeare and modern drama have appeared in *Comparative Drama*, *Studies in English Literature*, *English Literary History*,

*Shakespeare Survey*, and other journals. A book, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Transactions*, is forthcoming from Duke University Press.

KRISTINA FABER (Colby '69), whose Ph.D. is from Claremont Graduate School, is Associate Professor of English at Shippensburg University. She has published articles on Shakespeare in *CCTE Proceedings* and is currently working on a longer study of Shakespeare's problem plays.