

Editorial

In this issue, with the kind permission of the author and the editor of the *Durham University Journal* we are reproducing Part 1 of Wheatley Blench's erudite analysis of 'The Influence of Richard Jefferies upon Henry Williamson', which follows on from Brian Fullagar's excursion down this path in the previous issue. Richard Jefferies must be, by all criteria, the most profound influence on HW and it is of prime importance that this relationship is fully explored. It is only with critical comparison that HW's writing will take its proper place in the annals of literature.

Dr. Blench hints at further paths he may pursue in the future in his review of the second revised edition of *A Shadowed Man* by Lois Lamplugh (*DUJ*, Vol. LXXXIII, No.2, July 1991), where he states: 'Fuller analyses of his (HW's) work are needed, both in and for itself, and in relating it in detail to other cognate writers such as Wordsworth, Cobbett, W.H. Hudson, Tolstoy, John Galsworthy and D.H. Lawrence.' Whilst, as you will find on p.26, Ron Walker challenges him and/or others, to turn their skills on the Hardy connection.

Wheatley retired from his post as Head of English at Durham University (and thus from his post as Editor of the *DUJ*), last September and hopefully is now able to concentrate his energies on his magnus opus on HW. We wish him well and look forward to the finished work.

But to return to Brian Fullagar's article 'What Time in Mists Confounds' (*HW Soc. Journal*, No. 24, Sept. 1991, p.5), it is very obvious that many of you are equally intrigued by HW's use of the phrase 'their tears are clouds these many centuries', (p.17) and this will be pursued in a future issue. But here I want to point out that Brian also slipped in the nearest anyone has got to the source of 'Ancient Sunlight', in his quotation from *The Story of My Heart* on p.12 (Note 12), and further, I wouldn't want anyone to miss the reference in the Shakespeare sonnet quoted on p.17; 'I summon up remembrance of things past', which translates in french to 'A la recherche du temps perdu', the great work by Marcel Proust – followed as it was on the next line by Brian's reference to George Painter, biographer of Proust! Was it intentional – a subconscious line of thought – or sheer serendipity? And to return to our previous theme, critical comparison with Proust must surely be made in due course?

To give you a frivolous aside, I heard this on the radio recently in a lighthearted serious literary quiz. Learned contestants were asked (amongst other very clever things) to describe a book in one sentence for the others to guess the title; after the above, no prizes for guessing – 'A boy eats a bun and spends a long time thinking about it.' Perhaps someone would like to produce a similar 'metaphor' for any of HW's work.

To stay with things french, I have recently been in correspondence, as part of my duties as Manager of the HW Literary Estate, with a french scholar, a M. Larès who is, with others, translating the works of T.E. Lawrence for french publication. M. Larès was having to cope with Lawrence's letter of analytic criticism of *Tarka The Otter* and understandably having difficulty with some of the Devon dialect words that TEL picks out for mention.

Out of curiosity I turned to a french translation of *Tarka* from the archive file to see how that coped with what I suddenly perceived was quite a massive problem. And found two things, firstly that, unless the words were either very easily translatable or very obviously onomatopoeic (e.g. hu-e-ic) when they were left in english, then they were ignored, and secondly, that the story line was very much simplified with much of the ancillary detail of extra characters and incidents peripheral to the main story, left out. This will presumably apply to translations in other languages, which means that thousands of people are reading, or have read in the past, a much diluted version, which is a pity. (Although T.E. Lawrence might have thought this was a good thing?)