

Editorial Comment

One of the problems of being a wandering scholar and having a journal to carry along is the disorganization that is an inevitable part of moving. When I took over editing *Focus* in 1987, I never thought I would be changing from one institution to another three times in three years, but such has been my fate. Now, in 1990, Fayetteville State University has not only taken the responsibility of seeing that *Focus* appears twice in the academic year, but has also let me loose in its classrooms, where I try to turn the ubiquitous courses on composition and rhetoric into reflections on the literature of the Great War (unsuccessfully, I might add). The problem at any new university is learning the ropes: where to find support with funding, typing, mailing, photocopying—and how to find time. Here at Fayetteville State, the settling-in process has been a learning experience, but in fewer than three months we are ready with *Focus 11*, and are already well advanced with *Focus 12*.

The papers in this issue of *Focus* cover a range of different topics: John Smeds in his article "Graves, Bachofen, and the Matriarchy Debate" examines how Graves may have been influenced in his ideas about matriarchy and goddess worship, summarized in his *White Goddess*, by the Swiss anthropologist J.J. Bachofen; and how this influence resulted in Graves' search for the dominant female, the muse whom he eventually found in the person of Laura Riding. Martha Shull gives a brief overview of a much neglected area of World War One literature—books by lesser known women writers which, although they fall into the classification of popular fiction, and demonstrate obvious literary weaknesses, nevertheless provide a portrait of the ordinary woman's role during the war and her fate in its aftermath. Finally, Richard Schumaker's paper on Erich Maria Remarque examines *All Quiet on the Western Front* from a temporal perspective that reveals the novel to be a work of much wider significance than it has hitherto been judged.

The most significant piece of Graves scholarship since the appearance of the previous *Focus* is R.P. Graves' second portion of his uncle's biography, *Robert Graves: The Years With Laura 1926-40*. The entertaining "comic masterpiece" (the term is John Carey's) goes a long way to explaining the fascination and respect that Graves had for this extraordinary American poet. Hopefully, Deborah Baker's proposed book on Laura Riding (she recently spent a month in Deyá with William Graves and family) will add further insight into that unusual relationship. Finally, from William Graves,

we've learned that a sizeable collection of Robert's manuscripts of the later poems have been sold to Eton College, and that *The Nazarene Gospel Restored* is likely to be republished by Moyer Bell. The talk of a Graves Trust at Oxford University moves along slowly, but we hope that this will be in place for Robert Graves' centenary in 1995.

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