

choice. Leaving her son with Valacar, she would go back with all honour to Rhovanion to take up the work which first brought him to her people. By living among the Northmen she would serve as a link and interpreter between the two races, preventing misunderstandings by acting as a "frithuwebbe" — a peace-weaver. She would also, even in her home-coming, be entering upon her third "exile" — one that would last for the rest of her life.

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## 'The Heart of the Matter'

BY THE TIME The Lord of the Rings had been accepted as a literary classic in the mid-Sixties, those of us lesser beings privileged to know the Professor were aware first of all of his status as the most eminent linguist in the University. It was well known for example that one did not need to be studying Anglo-Saxon in earlier years to attend the famous dramatic lectures on Beowulf.

Considering then the colossal amount of philological work to which he was committed, it is a miracle of courtesy and sheer physical energy that so many questions, particularly of a linguistic nature were answered in such detail to those already dedicated to a study of things.

However, he was far more reticent on the 'Inner Meaning' of the works. Obviously the diversity of layers of sources of inspiration reveal a mind as complex as that of Yeats; like Yeats, we are all as thinking people attracted by the 'fascination of what's difficult'. We would not wish it were otherwise.

The main point I wish to make then, is that this eminent don had an irrepressible sense of humour, and delighted in what might best be described as games of intellectual chess. When questioned on any topic, from the House of Stuart to the validity of Anglican Orders, he would immediately take up whichever line of argument opposed his questioners; thus inevitably checkmating anyone foolhardy enough to engage such a formidable mind in debate. All this was done with the utmost

charm and youthful glee; with Professor Tolkien, it was impossible to win a debate.

Thus we have to treat the Letters and anecdotes such as we have not as 'ex cathedra statements', but as remarks to be taken very much in context; not only when such comments were written, but who they were written to can alter the intended meaning considerably. But please do not think that this implies that anything said was intended to be seriously misleading.

However, it remains the prerogative of every artist to choose to explain or not to explain 'inner meaning'; particularly if they wish to remain silent over those issues that lie closest to their hearts. It is precisely because the Professor loved his fellow men, from the NCOs he met in the trenches of the Great War to the gardeners at Merton College that my own feelings for Master Samwise are so deep; but personal relationships have an ethical copyright.

Remember that much of the material incorporated in the works was inspired by issues that lay at the heart of his own family life. And as his family was his greatest love of all, we owe it as a point of honour to tread very carefully, because where his deep and innermost thoughts lie, we do indeed tread on holy ground.

I. T. T.