"Elvish as She Is Spoke"

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In July 1954, as he put it to a friend, J.R.R. Tolkien "exposed [his] heart" to the world.[1] What Tolkien meant here by his "heart" was of course *The Lord of the Rings*, the first part of which was published that month, now fifty years ago. For with the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* Tolkien first gave full public expression to what had until that point been an essentially private, invented world, invested with a private, invented history and mythology that were formed by Tolkien's profoundest and most intimate thoughts on nothing less than fallen Man's relationship not only with the world as it is, but with the world as it might have been, with his Creator, and with his own unfallen self. But if the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* laid bare this storyteller's heart to the world, it can and should also be noted that the story itself, by Tolkien's own account, carried within itself a deeper heart still: that of the language maker, expressed most fully in Tolkien's two chief invented Elvish languages, Quenya and Sindarin, exemplars of which are found throughout *The Lord of the Rings*. As Tolkien wrote in response to an early review of the novel:

> The invention of languages is the foundation. The "stories" were made rather to provide a world for the languages than the reverse. To me a name comes first and the story follows. I should have preferred to write in "Elvish". But, of course, such a work as *The Lord of the Rings* has been edited and only as much "language" has been left in as I thought would be stomached by readers. (I now find that many would have liked more.) But there is a great deal of linguistic matter (other than actually "elvish" names and words) included or mythologically expressed in the book. It is to me, anyway, largely an essay in "linguistic aesthetic", as I sometimes say to people who ask me "what is it all about?"[2]

And again, a few years later in a letter to his son Christopher: "Nobody believes me when I say that my long book is an attempt to create a

world in which a form of language agreeable to my personal aesthetic might seem real. But it is true. An enquirer (among many) asked what the L.R. was all about, and whether it was an 'allegory'. And I said it was an effort to create a situation in which a common greeting would be *elen síla lúmenn' omentielmo*, and that the ph[r]ase long antedated the book."[3]

This may seem hyperbolic; and to a certain extent it is.[4] But it is certainly true that Tolkien's linguistic invention long predated his mythological narratives, and that indeed the narrative and novelistic forms of his sub-creation grew out of, draw upon, and are infused with historical, legendary, and mythological matters that were first given expression in the preceding course of Tolkien's language-making.[5]

The most pervasive element from Tolkien's invented languages to be found in *The Lord of the Rings* lies in the nomenclature, both personal and geographical, in particular of the characters, peoples, and lands encountered outside the Shire, and more particularly still of the Elvish characters and places, and of those most closely aligned with them, such as the land and people of Gondor. It is no mere chance that a large percentage of the elements and words entered by Tolkien in the various lexicons he made over the years were employed, and indeed often transparently were invented in order to be employed, in the formation of proper names in the narrative. Neither is it a mere chance that this proportion of nomenclatural elements in Tolkien's lexicons increased during the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*.

A second and far smaller class of exemplar is found in the few instances—all too few, the Tolkienian linguist will lament!—of actual speech in Quenya and Sindarin, occurring almost entirely in the form of laments, hymns, poetry, spells, oath-taking, and cries made *de profundis*, and mostly therefore of a poetic or otherwise markedly formal nature.[6] Significantly, there is nothing at all of what might remotely constitute "conversational Elvish" to be found in the novel.[7] The closest we have to such is the prose letter in Sindarin from Aragorn to Samwise that was given in the (rightly) excised "Epilogue" to *The Lord of the Rings*, and even this shows a certain marked formality, at least as judged by the string of royal titles that forms its opening, and from the formal character of Tolkien's accompanying English translation.[8]

One might reasonably ask: why, given the self-professed centrality of his invented languages to the *legendarium*, did Tolkien make so little use of them in terms of composition, and even less so of dialogue, within his

narrative? Many of his characters, after all, would have been speaking in one form of Elvish or another frequently; and Tolkien himself said that he would have preferred to write his book entirely in Elvish. So why, then, are we not given even so much as a few paragraphs of actual Elvish conversation?

There are a number of answers to this question, not least the one Tolkien himself gave in the letter quoted above: that his readers could hardly have been expected to stomach long passages in an utterly foreign language, and that as a consequence at least some of the language element had been edited out. But in connection with this explanation it must be noted that, judging from the surviving manuscripts and typescripts, there is no evidence of substantial amounts of Elvish ever having been edited from the book: in fact, we see that more Elvish was put into the book in the course of rewriting than had originally been in it. It may likewise be noted that if Tolkien ever made any attempt at composing Elvish narrative for his novel, it has apparently not survived.

But even if this entirely practical concern for reader interest were set aside, I believe that there would have remained an obstacle to extended Elvish narrative composition far more fundamental and no less practical: namely, that Tolkien himself was neither fluent in either of his two chief Elvish languages, nor himself able to compose in them with anything like the facility that would be required to produce substantial amounts of Elvish narrative. That is, at least not in anything less than geologic time, since on most occasions that Tolkien did set about to compose a poem in one of his invented languages, or allowed himself to digress into discussion of Elvish forms and terms encountered in the course of his extended essays or letters on topics in Middle-earth, there resulted a flurry of new invention, reconsideration, and change in the languages; so that essentially every attempt made by their own creator to "use" the Elvish languages ran up against not only the incompleteness of the languages, but also Tolkien's restless aesthetic.[9]

Indeed, it seems plain that it was never Tolkien's purpose either to fix and finalize his invented languages, or to make them "usable" in narrative or in any other prosaic or quotidian application, even by himself; or to describe them in such a way and bring them to sufficient completion that they could be learned and used by others as a living speech. To see this, and to understand the implications it has for any efforts to use the Elvish tongues as a medium of casual written communication, to say nothing of any effort to make them into spoken languages, we must

first briefly look at what was Tolkien's own stated purpose in inventing his Elvish languages, and at the form this invention took.

The Purpose of the Languages

The clearest statement we have from Tolkien as to his purpose in inventing his Elvish languages is in his famous letter of 1967 to Mr. Rang, where Tolkien writes that "it must be emphasized that this process of invention was/is a private enterprise undertaken to give pleasure to myself by giving expression to my personal linguistic 'aesthetic' or taste and its fluctuations."[10]

It is important here to note three things about this statement. First, that Tolkien describes his linguistic inventions as occasioned by and intended for the expression of his personal aesthetic and the satisfaction of his private pleasure, and thus without any intent to make Quenya, Sindarin, or any of his languages into spoken, auxiliary, or otherwise "useful" languages, least of all for use by anyone else. Consequently, unlike, say, Esperanto, which was created, formulated, and released to the public with the specific intent of facilitating its use and development by others as an auxiliary language, the Elvish languages exist solely because they satisfy and express Tolkien's own, personal linguistic aesthetic. To the extent that others found pleasure in the glimpses of that expression provided by the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien was no doubt quite gratified. But this in no way implies that Tolkien meant for others to "develop" his languages, his personal expressions, into a "useful" form, or into any other form than his own.

Another comment from the same letter, though made specifically in criticism of attempts by Mr. Rang and others to find supposed primary-world sources and hidden meanings in Tolkien's Elvish nomenclature, seems to me fully applicable as well to attempts to "supplement" or "complete" Tolkien's languages with forms and for purposes that were not Tolkien's own. Tolkien writes: "These seem to me no more than private amusements, and as such I have no right or power to object to them, though they are, I think, valueless for the elucidation or interpretation of my fiction. If published, I do object to them, when (as they usually do) they appear to be unauthentic embroideries on my work, throwing light only on the state of mind of their contrivers, not on me or on my actual intention and procedure."[11] Similarly, an earlier objection by Tolkien to the misguided efforts of translators of his work to reinterpret

or otherwise alter his own carefully devised system of nomenclature seems applicable to efforts to recast his languages to other purpose: "I wonder why a translator should think himself called on or entitled to do any such thing. That this is an 'imaginary' world does not give him any right to remodel it according to his fancy."[12]

Second, it is to be noted that Tolkien describes his linguistic invention—here in 1967, more than a dozen years after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, and more than fifty years after he first began the creation of the Elvish languages—as an ongoing process: he says that it both *was* and still *is* undertaken for his personal pleasure. This is a key statement because underlying and reflecting it is the consequent reality that Tolkien's languages were no more fixed at any point either in time or of grammar than was any other element of his *legendarium*. Indeed if anything they were even more fluid, as not even publication fixed the forms finally. Tolkien both could and did make changes to the published exemplars of his languages in *The Lord of the Rings* to bring them into accord with changes in the conception of his languages that continued long after *The Lord of the Rings* was published. Thus, for example, Tolkien changed *omentielmo* 'of our meeting' of the first edition (1954) to *omentielvo* in the second edition (1965) because, behind the scenes as it were, *-lve* had replaced *-lme* as the first pl. inclusive ending in the ever-changing pronominal system of Quenya, just as *-lme* had itself replaced earlier *-mme* late in the composition of *The Lord of the Rings*.

And third, it is to be noted that Tolkien states that the purpose of his languages was to express not just a set linguistic aesthetic, but also the *changes in his aesthetic over time*. That is, the ever-changing nature of Tolkien's linguistic inventions was not only an unavoidable fact, openly acknowledged, but one of the very purposes of the enterprise. Finality and completion of the languages was thus not only never achieved, it was not even a goal. Indeed, to the extent that we can speak accurately of Quenya and Sindarin as single entities at all, it is only as continuities of change over time, not only within their fictional internal histories (continual change being of course also a feature of primary-world languages), but also across Tolkien's lifetime. All of the writings concerning his invented languages that Tolkien left behind are, then, essentially a chronological sequence of individual snapshots, of greater or lesser scope, of stages in a lifelong process of invention and reinvention in accordance with changes in Tolkien's linguistic aesthetic, and of which

the endeavor itself and not its achievement was the purpose. Thus any detail of the languages at any point in Tolkien's shifting conception of them may have persisted from the beginning to the end of that process, or have had no more extent in that process than the edges of the sheet of paper it was written on (with often enough no way to tell which of these two extremes is true of any given detail). But every detail in turn defined Quenya and Sindarin, at least as these were conceived at the time it was written if no further.

Tolkien's languages were, then, at least as much as his *legendarium*, a "continuing and evolving creation"; and what's more, far from being seen by Tolkien as any sort of flaw in or impediment to his linguistic creation, this fact was a desired characteristic, and a necessary consequence of the very purpose of his language creation.

The Form of the Invention

Although Tolkien's languages and their invention are thus characterized by an ever-shifting conception, there is one constant aspect of his linguistic invention that also has profound consequences for any attempt to use Tolkien's languages in casual, diurnal conversation; and that constant is of the preferred form in which Tolkien chose to express his linguistic invention. The habitual form of Tolkien's extended efforts in describing his invented languages—or, more accurately, his changing conceptions thereof—was from beginning to end that of the *historical grammar*.

Historical grammars are now, and even in Tolkien's youth were already, a traditional vehicle of historical linguistics, and as such they had and have a traditional form. In accordance with this form, an historical grammar of a language will usually begin with a brief essay describing the language's place and time in its family tree of related languages, and then almost invariably begins with a presentation of the historical phonology of the language: that is, a complete and detailed accounting of the system of sound-changes exhibited or deduced to have occurred over time in the language through the course of its descent from an earlier, ancestral form, often from the very earliest of the theoretical ancestral forms that can be deduced by comparative reconstruction. Thus, for example, an historical grammar of English will often begin with an account of the phonetic system of the theoretical Proto-Indo-European language that is its ultimate common ancestor with Welsh, Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, among others; followed by a discussion of

the systematic sound-changes from this original system that resulted in the theoretical Proto-Germanic language that was the common ancestor of all the Germanic languages, including English, German, Gothic, and Old Norse, among others; followed by a discussion of the subsequent sound-changes that produced Old English, and so on through Middle English down to Modern English.

Next comes morphology, discussing how words were formed historically from constituent morphemes or units of meaning, and detailing the formal classes used to express case, number, tense, and other grammatical categories and functions. Frequent reference is made in the morphology to the preceding sections and features of the historical phonology, to explain the changes that occur within words and at the boundaries of elements that come into contact, all in order to explain the historical origins of the attested forms. Usually nouns are discussed first, then adjectives, numerals, pronouns, etc. Significantly, as we shall see shortly, verbs usually are discussed at or near the end of the morphology. Finally, there may or may not be a section on syntax, which even if present is usually nothing more than a brief discussion of sentence types.

Tolkien's own extended attempts at describing—and thus inventing—his languages closely followed this traditional form, which is of course only natural since Tolkien's own career both as a philologist and as a language-maker was inspired and profoundly shaped by such classics of the form as Wright's *Gothic Primer* and Morris-Jones's historical *Welsh Grammar*, and since Tolkien's intellectual and aesthetic interest in his own languages and in those of the primary world clearly lay not just in their "surface" forms, in the characteristics of the languages as they existed at any one particular time, but rather in the entire history of their development, from their remotest ancestral forms through all their prehistoric and intermediate developments. Thus, if you aren't a big fan of the historical grammars of primary-world languages, if you don't love *Lautverschiebung*, if Grimm's Law is nothing but a grim bore to you, if you think it is pointless to study dead languages because no one can speak them, then you will not likely find much of interest in the vast bulk of Tolkien's writings concerning his invented languages. On the other hand, if you, like Tolkien, find language, in and of itself, purely in its own right and without regard for any consideration of utility, to be a source of aesthetic pleasure, and if you, like Tolkien, derive great intellectual satisfaction from the consideration of the whole life

of a language, in the study and discovery of the features of a language both at one time and across time, and of its relationship to its relatives both near and far; of the complex, intertwined, and yet systematic changes in languages over time; in other words, if you, like Tolkien, are of a philological bent; then you will find rich reward in even his most abstract and minute discussions of phonology and morphology, and *abundant* opportunity to indulge it.

Tolkien typically began work on a new version of language description—and thus of invention—with obvious enthusiasm, the practical upshot of which is that very often the clearest, fullest, and most complete—not to mention the most calligraphic—part of his historical grammars is the opening historical sketch and the phonology. This initial enthusiasm probably reflected what seems to have been Tolkien's particular delight in selecting the sounds and patterns of development that so strongly characterize languages (even for those who know nothing of phonetics or phonology). But Tolkien being Tolkien, the historical grammars he began were often left unfinished, and usually well before their end had been reached—and thus, much to the chagrin of Tolkienian linguists, often before the verb morphology is reached, to say nothing of syntax.[13] But even the fullest, most sustained, and most nearly complete historical grammars that Tolkien produced[14] inevitably succumbed at last to reconsideration and alteration —not to mention multiple layers of annotations, strikethroughs, and revisions—so extensive as to require a completely new start at describing what had then become a new and different language.

What Tolkien left behind then is a sequence of more-or-less complete and more-or-less variant and even conflicting versions of historical grammars, almost always heavily weighted toward the phonology, describing versions of his invented languages as they were conceived at various points in his lifetime; together with a smaller number of more-or-less variant and even conflicting versions of lexicons containing what are by the standards of living languages and even of many dead languages quite small and selective vocabularies, heavily weighted towards mythological, historical, poetic, and nomenclatural forms; together with a very few short texts, again spanning different conceptual stages of the languages, and almost none of which is prose. Even assuming that the sometimes profound differences among the versions of the languages could somehow be smoothed out into a cohesive and consistent system, we are thus left at best with what amounts to traditional historical grammars of

two poorly attested, dead languages. This is a situation much closer to what we have with, say, Gothic, than to Latin, which must surely rank among the least dead of its departed brethren; and indeed not even as favorable as Gothic, since as relatively poorly attested as Gothic is compared to Latin or even to Old English, there is far more surviving Gothic composition than there is in all of Tolkien's invented languages combined.

And even this portrait gives at first glance a rosier depiction of the situation than it actually is. For unlike the great historical grammars of ancient Latin, ancient Greek, Sanskrit, Old English, and other dead languages having a more-or-less substantial surviving literature, Tolkien's grammatical writings constitute almost all the evidence there is or ever was concerning the nature and usage of his languages. It would be, even in this thoroughly optimistic scenario, as though Latin were preserved for us only by one individual who had produced a mostly complete historical grammar of Latin, and a small, selective dictionary of mostly mythological, historical, and poetic terms, and elements found in nomenclature, just before all but a few, mostly poetic scraps of all the authentic Latin literature that had ever been written, and upon which the putative grammar was based, were lost in a fire. I doubt very much that, had something like this happened, Latin would be at all usable as a medium of casual communication, as it is today.

A direct consequence of Tolkien's own purposes and of the form that his linguistic invention took is thus that the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of Tolkien's invented languages, even of Quenya and Sindarin, are far too incomplete to allow their casual, conversational, or quotidian use. Tolkien himself stated as much in a letter from 1967—that is, more than fifty years after he began inventing the Elvish languages: "It should be obvious that if it is possible to compose fragments of verse in *Quenya* and *Sindarin*, those languages (*and* their relations one to another) must have reached a fairly high degree of organization—though of course, far from completeness, either in vocabulary, or in idiom."[15]

What Tolkien most emphatically did *not* leave behind then is a sort of Berlitz Guide to Elvish, historical grammars being completely different in purpose and form to the sorts of instructional language textbooks that high-school and college students of foreign languages will be familiar with. Having read an historical grammar of a language, even in the all-too-rare case of one having more than just a cursory discussion of syntax, one could indeed interpret genuine texts in that language,

but by no means would one be able to compose in that language with fluidity, and certainly not speak it. The inescapable fact is that no one can learn to speak a language without a fluent speaker or otherwise full and comprehensive model against which to gauge correctness not only of grammar but of idiom; that is, an already fluent speaker or speech community, or a comprehensive grammar, a full, general lexicon, and recourse to extensive representative texts to serve as idiomatic models.[16] Since Tolkien never fixed his languages firmly or described them completely enough to provide any such comprehensive and corrective model for others, let alone for himself (that never being his goal), and since thus even Tolkien himself was never able to speak Quenya or Sindarin fluently or casually (that too never being his goal), it is consequently a further inescapable fact that no one has or ever will be able to speak Quenya and Sindarin, at least not Quenya and Sindarin as Tolkien devised them, any more than anyone will ever (again) be able to speak, say, Etruscan or Hittite or any other dead and fragmentarily-attested language. This then is the actual nature of Tolkien's languages as he made them.

The Post-Tolkien Usage of the Invention—"Neo-Elvish"

One might think that this would be the end of any notion of actually using Elvish as spoken languages. (Silly one!) But despite these facts, there has nonetheless arisen a considerable interest, particularly among denizens of certain Internet forums, in learning to "speak Elvish" (or, at any rate, to translate names and sentiments "into Elvish" for engraving on wedding rings or, most often, on one's body in the form of a tattoo, or to write poetry).[17] This effort has been led in recent years on the Internet by two main proponents: Helge Fauskanger of Norway, who promulgates a selective, homogenized version of Quenya on his Ardalambion site and in various Internet discussion forums; and David Salo, who promulgates a conflative and similarly homogenized version of Sindarin through the Ardalambion site, in the Peter Jackson movies, and in his book, *A Gateway to Sindarin*. Efforts such as these are aimed firmly at making Tolkien's languages, or more properly newly-minted *versions* of these languages, into "usable" and "standard" forms (their own terminology), which to distinguish them from Tolkien's own are sometimes referred to as "Neo-Quenya" and "Neo-Sindarin," or as a family, "Neo-Elvish." I'd like now to briefly discuss the character of this "Neo-Elvish" and

take a look at some examples, including some translations by the two aforementioned proponents and authorities of the form, to give some indication of their nature.

Conflation and Circularity

First and foremost, due to its homogenizing and standardizing tendencies, "Neo-Elvish" is characterized by conflation of materials and evidence from often widely separated conceptual phases, and by consequent circularity in reasoning about this evidence. What is referred to by some as "mature" Quenya and "mature" Sindarin "of the *Lord of the Rings* era" are in fact artificially selected and dubiously homogenized sets of data spanning decades of "fluctuations" in Tolkien's aesthetic conception, which are nonetheless assumed and then asserted to be essentially uniform in nature and conception. But in fact, most of what is claimed to be true of "mature Quenya" and "mature Sindarin" is actually silently asserted on the basis of evidence for the Qenya and Noldorin of the *Etymologies*, which Tolkien began some years before he started writing *The Lord of the Rings* and which he all but abandoned some years before its completion, and *before* the fundamental conceptual change by which Noldorin was replaced with Sindarin, a language having a radically different history and by the nature of Tolkien's own process of invention a necessarily different grammar in detail than Noldorin. The "reasoning" underlying this representation of "mature Quenya" and "mature Sindarin" is thus essentially circular: Qenya and Noldorin of the *Etymologies* are more or less the same as Quenya and Sindarin of *The Lord of the Rings*, it is claimed, because they largely conform to the claims made about the phonology and grammar of "mature Quenya" and "mature Sindarin"; and the claims about the phonology and grammar of "mature Quenya" and "mature Sindarin" can be based largely and silently on the data from *Etymologies*, because they are more or less the same.

Simplification through Artificial Regularity

"Neo-Elvish" inevitably relies on the assumption of an essential and artificial regularity in Tolkien's languages to generate new vocabulary and new inflected forms. That is, for any given grammatical situation, it is generally assumed and asserted that there is one correct formation expressing the desired function. But such deterministic, one-to-one

correspondence between form and function is notoriously *not* a characteristic of actual, historical languages, such as Tolkien wished his languages to appear to be remnants of. Thus such regularity was quite deliberately *not* desired by Tolkien for his languages, and is indeed not to be found in them.

English speakers (native and non-native alike) will perhaps be most familiar with the concept of grammatical regularity in the case of the past-tense form of verbs. While the largest number of verbs in English regularly form the past tense by the addition of *-(e)d* (e.g., *assume*, *assumed*; *assert*, *asserted*; *form*, *formed*; etc.), a small number of verbs instead form their past tenses in different ways (e.g., *think*, *thought*; *see*, *saw*; *drink*, *drank*; *eat*, *ate*; etc.). Because the former class is much larger than the latter, and because newly-coined verbs now (almost) always follow their pattern, it is usually referred to as the *regular* past tense, while the latter class is by contrast *irregular*. But it is to be noted that the latter, "irregular" class contains most of the oldest and commonest verbs in English, so that they cannot be regarded as merely quaint relics that can be ignored. They are in fact among the most characteristic verbs in English, and the failure to form their past tense properly is an instant indicator that the speaker or writer is not a native speaker of English.

Tolkien's languages, being intended to appear as though they were actual languages with a long history of development, naturally share this feature. Thus, for example, both Quenya and Sindarin have two main classes of past-tense verb formation: one employing internal modifications of the root (called the *strong* past) and the other instead adding a suffix to the root (the *weak* past). Further subclasses of each of these main classes are attested, across all the stages of Tolkien's (external) development of his languages. Thus the Noldorin verb has *four* chief attested past-tense formation classes (two strong and two weak formations), as does Sindarin.[18]

It is true, however, that numerically one formation dominates the others in the (quite small) corpus of attested past-tense forms of Noldorin and Sindarin (combined):[19] sc., the weak past tense characterized by the addition of the suffix *-(a)nt* to the verb-stem (comparable to the addition of *-(e)d* in English). And despite the fact that it is arguable whether a majority of such a very small sample is statistically significant enough to support such a conclusion, it is widely assumed among teachers of "Neo-Sindarin" (and thus their students) that this is "the regular" past

tense; and further because it avoids having to wrestle with phonological details, this weak past tense in *-(a)nt* is virtually the *only* past-tense formation one will ever encounter in "Neo-Sindarin." No doubt the effect of "Neo-Sindarin" would in this regard be as strange to Tolkien's ear as it would be to ours if we met someone who thought that every English verb formed its past tense with *-(e)d*: *he knowed and speaked a curious tongue and thinked it English.*

A good demonstration of this particular falsely-assumed regularity found its way into the recent film treatment of *The Lord of the Rings*, courtesy of David Salo, perhaps the chief architect of "Neo-Sindarin" and responsible for the "Neo-Sindarin" translations that pepper the movies. Here we encounter the "Neo-Sindarin" form *istant*, intended to mean 'knew' as the past-tense form corresponding to the attested Noldorin intransitive verb *ista-* 'to have knowledge.'[20] But in fact, there are *two* attested past-tense forms of *ista-*, *neither* of which employs *-(a)nt*: these are the strong form *sint*, and the weak form *istas*. (The ending *-(a)s* appears to be the characteristic weak past-tense ending of intransitive verbs.) So the "regularized" "Neo-Sindarin" form *istant* is roughly comparable to a similarly regularized form *knowed* for English *knew*.

And this considers just the case of Sindarin past-tense verbs. Similarly imposed regularity characterizes both "Neo-Sindarin" and "Neo-Quenya" further in the matters of plural formation (both Sindarin and Quenya, like English, have more than one means of forming plurals; Quenya for example has both a general plural in *-i* or *-r*, and a particular plural in *-li*; yet one would never know this from "Neo-Quenya" usage), case endings (consider the example of "the" locative case in "Neo-Quenya," illustrated above), derivational endings, etc. Thus, as artificial as these relentlessly regularized forms of Quenya and Sindarin seem to the eyes and ears of those who have studied the languages as Tolkien actually described them, it must be that they would have seemed far more artificial to Tolkien himself.

Reconstruction

The phenomenon of linguistic *reconstruction* relies, like the whole science of historical and comparative linguistics, on the observable fact that any two languages that are historically related to one another (e.g., Spanish and Italian, or English and German) are related in abstract, systematic, and thus often predictable ways. In particular, languages

undergo systematic *sound-changes*, resulting in a continuous and systematic change in the sounds of a language over time. The precise changes that occur vary from language to language, but the fact of such change is characteristic of the history of every spoken language. And because these changes are systematic and historically sequenced, they can be determined by comparison with earlier attested forms of the language and in most (though not all) cases be essentially "rewound" to reveal the earlier form that the ancestor of a given word would have had at an earlier stage, before the various sound-changes that generated it were applied. Further, by comparing two related languages and "rewinding" their respective systems of sound-change, one can as it were "recover" (though strictly speaking only in a theoretical sense) forms that must once have been found in the shared parent language common to each. This technique can even be applied to "discover" what the form of some word unattested in one language might have taken, based on an attested form it takes in a different but related language.

But the technique of reconstruction is not without its hazards. For one thing, the fact that a given form has reflexes in some related languages does not mean that the form retained the same meaning (or even survived at all) in all related languages (hence *thing* in Modern English is quite different in meaning from its Old Norse cognate *þing* 'public assembly' and its reconstructed common ancestor **þengan* 'appointed time'). Moreover, it is not always possible to determine with certainty what the cognate form would be, since a given sound may have more than one possible source sound in the parent language; so that for a given word in language A, there may be more than one possible reconstructed form in the parent language and further more than one possible development from that set of forms in a cognate language B.

Unfortunately, an excellent example of these hazards occurs in one of the most widely used products of "Neo-Sindarin," the proponents and students of which have adopted the phrase *hannon le* as meaning 'thank you.'[21] The verb here, *hannon*, is intended to mean 'I thank,' formed from a stem **hanna-* 'thank.' This stem was reconstructed for "Neo-Sindarin" by analogy with an attested Quenya (Q.) form, *Eruhantalë* 'Thanksgiving to Eru,'[22] from which a proposed verb-stem **hanta-* 'thank' was derived. To arrive at "Neo-Sindarin" **hanna-* 'thank,' it was assumed that Q. **hanta-* 'thank' derived from a Common Eldarin (CE) **khantā-* 'thank,' which if it existed would indeed yield Q. **hanta-* and S. **hanna-* by regular phonological development.

The problem here is that CE *khantā- is *not* the only possible source of Q. *hanta-; the latter could also quite regularly and therefore just as likely have developed from CE *ʒantā-, *hantā-, or *skantā-, which would have yielded Sindarin (S.) *anna-, *anna-, and *hanna-, respectively. Moreover, it is further unlikely that the source was CE *khantā-, since its underlying base, KHAN-, was used by Tolkien in the *Etymologies* to mean 'understand, comprehend,' an unlikely basis for a verb meaning 'thank.' Similarly, CE *ʒantā- < ʒAN- 'male' is quite unlikely. This leaves us with only *hantā- or *skantā- as really plausible sources for Q. *hanta- 'thank.'

It was John Garth who first noted that the Quenya word *han* *'beyond,' and its apparent source, the CE root √*han-* 'add to, increase, enhance, honour (espec. by gift),' published in connection with Tolkien's Quenya translations of the Lord's Prayer, likely provided the actual source of Q. *hanta-* 'thank,' in the sense 'to increase, magnify, honor, glorify' < CE *hantā-.[23] Shortly after this, Bertrand Bellet noted the implication of this newly attested root and derivation for "Neo-Sindarin" *hanna-* 'thank,' pointing out that since CE *h- disappears in Sindarin, CE *hantā- would yield S. *anna-, not *hanna-.[24] But *anna-* already exists as a Sindarin verb, for 'give.' And so the "Neo-Sindarin" reconstruction *hanna-* 'thank' and its signature phrase *hannon le* 'I thank you' disappear in a puff of phonology.[25]

Dictionary Translation

Most students and all teachers of a foreign language, living or dead, will be familiar with this process. It involves translating a text into or from a foreign language by looking up (typically uninflected) forms in a bilingual dictionary, and then using the gloss found there as the translated meaning. Any teacher of a foreign language will be able to vouch for the poor and unidiomatic if not outright ungrammatical results that this method often produces. Such translations are characterized by a purely mechanical, word-for-word substitution of the words of one language for those of another, and thus constitute little more than a coded message, a simple substitution cipher.[26]

A good example of dictionary-translation in "Neo-Elvish" is the case of the Quenya word *óre*, which is glossed in *The Lord of the Rings* as 'heart (inner mind).'[27] And so in "Neo-Quenya" we find *óre* used to translate 'heart' *in every sense of the English word*. That is, it is assumed by "Neo-

Quenya" dictionary-translators that because *óre* is glossed as 'heart,' that it is exactly equivalent to English "heart" in all its varied senses: as the physical organ, as the seat of emotion, to indicate sympathetic or enthusiastic feelings, etc. But as any experienced translator knows, it is not at all usual for the range of meanings of a word in one language to exactly match that of a word in another language. Sometimes this semantic range will overlap only narrowly, and even when the overlap is broad it is often not identical. In fact, it turns out that the semantic overlap of Q. *óre* with "heart" is quite narrow indeed, as Tolkien tells us in a set of notes dating from c. 1968, where he states that "heart" as a gloss of *óre* "is not suitable, except in brevity, since *óre* does not correspond in sense to any of the English confused uses of 'heart': memory, reflection; courage, good spirits; emotion, feelings, tender, kind or generous impulses (uncontrolled by, or opposed to the judgments of reason)."[28] Tolkien goes on to explain that the *óre* is instead an inner faculty of Incarnates that advises or warns them as to proper courses of action—that is, something rather more akin to "conscience" than to "heart" in most senses of the English word; and exemplified by such phrases as "my heart tells me."

Nonetheless, despite this careful distinction that Tolkien incorporated into his Quenya, in "Neo-Quenya" we still routinely find *óre* used as an exact semantic equivalent of English "heart." To get a sense of how strange this indiscriminate application of the word would sound to Tolkien's ears, simply consider how it would be to do the reverse in English, and use "conscience" everywhere we would normally use "heart": e.g., "he is a good-conscienced fellow," "she showed a lot of conscience," "he broke her conscience," "my conscience is beating fast."

Analogy with English

This phenomenon occurs when it is assumed that some grammatical or syntactic feature of one's native language (most often English) obtains in "Neo-Elvish," and a construction is modeled on it and employed even though not actually attested in Tolkien's own writings. A good example of this phenomenon is the common "Neo-Sindarin" salutation *suilaid, translating English 'greetings.' This form is transparently intended to be an *i*-affection plural form of the attested gerund/verbal noun *suilad* 'greeting,' which occurs in the various forms of Aragorn's

letter to Samwise that Tolkien included in the excised epilogue to *The Lord of the Rings*.[29]

But underlying this formation is the implicit assumption that Sindarin gerunds have plural forms. Certainly, this is (often) true of English gerunds, as such pairs as "greeting", pl. "greetings"; "viewing", pl. "viewings"; "writing", pl. "writings"; etc. show. But this feature of English is by no means universal among languages that have formal gerunds: for example, German, English's close linguistic cousin, has no plural form of gerunds; neither does Latin. There is thus *a priori* no reason to *assume* that Sindarin has plural gerunds, and the fact that there is not a single attested plural Sindarin (or even Noldorin) gerund in all of Tolkien's published writings likewise hardly supports the assumption.[30] Thus "Neo-Sindarin" *suilaid*, like the assumption it is based upon, is derived purely from analogy with English.

Kennings and Paraphrase

Kennings are basically short, often metaphorical, descriptive phrases that have been melded into one compound word. While they are a not-uncommon feature in poetry, especially in Western and Northern Germanic poetry (where their allusive and circumlocutionary nature can be employed for poetic effect), they are not nearly so common in prose, nor are they noticeably common even in Tolkien's Elvish poetry. But because they provide a means of creating a paraphrase translation of words not found in Tolkien's lexicons, they are quite noticeably common in "Neo-Elvish" compositions, and provide a sure way to distinguish the two. A few examples will suffice.

Helge Fauskanger, chief promulgator and expositor of "Neo-Quenya," offers a number of notable examples in his translations of the first two chapters of Genesis.[31] Confronted with 'onyx,' Fauskanger employs *ahya-mírë*, combining two attested elements, the verb-stem *ahya-* 'change' and the noun *mírë* 'jewel,' which he explains as "refer[ring] to the 'changing' or alternating layers of colour found in an onyx." Similarly, needing a word for 'rib,' Fauskanger offers *hónaxo*, combining two attested nouns meaning '(physical) heart' and 'bone,' respectively, "since," he notes, "the ribs cover the heart." (One wonders what will be done should a translation for 'sternum' ever be needed?) Nor are the kennings and paraphrases Fauskanger offers always even *this* specific: needing a word for 'insect,'

Fauskanger proposes *celvalle*, which he formed as a "diminutive of [attested] *celva* 'animal.'" (Certainly not all "small animals" are insects!)

The *ad hoc* nature of these coinages is glaring, and it is doubtful because of this nature that they will enjoy any currency even in "Neo-Quenya" beyond the text they arose in. But even if they should, such vague kennings and paraphrases as this are immediately noticeable as clumsy and alien when compared with Tolkien's own compositions and derivational techniques, and as such impart a clumsy and alien feel to any "Neo-Elvish" text they are found in (meaning, unfortunately, pretty much the majority of any non-trivial "Neo-Elvish" composition). To pick just the most recent example that will illustrate this alienness, consider this portion of an attempted "Neo-Sindarin" translation of Yeats's "The Second Coming," setting the original against (first) the "Neo-Sindarin" rendering and (second) the translator's literal gloss of the "Neo-Sindarin":[32]

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
> *Hwiniol a hwiniol min ringorn ú-'leinannen,*
> Spinning and spinning in the circle not-having-been-bounded
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> *i-aew-farad û-'ar lathrado nan *aewben;*
> the hunting-bird cannot listen to the bird-man;
> Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold;
> *nadath *godhannar, i-enedh û-'âr dartho;*
> things collapse, the centre cannot hold,
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world;
> *únad dan úmarth erin amar leithar aen;*
> nothing but evil fate upon the world is released;
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> *i-aear iâr-'wathren leithar aen, ah min *ilhaid*
> the sea blood-shadowy is released, and in all places
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned.
> *i-chaew e-gur buig danna 'n-uir di-nên.*
> The habit of the pure heart falls forever beneath water.

We need not here consider the grammatical postulates underlying the "Neo-Sindarin" composition itself; instead, we need only to look at the author's own English gloss to ask: Does this paraphrase-laden translation really convey anything of the meaning (to say nothing of the poetry) of the original? Knowing in advance that the "Neo-Sindarin"

is offered as a rendition of "The Second Coming," and clinging fiercely to the qualifier "anything," one might in great charity answer "yes"; but even such charity cannot ignore the fact that the meaning is conveyed by the "Neo-Sindarin" in so imprecise, circumlocutionary, and hackneyed a form (as un-Elvish as the gloss is un-English) that, unless one knew that the result was intended to be Yeats's poem, one would never arrive at anything like the sense (to say nothing of the poetry) of the original by translating the "Neo-Sindarin" back into English.

"Elvish as She Is Spoke"

What, then, is the sum character of the "Neo-Elvish" languages, and how do they relate to Tolkien's own private aesthetic and conception of his languages? Other than in cases of more or less demonstrable error like those outlined above, we can know this only generally and in terms of likelihood, since of course certain and detailed knowledge of this relationship could only be had from comparison with the very things we lack: sc., a much more extensive lexicon and a substantial set of representative texts in the Elvish languages by Tolkien himself; that is, the full and comprehensive corrective grammatical and idiomatic model needed to learn to speak any foreign language accurately and with facility.

But I think that we can nonetheless get a pretty good indication of the answer to this question. Suppose that there is some would-be instructor of English that has a knowledge of English vocabulary and morphology roughly comparable to what we have for the Elvish languages, and a similarly small recourse to examples of actual English speech and composition, but who is nonetheless determined to produce a guidebook to spoken English for those with even less knowledge that want to learn to speak English. What might be the character of the English promulgated by such an instructor? As it turns out, we don't have merely to imagine such a situation.

In 1855 there first appeared, in Paris, a book bilingually titled: *Novo Guia da Conversaçao, em Portuguez e Inglez, em Duas Partes ' The New Guide of the Conversation, in Portuguese and English, in Two Parts*, attributed to José da Fonseca and Pedro Carolino.[33] As its title indicates, it purports to provide a bilingual guide to conversational English. But as the title also (unwittingly) indicates, the book's authors were hampered in their stated goal by one inconvenient fact: *that they themselves did not*

speak English. As with our would-be speakers and instructors of Elvish, they had knowledge of some but not all aspects of English grammar, and they had access to a not-inconsequential English dictionary; but they had no apparent knowledge of English syntax or idiom, apparently no familiarity with substantial English texts, and relied heavily on word-for-word dictionary translation of phrases and anecdotes in their own tongue. The language that they espoused is thus exactly what one would expect: clearly inspired by actual English, often intelligible to an English speaker, but highly artificial and ungrammatical, and occasionally impenetrably so. Thus between the covers of this little gem of unintentional linguistic hilarity lies what can only in great charity be considered English, and then only an idiolect having no home save its own pages. Some examples include: "What time from the month you are to-day?"; "Apply you at the study during that you are young"; "Let us go to respire the air"; "I have not sleeped; i have had the fever during all night"; "What is composed the medicine what i have to take?"; and "Have you understand that y have said?" And these are among the better translations in the book, in that, just as with many of the "Neo-Elvish" examples cited above, one can in fact understand what is intended by them; though also as with "Neo-Elvish" many others only hover on the border of intelligibility, such as: "These are the dishes whose you must be and to abstain," and "Is so that you act for to me?"

The *New Guide* found its way to the United States in the 1860s, where Mark Twain delighted in what he called its "miraculous stupidities," and where it was given the eminently suitable title that it has since been known by, *English as She Is Spoke*.

Despite the self-belying assurance in its preface that the authors of *English as She Is Spoke* "did put, with a scrupulous exactness, a great variety own expressions to english and portuguese idioms; without to attach us selves (as make some others) almost a literal translation; translation what only will be for to accustom the portuguese pupils, or-foreign, to speak very bad any of the mentioned idioms [*all sic*]," it is evident from even a cursory comparison of the faux "English" phrases with their Portuguese originals that the process that produced them *depended* on "literal translation," taking the form of word-for-word dictionary translation of the original Portuguese, filtered through an incomplete knowledge of English morphology, with a heavy reliance upon French and Portuguese syntax and idiom, and with little apparent knowledge of actual English syntax, usage, and idiom. In other words,

English as She Is Spoke was the inevitable product of an application of much the same level of knowledge that we now have of Elvish syntax, usage, and idiom—which is to say, essentially none, when compared to what is available to students of any living language and even of many dead languages—and if anything with far greater recourse to authentic vocabulary than we have or ever will have for the Elvish languages. Thus not only do the sorts of avoidable errors outlined above abound in "Neo-Elvish," even among the translations made by its chief proponents and practitioners, but it seems all but certain that much if not most even of the "Neo-Elvish" composition that manages to avoid these more obvious sorts of errors would strike Tolkien as little if at all better than a sort of "Elvish as She Is Spoke."

Conclusion—A Modest Proposal

So where does this leave us? Does this mean that it is futile or meaningless to attempt to compose Elvish sentences? Well, no. The mere fact that we can diagnose more or less demonstrable errors in "Neo-Elvish," and further have the example and caution of such works as *English as She Is Spoke* (not to mention never-ending supplies of foreign-language homework) to help warn those who will heed, gives some hope of improvement of "Elvish as She Is Spoke." With long, thorough study and careful consideration of the information and exemplars that Tolkien did provide, it is indeed possible to produce written Elvish that so far as anyone now can tell conforms grammatically and idiomatically to the exemplars and statements that Tolkien provided to a very high degree (for example, by relying only upon attested elements and derivational mechanisms, attested grammatical devices, and attested syntactic patterns that can reasonably be thought to belong to the same conceptual phase)—though I very much doubt that anyone will ever be able to do so quickly enough to use Elvish as a spoken language, for any but the most trivial sorts of declarative sentences.

But I am proposing that "Neo-Elvish," at least as practiced and discernible from the writings and usages of its chief proponents and practitioners in various Internet forums and in Peter Jackson's movies, has taken the dubious form it exhibits today largely because it has got the process backwards. What we see almost without exception is attempted translation of sentences or passages composed in one's native tongue (most often English) into one or the other of the two

main Elvish languages. I make the modest proposal that the best way to develop real linguistic knowledge of the Elvish languages as Tolkien thought about and described them, and thus to have the best chance of producing Elvish sentences that most fully and faithfully reflect the character of the Elvish languages so far as that can be discerned, is this: Rather than translating from English into Elvish, thereby bending and distorting the Elvish to serve the needs of the English—all too often, alas, beyond recognition—turn this process around. Engage first in deep and thoughtful study of all that Tolkien himself wrote, of the modes of expression that he employed in his Elvish compositions, and of the subjects of expression that interested him, as exemplified by the contents of the lexicons he created. Such consideration can hardly fail to suggest and inspire expression in the linguistically- and/or poetically-minded student of the languages, and will provide thereby both the inspiration and the means to make new expression in the languages as they actually are, rather than as we might otherwise wish them to be, or mistakenly think they are because of the assumptions we import from our own language. Such an approach would, I feel, not only result in generally better Elvish, but would also be more in keeping with Tolkien's own conviction that the word comes *first* and the story follows; that is, unlike "Elvish as She Is Spoke," which puts the words utterly at the mercy of an English original, *Tolkien's* languages, and not the speaker's own, then become the source and the inspiration of new expression *in* the languages.

The results would certainly still not be perfect, but they would be far truer to Tolkien's own heart of hearts.

1. As Tolkien continued: "to be shot at." J.R.R. Tolkien, to Robert Murray, in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, selected and ed. Humphrey Carpenter with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 172. This volume is hereafter cited as *Letters*, by page.

2. J.R.R. Tolkien, to the Houghton Mifflin Company, 30 June 1955, in *Letters*, 219–20.

3. J.R.R. Tolkien, to Christopher Tolkien, 21 February 1958, in *Letters*, 264–65.

4. For instance, I have seen no evidence even among Tolkien's unpublished linguistic papers that the phrase *elen síla lúmenn' omentielmo* existed in any form before Tolkien began work on the book, nor even until he was well past beginning; though certainly all the elements of the phrase had long been in existence, with the exception of what was in 1954 the first-person plural inclusive genitive ending *-lmo* 'of our,' the precise form of which was a development rather late in the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*.

5. For an excellent presentation of this matter, see John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War: The Threshold of Middle-earth* (London: HarperCollins, 2003), 125–27, in which he details the nascent elements of Tolkien's mythology that are intertwined with the earliest *Qenya Lexicon*, written some two years before Tolkien first set down any narrative tales.

6. I'll note here that an exceedingly common greeting among online enthusiasts of Tolkien's invented languages is Quenya *aiya*, which is translated by Tolkien as "hail!" or "behold!" and thus seems to be a rather more formal greeting that our "hello"; but it has nonetheless been adopted, pretty much by default, as the standard greeting in "Neo-Quenya." Among "Neo-Sindarin" enthusiasts we also find the somewhat less popular greeting *mae govannen* "well met!" Thus surely no group this side of the Society for Creative Anachronism ever greets each other with "hail!" and "well met!" quite nearly so often as do practitioners of "Neo-Elvish."

7. A fact that is in stark and telling contrast with the use of (what purports to be) Elvish in the recent films by Peter Jackson, which almost entirely eschew Tolkien's own Elvish exemplars in favor of long stretches of mostly banal dialogue and exposition.

8. J.R.R. Tolkien, *Sauron Defeated*, ed. Christopher Tolkien, vol. 9 of *The History of Middle-earth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 128–29.

9. Consider for example Tolkien's labors over translating what would seem to be an extremely simple predicate phrase, "in heaven," from the opening of the Lord's Prayer for his Quenya Paternoster (which is extant in a series of seven distinct versions). Before this was published, any student of "Neo-Quenya" would without a moment's hesitation have said that "the" way to translate this is to use "the" locative case of *menel* 'heaven,' thus *menelesse. Tellingly and characteristically, though, things were not so clear to *Tolkien*, who progressed through no less than nine distinct versions of a translation: 1) loc. adj. *menellea*, 2) loc. adj. *menelessea*, 3) prep. phrase *mi menel*, 4) loc. adj. *menelzea*, 5) gen. (*?*) or abl. (*?*) *menello*, 6) adj. *menelda*, 7) loc. adj. *meneldea*, and the paraphrases 8) *i ea pell' Ea* and 9) *i ea han ea* lit. "who is/exists beyond what is/exists," or as we might say, "who is beyond the world."

10. J.R.R. Tolkien, to Mr. Rang, August 1967, in *Letters*, 380.

11. Ibid., 379–80.

12. J.R.R. Tolkien, to Rayner Unwin, 3 July 1956, in *Letters*, 250.

13. It is not for nothing that Lowdham enters excitedly into a meeting of the Notion Club to announce: "'I've got something new!' he shouted. 'More than mere words. Verbs! Syntax at last!'" (J.R.R. Tolkien, "The Notion Club Papers," in Tolkien, *Sauron Defeated*, 246.)

14. Not coincidentally, I think, achieved during the mid- to late thirties, that is, at the same time that Tolkien achieved the most cohesive and sustained form of "The Silmarillion," the fortunes of the languages seeming very much to rise and fall with that of the *legendarium*.

15. Tolkien, to Mr. Rang, August 1967, in *Letters*, 380.

16. Anyone who has wrestled with, say, the many semantic functions that are mapped onto the relatively small set of inflectional cases of the Latin noun, where for example the ablative case alone can be used to indicate place or time at or in or from which, the instrument by which, and many other functions; or, even with respect to such closely related languages as English and German, the often quite variant and counterintuitive (each to the other) idiom of prepositions and the cases they govern: for example, German *unter* can translate both "under" and "among"; will understand how thoroughly wrong one can go in relying on one's native model of syntax and semantics in place of that of another language.

17. Or "poetry." Or as my friend and colleague Patrick Wynne says, "really really *bad* poetry." And, of course—and I swear I'm not making this up—to answer the burning question of how to say "I am cheese" in Quenya.

18. Though they do not share precisely the same set of formations. For the details, see my article on "The Past-Tense Verb in the Noldorin of the *Etymologies*" at http://www.elvish.org/Tengwestie/articles/Hostetter/noldpat.phtml.

19. Thus far only four past-tense verbs are attested for all of Sindarin proper, of which two are weak and two are strong.

20. See http://www.elvish.org/gwaith/movie_soundtrack_rotk. htm#angmar.

21. This *hannon le* has even found its way into the recent movies, courtesy of translator David Salo; see http://www.elvish.org/gwaith/movie_rotk. htm#hannon.

22. J.R.R. Tolkien, *Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth*, ed. Christopher Tolkien (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 166.

23. J.R.R. Tolkien, "'Words of Joy': Five Catholic Prayers in Quenya (Part One)," ed. Patrick Wynne, Arden R. Smith, and Carl F. Hostetter, *Vinyar Tengwar* 43 (January 2002): 14.

24. See Bertrand Bellet, "Re: Thank you," post to the Elfling mailing list, 16 November 2003, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/elfling/message/27523.

25. Indeed, given all that we know currently about Noldorin and Sindarin, *hannon le* would in fact mean 'I understand thee.'

26. It also often leads to hilarious misuse of words, exemplified by the famous (and probably apocryphal) anecdote about an early computer-based translation from English to Russian of 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,' yielding in Russian a result that meant literally 'the vodka is good but the meat is rotten.'

27. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 1 vol. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, [1999]), 1096.

28. J.R.R. Tolkien, "Notes on *Óre*," ed. Carl F. Hostetter, *Vinyar Tengwar* 41 (July 2000): 11.

29. It is widely assumed that such forms of Noldorin and Sindarin verbal nouns in *-(a)d* as *suilad* 'greeting' are *gerunds*, that is, belonging to a class of nouns that, like the class of nouns in Latin from which the name *gerund* is taken, is formed from verbal stems.

30. It is to be noted that none of the supposed Sindarin plural gerunds listed by David Salo in his *Gateway to Sindarin* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004), 114, are anywhere attested in Tolkien's writings.

31. See http://www.uib.no/People/hnohf/yessesse.htm and http://www.uib.no/People/hnohf/genesis2.htm.

32. Bobo Williams, "(S) Yeat's [sic] The Second Coming." A post to the Elfling mailing list, 16 May 2003, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/elfling/message/31750.

33. This attribution has recently found new challenge, in particular as regards José da Fonseca; see http://www.collinslibrary.com/english.html.