Sindarin and Quenya Phonology

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Abstract
Attempts to classify the distinguishing phonemes of Quenya and Sindarin and use them to develop a framework for determining where on the scale of historical change a vocabulary word might fall.

Keywords
Tolkien, J.R.R.—Languages

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Robert Foster

This paper is the first version of a portion of what I hope will eventually become an Elvish Grammar and Dictionary. Obviously, my efforts are somewhat tentative and this paper is not meant as a final work. I have included it here because of the need to profit by the many criticisms and corrections which I am sure my work will generate.

Before I proceed to my discussion, which is of the sound systems of Quenya and Sindarin, I would like to mention that in my examination of Eldarion I shall attempt to eschew phoneticism and from discussible differences. All phonetic differences which are not of interest in this analysis are ignored. Times at which I shall break my own rule, but it should be kept in mind that this decision was extremely hypothetical and ultimately cannot be defended by anything more than my linguistic intuition. Also, I would like to point out that although there are no phonetic differences which are not of interest in this analysis, the concept of the phoneme, it is an extremely useful concept for discussions of this sort.

Sindarin and Quenya, and Sindarin and Quenya phonology...
in addition, there are a small but significant number of "vowel clusters" in ES.

The great changes in the vowels and consonants of ES which at times seem almost random probably took place at the same time as the large amount of elision and addition of vowels that seems to have accompanied the tendency of SS to lose final vowels and the corresponding stress shifts, and so the question of sound correspondences can probably only be settled at the same time as the rules of the latter phenomena are determined.

I would greatly appreciate any questions or comments generated by this paper, as I am sure that my presentation is not perfect. My address is 2168 Chestnut St., Apt. E,

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This paper was written much later than the introductory address given at Mythcon that it parallels. The basic ideas are the same, while written and oral style often vary in their exact approach.

I would like to begin with the poem about Denethor I wrote, which is in the Mythcon Program Book:

**LAMENT FOR DENETHOR**

Go now to your fire, beaten and mad.
Rage in the flames; you whom existence has driven insane.
Your first born is dishonored in death;
Your second is swooned before you.
Leave the old Grey Beard, who in all his plots cannot win.
Leave now the last chance to see beyond your crazy pride,
The Star a baffling seen from Mordor.
Only the darkness is eternal.

I begin with Denethor, a character I feel is often overlooked, despite his strong personality and heavy, yet tragic, role, he has to play in the drama of Middle-earth. Denethor reminds me very much of the predicament and situation of Modern Western Man. Modern Western Man, like Denethor, is a ruler of a vast material empire; is a recipient and guardian of serval noble heritages, all several millenia old, and is yet faced with impotency and despair when confronted with his worst enemy. Modern Western Man, like Denethor, lacks the quality of inner personal dynamism when confronting this enemy.

What is Modern Man's worst enemy? Can we even think he has one? Look at what he has conquered and subjugated, nearly everything he has set his mind to. In fact that he has not been able to domesticate, to be able to fully explain and understand. That which he cannot control, he has to come to fear, and has attempted to blot out recognition, so that this unconquered thing will not trouble his pride of those things he has come to master.

What is this thing? For a crude example I would bring forth the multitude of grade & science-fiction horror movies made during the late forties and the fifties, in this certain genre of film, we have a recurring theme, that of some gigantic monster, troubled and awakened from his arcane sleep, to arise from the depth of the sea, and finally to make his way to a large metropolitan city to there ravage and destroy blindly all that he can, before the scientists can discover some bizarre last ditch way of destroying him. The monster must always be destroyed, never subjugated and tamed. To me this is a clear symbolism of what Modern Western Man is the most afraid of: the unconscious mind, his unconscious mind. Why is he so afraid of it? I suggest because he cannot tame it, nor hold it down long enough to analyse it.

Modern Man has inherited from Hellenic Civilization an intellectual and logical approach toward taking raw information, and ordering it into understandable categories. He has developed this technique to a fine science. Through harnessing the tremendous powers of the intellect, he has been able to revolutionize his manipulation of the physical universe, and we have seen in roughly the last four hundred years unbelievable advances in the way man lives and thinks. This period, from the Renaissance to now, has been the period of "the detached rational intellect."

But in detaching this tremendous power of the intellect and harnessing for man's material benefits, he has tended to neglect, culturally speaking, other aspects of himself, and dismiss them as not as important, or even in some cases, worthless.

But Man is more than his intellect, and we have this brought before us every night, only to forget it in the morning. Our dreams are there, and what they tell us is often not logical or comprehensible to our orderly minds. Dreams are a kind of symbolic language of the unconscious mind, attempting, as it were, to communicate to our conscious minds, in the best ways it knows how.

To me, the unconscious mind represents and deals with order. Its language is that of linguistic building blocks that can be rearranged and manipulated for communication. It sorts and rearranges facts in a logical way, much like a computer, only with a much greater degree of subtlety.

The unconscious mind is not ordered and structured in ways that are understandable to the conscious mind. Two universally recurring symbols of the unconscious are those of the deep and stormy ocean, and the limitless and primeval forest. Both are wild and unknown regions, where unknown and fearful things abide.

Charles Williams has combined the images of the sea and the forest into Broceliande. He says that it is "both a forest and a sea - a sea-wood. " A place of making... From it the huge shapes emerge, the whole matter of the form of Byzantium [Williams' symbol for perfect order] - and all this is felt in the beloved, "I C.S. Lewis comments about Broceliande, saying that it is both the road to Sarras or to Pto L"u (Heaven and Hell)

Those who accomplish either journey will not be likely to return; but those who have gone only a little way into the wood have been known to come out again. They are changed when