

mandala

Symbolism

in LORD OF THE RINGS

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ACCORDING to the famous Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung (1875–1961), many symbols find their origin in the collective unconscious (an unconscious psychic force which the whole human race has in common). A symbol is an image that implies "more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it."¹

One of our most important symbols is the Mandala. The term 'Mandala' comes from the Sanskrit, and means "(magic) circle". The most important manifestation of the Mandala is a circle with a centre, but the mandala-design includes in fact all concentric figures. In *Psychologie und Alchemie* Jung discusses a number of dreams, where mandalas occur in the form of a clock, a ball, a sphere, a snake turning in a circle around the narrator, a round table with four chairs, a square garden with a fountain in the midst, people walking around a square, four children walking in a circle, and so on.

The meaning of every particular mandala depends on the context. And as with all symbols, this meaning is inexhaustible. I shall give the most frequently-occurring explanations:

1. The Mandala is the symbol of *the Self*, the totality of the psyche of a man, the sum of conscious and unconscious factors. (I know this may seem very unclear, but readers who want to know more would be advised to read an introduction to Jungian psycho-analysis. Besides, it is very interesting to apply Jung to Tolkien's works.) The Self is not necessarily positive, it also has a negative aspect: "It can cause people to 'spin' megalomaniac or delusory fantasies that catch them up and 'possess' them. A person in this state thinks with mounting excitement that he has grasped and solved the great cosmic riddles; he therefore loses all touch with human reality."²

The mandala appears when the process of individuation (the realisation of the Self) comes to an end.

2. In the past the mandala has frequently been used to explain *God* in a philosophical way, or to give Him a visible form, e.g. in worshipping Him.

[1] Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p.4, Picador, 1978.
 [2] *Op.cit.*, p.234.

3. It has an ancient magical effect as the *protecting circle* (or negative: forbidden circle). Emphasized here is, of course, the centre. Psychologically speaking this is the inner personality. The circle serves as a protecting wall, to prevent this personality from bursting out or falling apart, or to hold back influences from outside.

4. The Mandala leads to the *restoration of order*, both internal and external. In eastern civilisations it is used as an instrument, since a Mandala leads to reconciliation of contrasts. It brings about a feeling of inner peace, a feeling that life regains meaning and order. Such mandalas appear especially after chaotic conflictual situations involving fright.

This Mandala is conservative in so far as it restores a previous order; but it is creative in so far as something new is expressed. In fact it is a spiral process, since in the new order the old order returns on a higher level.

5. Many cities and buildings have a mandala-plan (especially in the Middle Ages). Here the mandala has the meaning of a *microcosm*.

6. The Mandala as *Temenos* is in fact part of the protecting circle, but it has a specific appearance and a name of its own. A Temenos is "Ein dem Gott geweihtes, abgetrenntes Stück Land, oft ein Hain, einen Tabubezirk, zu schaffen, in welchem es ihm möglich wird, das Unbewusste zu erleben."³ In the case of a holy place like this, the circle isolates an inner process or value that must not be mixed with things outside.



The Protecting Circle

The most frequent Mandala in *LotR* is No.4 above, i.e. the protecting circle. We are concerned here mostly with physical protection, not so much with psychological protection. People tend to look by preference for places with a mandala-structure when they want to take a rest, or when they have to defend themselves.

We find a good example of this when the Fellowship is in *Eregion*:

For their defence in the night the Company climbed to the top of the small hill.... It was crowned with a knot of old and twisted trees, about which lay a broken circle⁴ of boulder-stones. In the midst⁵ of this they lit a fire...
(*LotR* I.2.IV.5)

The mandala, being broken, can't offer sufficient protection, and they have a lot of trouble repulsing the attack of the Wargs.

When Aragorn and the Hobbits arrive at *Amon*

Sûl (*Weathertop*), they find there "a wide ring of ancient stone-work... But in the centre a cairn of broken stones had been piled" (*LotR*, I.1.XI).⁴ The pile of stones in the middle of the circle contains a message from Gandalf, who had retreated there when he was besieged by the Black Riders.

The old stone ring is the only remnant of the great tower of *Amon Sûl* that was built by *Elen-dil*, and where a palantir had been kept. It is striking that most palantiri were kept in towers with a mandala-plan.

Minas Tirith is built in seven levels, and around every level a circular wall has been erected. Within the seventh circle lies the High Court, the Court of the Fountain, and the high White Tower, where another of the palantiri was kept. And the people inside the walls "laughed and did not greatly fear" (*LotR*, III.5.IV), while the city was being besieged.

These are clearly examples of physical protection. We find a case of psychological protection in *Isengard*, "a circle of sheer rocks that enclose a valley as with a wall, and in the midst of that valley is a tower of stone called *Orthanc*" (*LotR*, I.2.II). There is only one gate, and there is no other way to enter the valley. All the roads inside the mandala lead to the centre: the tower of *Orthanc*. "A peak and isle of rock it was, black and gleaming hard: four mighty piers of many-sided stone were welded into one" (*LotR*, II.3.VIII). So the tower itself has a mandala-pattern as well.

Several times attention is drawn to the fact that *Orthanc* seemed not to have been made by the craft of men (e.g. II.3.VIII). It was built by the *Númenoreans* in the days of their power, and one of the palantiri was kept there. In the Third Age *Saruman* settled in *Isengard*. There he wanted to work out his plans to become the great ruler of *Middle-earth*. The mandala protected him from outside influences: no-one could try to put the ideas out of his head. It also kept his power and his delusions together: if *Saruman* lost some of his power, or if he discovered gaps in his delusory theories, he would surely not be able to bring his plans to a successful conclusion.

In *The Two Towers* the Ents assault the wall of *Isengard* and break it. Thus *Saruman's* protecting circle is broken, and the consequences for him are incalculable. His army is defeated, and his staff is broken. The whole wall is razed to the ground by the Ents — but they cannot get any hand-hold on the Tower of *Orthanc*. *Saruman* is therefore able to fall back on this tower, and so is able to save a part of his power — which is represented by means of his persuasive voice. With this voice he will be able to convince *Treebeard* to let him go, despite *Gandalf's* strict orders to watch him very closely.

Restoration of the Order

Round doors and round windows are typical characteristics of *Hobbit architecture*. In the Prologue it is stressed several times that Hobbits are very fond of order — and I think we can reasonably conclude that their predilection for round doors and windows is prompted by this urge for order, of which it is the external characteristic.

At the beginning of *The Hobbit* we are given a description of *Bilbo's* door: "...a perfectly round door ... with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle" (*TH*, ch.1). *Bilbo's* orderly life is dis-

[3] Jung: *Psychologie und Alchemie*, p.75. Rough translation: "[A temenos is] a plot of land which has been consecrated to the god and partitioned off, often a grove, to create a taboo area in which it becomes possible for him [a person] to experience the unconscious."

[4] [Writer's emphasis is indicated by underlining; original emphases are in italics. — Ed.]

[5] = *Lord of the Rings*, Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter IV.

turbed by Gandalf, who saddles him with thirteen dwarves: they want him to join them on their quest. This disturbance is symbolised by the sign Gandalf scratches on his beautiful door: the mandala is disturbed.

In *Derndingle* the Ents have their great Entmoot, where they decide on what action they are going to take against Saruman because of his destruction of so many of their trees. *Derndingle* is "as round as a bowl". They choose a round place for their meeting, since the mandala-pattern has an ordering influence on their thoughts.

"*The Cross-roads of the Fallen King*" is the name of the crossing of the Morannon-Harad road and the Morgul-Osgiliath road in central Ithilien, where Sauron has played havoc. The four roads meet in the exact middle of a circle of trees (II.4.VII). When Frodo, Sam and Gollum reach the trees the light of the setting sun falls, inside the circle, upon a huge seated king-figure made of stone. The statue is damaged, and in place of the head there is a painted stone with a red eye. The real head lies cracked beside the road. But

A trailing plant with flowers like small white stars had bound itself across the brows as if in reverence for the fallen king, and in the crevices of his stony hair yellow stonecrop gleamed.

(*LotR*, II.4.VII.)

The king's statue can be seen as a symbol for the Lords of Gondor, the Númenoreans, who were the rulers of that region. The king is beheaded because the armies of Sauron turned the people out of that part of the country. But when Frodo arrives at the ring, the tide is turning already, as is shown by the crown of flowers. Frodo properly remarks, "They cannot conquer for ever!" (*loc.cit.*).

And indeed, thirteen days later Aragorn Elessar reaches the Cross-roads with an army:

Then Aragorn set trumpeters at each of the four roads that ran into the ring of trees, and they blew a great fanfare, and the heralds cried aloud: 'The Lords of Gondor have returned and all this land that is theirs they take back!'

(*LotR*, III.5.X.)

The stone with the eye is destroyed, and the old head is replaced on the body, and the statue is cleaned and restored. The old order is clearly re-instated here. And the third part of *The Lord of the Rings* is for that matter entitled 'The Return of the King'. That it has become in fact a new order — or the old order on a higher level — is stressed by Imrahil: "Say not *The Lords of Gondor*. Say *The King Elessar*." (III.5.X).



At *Amon Hen* we get two ordering mandalas one after the other, but the second is by far the clearest and most important. Frodo is charged with the responsibility of deciding which way the Fellowship is to follow: that to Mordor, or that to Minas Tirith. This is a very heavy task, if one considers that the future of the world may depend on it. Frodo asks to be left alone for an hour. He goes away, seemingly led by some unconscious power:

...aimlessly at first ... Frodo found that his feet were leading him up towards the slopes of the hill. ... For some while he climbed, not caring which way he went, until he came to a grassy place. Rowan trees grew about it, and in the midst was a wide flat stone.

(*LotR*, I.2.X.)

Sitting in the centre of this mandala, Frodo looks back on what has happened since he left the Shire. He tries to order his thoughts, but he can take no decisions. The reason for this is that Boromir, who has been following him, has entered the mandala and disturbed it. Frodo feels his presence. Boromir tries to steal the Ring from Frodo — and the only way for Frodo to escape is to put on the Ring and become invisible. Boromir, left alone in the circle, immediately understands how stupid he has been.

Again Frodo seems to be led by another power, until he reaches the top of *Amon Hen*. There he sees

a wide flat circle, paved with mighty flags, and surrounded with a crumbling battlement; and in the middle, set upon four carven pillars, was a high seat...

(*LotR*, I.2.X.)

Frodo sits down on the seat and looks in all directions. And all of a sudden he feels the Eye of Sauron, searching him out. Then the mandala begins to work on his mind:

The two powers strove in him. For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he writhed, tormented. Suddenly he was aware of himself again ... free to choose ... He took the Ring off his finger ... Frodo rose to his feet. A great weariness was on him, but his will was firm and his heart lighter. He spoke aloud to himself. 'I will do now what I must ... I will go alone. At once.'

(*loc.cit.*)

The decision is made. The chaos in his mind has been solved. These pages give us an excellent description of how the mandala orders Frodo's thoughts, and how it brings him at a certain moment the exact solution to his conflict.

In the *Old Forest* we also find two glades in mandala-form. The frightening wood gives Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin "an uncomfortable feeling" — and "the feeling steadily grew". "Suddenly they came out of the trees and found themselves in a wide circular space." (I.1.VI.) This is the Bonfire Glade, where hobbits once burned hundreds of trees, as a retaliatory action against an attack by the Forest on Buckland. The hobbits remained in this place for some time, and then "[they] felt encouraged, and looked up hopefully ... they now went much quicker, and with better heart" (*loc.cit.*).

Some time later they again get anxious, but once more a mandala appears, on the top of a hill: "The wood stood all round the hill like thick hair that ended sharply in a circle round a shaven crown" (*loc.cit.*). It is remarkable that the hobbits do not go straight up the hill, but climb it "winding round and round". At the top they look towards the four points of the compass: "...the southern half of the Forest ... in the west ... northward ... in the east...". Mandala enough, and again a positive effect: "That cheered them greatly." Twice within a short time a mandala solves the hobbits' feelings of anxiety, and restores to them the courage to proceed on their way.



There also seems to

be a connection between mandalas and the *Elves*. For some time the Elves lived in Valinor, in the Undying Lands. But after some rather unhappy events, as related in the beginning of *QS*, they were banished by the Valar across the Sea to Middle-earth. At the end of the First Age the curse was raised, but not all the Elves returned, since they could not leave the land where they had been living for so many centuries.

But it was impossible for one of the High Elves to overcome the yearning for the Sea, and the longing to pass over it again to the land of their former bliss. (*RCEO*, 'Notes and Translations': *Namárië*.)

Moreover they [the Elves] were not at peace in their hearts, since they had refused to return into the West, and they desired both to stay in Middle-earth, which indeed they loved, and yet to enjoy the bliss of those that had departed.

(*QS*, 'Of the Rings of Power & the Third Age.')

Sam Gamgee also notes the duality in the Elvish mind:

They are quite different from what I expected — so old and young, and so gay and sad, as it were. (*LotR*, I.1.3.)

This unrest in the Elvish mind is, I believe, connected with the preference for Mandalas that they appear to have. These Elvish mandalas are of course the *Rings of Power*. The idea of making such Rings originated with the Elves: more than once it is stressed that

Those who made them did not desire strength or domination or hoarded wealth, but understanding, making, and healing, to preserve all things unstained. (I.2.II.)

Thus we can be fairly sure that this idea is prompted by the restlessness of their minds, which find rest in making figures of mandala-form.

In *The Hobbit*, Bilbo and the Dwarves are travelling through Mirkwood, and they see there a group of Elves

sitting on sawn rings of the felled trees in a great circle. There was a fire in their midst and there were torches fastened to some of the trees round about. (*TH*, Chapter 8.)

The Elves will not allow anyone to enter the circle. The moment Bilbo enters the ring to ask for food, all the lights are extinguished and the fire disappears. The same scene is repeated twice more.

We find a third series of examples in *Lórien*. All the open places in the wood are circular. A beautiful example of this is Cerin Amroth, which I shall be discussing later. Even the city, Caras Galadon, is surrounded by a circular wall. It is rather improbable that this is a protecting circle, since nobody was able to enter *Lórien* without Galadriel's permission — not even Sauron. That this is an ordering mandala is revealed later in the book: Twenty-two days after his fight with the Balrog, Gandalf comes back to life and is carried by Gwaihir to *Lórien*. Gandalf reports it himself:

'Thus it was that I came to Caras Galadon ... I tarried there in the ageless time of that land where days bring healing not decay. Healing I found, and I was clothed in white.'

(*LotR*, II.3.V)



An exterior order is also restored here: Gandalf is clothed in white. White had been the colour of Saruman as head of the White Council, that had to decide on strategy in the battle against Sauron. But Saruman fell. The white clothes show that Gandalf has taken the place of Saruman. In this way the order is restored on a new level.

A last example of the Elvish predilection for mandalas is found in the emblems of a number of Elves. I know nothing about their rôle or meaning, but their existence cannot be denied.⁶ These emblems, which are piece by piece perfect and beautiful mandalas, all belong to Elves of the First Age. They probably devised emblems like these to compensate for the prohibition on their leaving Middle-earth; such devices would soothe their minds, burdened by exile.



Temenos

The house of the Ent Bregalad is described as "nothing more than a mossy stone set upon turves under a green bank. Rowan trees grew in a circle about it..." We know the love of the Ents for their trees, a love stronger than that of the shepherd for his sheep. When Bregalad tells the story of his life, it becomes clear why those rowan-trees stand there:

'There were rowan-trees in my home,' said Bregalad, softly and sadly, 'rowan-trees that took root when I was an Enting, many many years ago in the quiet of the world. The oldest were planted by the Ents to try and please the Entwives ... there are no trees of all that race, the people of the Rose, that are so beautiful to me. And these trees grew and grew, till the shadow of each was like a green hall, and their red berries in the autumn were a burden, and a beauty and a wonder. Birds used to flock there. I like birds ... But the birds became unfriendly and greedy and tore at the trees, and threw the fruit down and did not eat it. Then Orcs came with axes and cut down my trees. I came and called them by their long names, but they did not quiver, they did not hear or answer: they lay dead.'

(II.3.IV.)

A very tragic story. The circle of rowan-trees around Bregalad's house stands there clearly in memory of his former home, and out of a kind of worship for those trees. They always make him think of the injustice done to him and to them. And that is why he is so quick to make a decision: while the other Ents are still deliberating, he is already determined to attack Saruman and his orcs in Isengard.

The *Barrow-downs* are hills crowned with stone circles, and in the middle of such a circle stands a stone, "like a landmark, or a guarding finger, or more like a warning" (I.1.VIII). The Barrow-downs were built by Men of the First Age, and they had buried there the noblest of their dead. "Those hills were therefore revered by the Dúnedain after their return; and there many of their lords and kings were buried" (III Appendix A.I(iii)).

[6] See the illustrations on the cover of the British hardcover (1977) edition of *QS*, Allen & Unwin's *Silmarillion Calendar 1978* (February & April), and *Pictures by JRRT* (Picture 47).

Clearly the mandala here has the meaning of a holy place. But these sacred places are desecrated when, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, evil spirits came from Angmar and entered the deserted hills to take possession of the dead bodies — which became the notorious Barrow-wights. This desecration is also punished: After their escape from the Barrow-down in which they had been captured by a barrow-wight, the hobbits took swords from the treasure of the king buried there. With one of these swords Merry later kills the leader of the Black Riders: the Witch-King of Angmar.

A third *temenos* is *Cerin Amroth*, in the middle of *Lórien*:

They were standing in an open space. To the left stood a great mound, covered with a sward of grass as green as Spring-time in the Elder Days. Upon it, as a double crown, grew two circles of trees: the outer had bark of snowy white, and were leafless but beautiful in their shapely nakedness; the inner were mal-lorn trees of great height, still arrayed in pale gold. ... a towering tree ... stood in the centre ...

'Behold! You are come to *Cerin Amroth*,' said Haldir. For this is the heart of the ancient realm as it was long ago. ... Here ever bloom the winter flowers in the unfading grass...'

(I.2.VI.)

At this place, with a splendid mandala-structure, the Fellowship stays for a while. *Cerin Amroth* lies in the middle of the Elven-realm, and it is more elvish than anything Sam ever saw. Haldir invites Sam and Frodo to climb *Cerin Amroth*. As soon as Frodo enters the circle he feels entirely elvish: he feels the timelessness of the land, he hears far off the roaring of the great Sea, he feels the life inside the trees.

Aragorn says that *Cerin Amroth* is the heart of Elvendom on earth. The absolute Elvish character of this place and its immortal overgrowth show that it is a sacred place for the Elves, and a favourite place to dwell and to rest in.

It is also on *Cerin Amroth* that Aragorn and Arwen plight their troth to each other, so that this place becomes for them much more, even, than a holy place. This explains the strange musing of Aragorn at the foot of the hill. And many years after Aragorn's death, Arwen goes back to *Lórien*. When she feels her end approaching, she goes to *Cerin Amroth* and lays herself to rest on this Elvish holy place,

and there is her green grave, until the world is changed, and all the days of her life are utterly forgotten by men that come after, and elanor and niphredil bloom no more east of the Sea.

(III Appendix A.I(v))



The Self

One of the most frequent mandalas in *LotR* is undoubtedly the *Ring* itself.

We have already seen that the idea of Rings of Power had its origins in the unquiet mind of the Elves.

The One Ring can be seen as the Self of Sauron: he forged it with his own hands, he put a great part of his power into it, and did many works with it.

When at the end of the Second Age Sauron is defeated, Isildur cuts the Ring off his finger, and Sauron is separated from his Self. From then on Sauron is referred to as 'the Shadow'. In *LotR* Sauron is only represented as a seeking Eye. This Eye is looking for the Ring, to be united with it. The Ring is also looking for the Eye. The fact that Gollum lost the Ring and that Bilbo found him, is explained by Gandalf as "the Ring ... trying to get back to its master" (I.1.II).

On the cover of some editions of *LotR* we find a drawing of the Ring in which the inner area is black, but in the *centre* there is the Red Eye. It is clearly *this* that Sauron wants to achieve, and this that has to be avoided at all costs. Since the process of individuation is experienced passively, Sauron will get the Ring automatically when his process of individuation comes to an end — when his Eye is centred in the Ring, as it appears in this mandala. But if the Ring is destroyed, Sauron can no longer reach his Self: so that if one wants to defeat Sauron thoroughly, one has to destroy the Ring.

At the beginning of this article I mentioned the dangerous *negative aspect* of the Self. It is striking that in every case where someone comes into contact with the Ring, the symptoms appear that are described by Jung as going together with this negative aspect. Most figures see themselves as the great heroes or rulers of Middle-earth when the Ring comes within their grasp. The principal objective for each of them then becomes to banish these visions and reject the Ring. People who get the Ring must give it up voluntarily. Those who are not able to make such a renunciation are doomed to death, since the negative aspect of the Self dominates them. Remarkable in this respect is Gandalf's comment that a person does not own the Ring, but is owned by the Ring.

Here is a list of those who are confronted with the negative side of their Selves, and how they react to it:

1. *Isildur* cuts the Ring off Sauron's hand. Elrond and Cirdan advise him to destroy the Ring immediately in Mount Doom. He refuses, wanting to keep the Ring. Isildur is killed by Orcs, and the Ring ends up in the Gladden fields.

2. Nearly 2,500 years later the Ring is found by *Déagol* the Stoor. His friend *Sméagol* demands it as a birthday present. *Déagol* refuses and is strangled professionally.

3. *Sméagol* takes the Ring and goes on an expedition to discover the secrets of the Mountains. The Ring changes him into *Gollum*. Five hundred years later the Ring leaves him. For the rest of his life *Gollum* will be looking for the Ring, which he cannot give up; he falls with it in *Orodruin*.

4. *Bilbo Baggins* finds the Ring, and even manages to use it for good purposes (cf. *The Hobbit*). Sixty years later he renounces the Ring, with the help of Gandalf, and passes it on to Frodo. Bilbo goes with the other Ringbearers to the Undying Lands.

5. *Frodo* accepts the task of bringing the Ring to Mount Doom. When at last he arrives at the Cracks of Doom, he cannot destroy it. *Gollum*, who is still living thanks to Frodo's compassion, bites the Ring off his finger and falls with it into *Orodruin*. Frodo's achievement gives him a place in the Undying Lands, but because of his last failing (as well as earlier failings), he finds himself unhappy thereafter in Middle-earth.

6. *Gandalf* more than once refuses to take the Ring. He knows the consequences, and as a *Maia* he is directly accountable to *Ilúvatar*.

7. *Saruman*, who has studied the Rings of Power, wants to gain possession of the Ring, and clearly suffers from megalomania. In the end he is killed, and his spirit dissolves in the air.

8. *Aragorn* easily renounces the Ring, more than once. In the end he becomes King of Middle-earth, and thus ends his process of individuation in a perfect way. (See also below on the Court of the Fountain.)

9. *Elrond* refuses the Ring.

10. *Boromir* wants to use the Ring in the battle of Gondor against Mordor. In an access of megalomania, he tries to take it away from Frodo. Too late he realises his mistake. He is killed that very day.

11. The mighty Elven queen *Galadriel* renounces the Ring, although Frodo offers it spontaneously. She has a vision, where she sees herself as the mightiest queen. We should not forget that she was banished from the Undying Lands for ever, and that she knew that when the Ring was destroyed her own realm would also perish. Because of her renunciation (and other achievements), the ban is removed.

12. *Faramir*, Boromir's brother, gets Frodo and the Ring within his power, but he lets the Ringbearer go. He is appropriately rewarded in the end.

13. *Samwise* is the last one to be put to the test. When Frodo is lying, as if dead, at Cirith Ungol, Sam takes over the Ring to bring it to Mount Doom himself. The Ring gives him a vision that he will be the Hero of the Age. But after having saved Frodo, he gives him back the Ring. Later in Hobbiton Sam will have a successful career and a happy family life, and in the end he too will go, the last of the Ringbearers, to the Undying Lands.

So much for the negative aspect of the Self.

The Court of the Fountain lies within the seventh circle of Minas Tirith, at the foot of the White Tower.

Gandalf strode across the white-paved court. A sweet fountain played there in the morning sun, and a sward of bright green lay about it; but in the midst, drooping over the pool, stood a dead tree, and the falling drops dripped sadly from its barren and broken branches back into the clear water. (III.5.I.)

This is a mutilated mandala, because the tree in the centre is withered. According to dream 13 in *Psychologie und Alchemie*, p.143ff., the garden with the fountain is the Self. "Der Garten nämlich ist wiederum das Temenos, und der Springbrunnen ist der Quell 'lebendigen Wassers'."⁷ The tree symbolizes the process of Individuation (*Man and his Symbols*, p.165). The mandala can only be restored when a sapling of the White Tree is found. Aragorn, the legal heir of Gondor and Minas Tirith, is the man who is waiting for this sign.

He finds the sapling on a stony slope.

And Aragorn planted the new tree in the court by the fountain, and swiftly and gladly it began to grow; and when the month of June entered in it was laden with blossom. (III.6.V.)

In this way Aragorn's process of individuation ends.



[7] "The garden, then, is once again the Temenos, and the fountain is the source of 'living water'."

The Divinity

That the mandala also appears as a God-symbol in *LotR* might seem surprising to some readers. God in Tolkien's mythology is Ilúvatar, but he is never seen on Middle-earth. However, in the Old Forest there is that strange character Tom Bombadil. What do we know about him? Not very much. He is the Eldest and the Fatherless, but what else?

The four hobbits meet Tom in the Old Forest. They tell him about their quest, and Tom asks to see the Ring. Gandalf, "best of friends" (I.1. II), had once asked the same thing of Frodo, and it had then been very difficult for him to let go of it; but now he hands it over to Tom without hesitation.

It seemed to grow larger as it lay for a moment in his big, brown-skinned hand. Then suddenly, he put it to his eye and laughed. For a second the hobbits had a vision, both comical and alarming, of his bright blue eye gleaming through a circle of gold. Then Tom put the Ring round the end of his little finger and held it up to the candle-light ... There was no sign of Tom disappearing.

(I.1.VII.)

The eye within the circle is well-known as a symbol of God. This is why the vision of the hobbits is so important: it proves the divine character of Tom Bombadil. With no trouble at all his eye comes into the centre of the Ring. How feeble, by contrast, is Sauron's unsuccessful attempt to get his eye within the Mandala of the Ring, to take the place of God and his power in Middle-earth!*



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 - *Von den Wurzeln des Bewusstseins (= Archetypen und the Collective Unconscious).*
 - *Psychology and Religion.*
 - *Gestaltungen des Unbewussten.*



* *Postscript:* I am aware of the fact that this article does not reach a high level of scholarship. It is far from exhaustive, and there was neither structure nor system in my 'research'. But I had to start from zero, since I found nothing written on this particular topic. The comments of C. G. Jung on mandalas are spread over some ten books, and they have a high degree of obscurity. But if there are others who have additional information, I would be very glad to hear about it.