

**Understanding Concentricity:  
CharuSheel Singh's Mandala Literary Theory**

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**Abstract**

Esoteric tradition is fertile and full of the seeds of mystic ideas. It has been providing substratum to sprout those seeds of ideas into the lofty and exalted trees of language, literature and culture. In Indian tradition, Vyas, Valmiki, Panini, Mammata, Bhartrihari, cultivated the tree of knowledge. They propounded different literary theories which are universally acknowledged. Where Panini is known as the father of linguistics, Bhartrihari is famous for Sphota theory. Here, this paper explores the post-modern literary theory of Mandala propounded by Charu Sheel Singh, for understanding the literary text in oriental way. In this paper, I have focused on the ontogenesis of Charu Sheel Singh's theory, which takes its origin from concentric imagination that originates the different shapes of poetry. Further, it discusses the body plexuses as transcending factors of thoughts which like, twelve forms of Indian deity *Kali*, govern all the forms of his poetry after the assimilation in the mega center (Shiva). The kinetic energy produced during this process re-generates true sublime (*parmaanand*) in literary arts of the poets, like Vyas, Balmiki, Dadu Nanak, Ravidas among others. In the last section, I have concentrated my focus on the reader's response that stands on the other periphery of literary art.

**Keywords:** Kinaesthetic, *Mandala*, Ideas in motion, Chakras, Buddhist *kayas*, genealogy, genesis of *mandala*, *rasas*, *senary*, *septenary*, *chhidakasha*, *bodhichita*, *Virat Swarupa*, *two equilateral interlaced triangles*, physical plane, Archetypal plane, *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*, three *gunas*, trikal, Intersecting globes, concentric cycles, *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, lyric, epic

***Mandala***

Literally, the term *mandala* is a Sanskrit word which means circle. It has different imperatives. The beginning letter "M" is very mystical. H.P Blavatsky is of the view, "the most

sacred of all letter is M. It is both masculine and feminine, or androgyny, and is made to symbolize WATER, the great deep, in its origin” (Blavatsky Vol.I 384). In Oriental and Eurocentric esoteric tradition it stands for the wave. The letter MA is equivalent to, and corresponds with, number 5- composed of a binary, the symbol of the sexes separated, and of the *ternary* symbol of third life, the progeny of the binary. This, again, is often symbolized by the pentagon, the letter being the sacred sign, a divine monogram. MAITREYA is the secret name of fifth Buddha, and the *Kalki-avatara* of the *Brahmans*, the last Messiah who will come at the culmination of the Great Cycle. Further, this letter is the genesis of the words, like *Métis*, *Minerva* and *Mut* which mean ‘Divine wisdom’ in Greece and Egypt; *Mary*, *Myrrha* etc., the mother of Christian logos; *Maya* the mother of Buddha; *Madhava*, *Madhavi*, the most important god and goddesses in Hindu Pantheon; and finally the *Mandala*. The most sacred names of India begin with this letter generally- from *Mahahat*, the first manifested intellect and *Mandara*, the great mountain used by the gods to churn the Ocean down to *Mandakani*, the heavenly *Ganga*, *Manu*, etc. It is deeply rooted in the ontogenesis of this universe.

### ***Mandala as a ‘Circle’***

Here, the term *Mandala* as a ‘Circle’ has different connotations. Whether on the one side, it indicates ‘the completeness’ on the other side ‘the endless’ journey of this universe. It means it is the *Brahma*. To quote, “*OM purnamadah purnamidam purnatapurnya mudachatye, purnasya purnamadaya purnyameva vashishyate*” (that *Brahma* is infinite, and this universe is infinite. The infinite proceeds from the infinite. Then, taking infinitude of the infinite universe, it remains as the infinite alone). It symbolizes the continuity and discontinuity, beginning and end, finite and infinite, such is the mystic view of God. It is the ABSOLUTE. In this connection, to quote *Bhagavadgita*, what Krishna says about his nature, “*na me viduh suraganah prabhavam na maharsayah, aham adir hi devanam mahirshinam ca sarvasah*” (Krishnan 256). S. Radha Krishnan translates it, “neither the host of gods nor the great sages know any origin of Me for I am the source of the gods and the great sages in every way”. Even after getting subtle vision Arjuna says, “I see not Thy end or Thy middle or Thy beginning” (Krishnan 275). Beginning and end, both are unknown. It means, ‘beginning’ and ‘end’ emerge and merge in each other. The space between beginning and end interweaves the *Ida* and *Pingla* of god’s creation.

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## **In Buddhism**

In Buddhism, the term *Mandala* has a great significance as well as in Hinduism. There is a concept of time as *kala-chakra*, the Wheel of Time. This is represented in the Buddhist painting and performed in actual rituals by a person who is supposed to be the leader of the house. He leads the course of the twelve months until the cycle is completed. According to Prof. Charu Sheel Singh, this exercise is to interiorize the exterior space within the body of the *tathagata*, the yogi, or the artist, for that is only the way to arrive at the central axis of the moving world. In Tibetan Buddhism *mandala* is the place of worship as in Hinduism, it creates a super-terrestrial region in which the adorer has to discover the axis of the being. Here, these both concepts are comparable to the scripture of *Bhagavad-Gita* where Lord Krishna bestows the celestial eyes to behold the center of being. And then, he beholds the whole universe moving around the center. The God is a great visionary poet in Himself, and this universe is his imagination.

## **The Word Poet**

In Indian esoteric tradition, the word *poet* is considered synonym to the God. He must have the celestial vision to assimilate all the scattered elements in the center of cosmos. A yogi poet has to peep outside his *mandala*, and at the same time, he has to store the cosmic energy in his center for the conversion into the diamond which glitters forever. This center which is completely vacant, empty and it has unlimited space without any impurities. This is the true nature of *Sunya*, where everything merges in its center.

## **The Word *Sunya***

The word *Sunya* very important etymology and enriches the Buddhist genealogy. This is the central governing maxim of Buddhist philosophy. In Buddhist epistemology emptiness, apart from being realized by a process of absolute negation, also means dependent origination (*Pratitya-Samanutpada*), unreality of elements, the heart of Buddha, etc. Further, Prof. Singh quotes *Majjhima Nikaya*, “depending on the oil and the wick does the light of the lamp burn; it is neither in the one nor in the other, nor anything in itself; phenomena are, likewise, nothing in themselves. All things are unreal: they are deceptions *Nirvana* is the only Truth” (Singh 63).

Buddhism takes *Sunya* as emptiness where there is cessation of all the desires, what Yoga stresses on *vikaras* (impurities). *Sunyata* is the paramount goal of a Buddhist. But this *sunyata* is full of the seeds of *Omkar* from where the journey of Eternity begins. In this way, the spiral movement continues endlessly. The journey of trans-temporal world begins from the corporeal body. Our human body is also a *mandala*. It is the microcosmic reflection of macrocosm. Prof. Singh writes, “Our body is not only made of the five gross elements but of all that is imaginable, including twelve months of Zodiac, governed by the twelve different deities and planets. The simple logic boils down not only to the identity of the micro and macrocosm but to the fact that there is nothing besides the bodily vehicle” (Singh 61).

The *Virat-Rupa* of Krishna is symbolic of microcosmic body. But, such realization comes in *tathagata*-hood. Simply stated, *Mandala* is a space contained with its center, radius, circumference, where different geographical figures take place with their own symbolical interpretation which I have discussed further in this paper during the analysis of the figure of *Mandala*.

### ***Mandala* as the Hub of Poetic Creation (Kinetic Energy)**

For Prof. Singh, *Mandala* is taken as the hub of poetic creation. He writes:

*Mandala* is a technique of discovering literary meaning which takes into account all the difference that the world is capable of generating, but its meditative gravity surely helps it to look beyond difference into region where difference, along with other word meaning, was also dissolved and out of which it again sprang forth. This is no return to the logic of endless cyclic generation of rhythms but an attempt to make the circle change the flow of the mode of energy from the circular to the spiral, for it is only the latter which can lead to the point that is virtually the center (Singh 6).

### **Ideas in Motion: *Mandalas* Formed and Deformed**

In a simple language, it can be clarified that there is always the oscillation of radius governed by the gravity by the center and creates the thread of thoughts. The symphony of art

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begins to become audible. Each and every animate or inanimate object of this universe is a *mandala* and has its own rhythm. Million and billion *mandalas* are formed and deformed. Further, according to the potentialities of their seeds, they survive and get *nama-rupah* (name and form). But, this theory tries to catch the words and its associated heterogeneous words scattered on the circumference of the circle. It catches the rhythms of the oscillating radius and enshrines into the poetic art. On the climax of concentric imagination, the artist becomes unmoved mover. He has the power to transcend the sublimities in art and culture but he is untouched. Other imperative of *Mandala* is 'cycle.' All the natural phenomena move in cyclic form. The revolution of sun, moon, planets, zodiac etc. which are responsible for creation of existence, moves endlessly in the infinity.

Prof. Singh writes, "The circular Sun-cycle is well known in the *Rig Vedic* hymns to *Savitri*, and the circular movement of the seasons brought about by the Sun cycle is evident in the account of the *Purusa* as described in the *Purusha-sukta* of the *Rig Veda*. Since the origin of the history in terms of the time has been only be imagined and not empirically known, no one really knows for how many thousand years these primeval rituals have become the part of the bones and arteries, even the life-blood of the historical protagonist, who goes on and on, endlessly, and often without knowing it, into the circle of his unknown desire" (Singh13).

### ***Virat Swaupa of Krishna***

The whole universe moves round to its axis ceaselessly. Countless concentric cycles are formed and deformed, which Arjuna beholds in the *Virat Swarupa of Krishna*, as covered in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavadgita*. The configuration of Lord Krishna is the *Mahamandala*, a Big Cycle with Mega center where the seeds of knowledge, art, culture, and literature lie. It is contained countless concentric cycles, where a yogi poet searches his center of rhythm. In Mandala Literary Theory, the writer has tried to establish the balance between the center and its periphery. The vertical and horizontal waves weave warp and woof of his poetic art. This cyclic movement may be taken as the formation of ideas in motion. During the meditation, a poet accelerates the movement of imagination which catches similes, metaphor, metonym, and other figures of speech to concertize his thoughts in the poetic forms.

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## **Human Body as *Mandala***

Now, I am going to concentrate my focus on the human body as a *mandala*, and how with its concentric chakras contained in Mount Meru creates the kinetic energy, which becomes the perpetual fountain of sublimities in the poetic art. The creation of human being is one of the greatest manifestations of the God. This is the most precious creation from where the soul can search its center and start the journey towards Eternity. And ultimately, it dissolves itself in to the mega center that is Shiva, because of the pre decided destination of the Creator. Patanjali in *Yog Sutrās* writes, “The subliminal impressions of latent deposit karma ceaselessly rolls up until the highest concentration is attained” (Woods 17). Constraint is the ultimate goal of *Atma*. The space between the center of concentric cycle and mega center depends on the subject that how it acts. *Manas, Buddhi and Atma*, these three with seven plexuses are bestowed to this corporeal body to march from darkness to the realm of enlightenment. The cosmic energy produced at this substratum constitutes the essence of Mandala Literary Theory. There are different zones in the human body which make this body sustainable.

## **Great Significance of *Chakra***

Body *plexuses (chakras)* in Sanskrit has a great significance in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Chakras are believed to be the part of the subtle body, not the physical body, and as such, are the meeting points of the subtle (non-physical) energy channels called *Nadi*. *Nadis* are considered to be channels through which the life force (*prana*) or vital energy moves. There are 88000 chakras within the human body, but major chakras are somewhere six and somewhere seven. All the plexuses have their own position and color in the human body, which is clear in the figure on the next page.

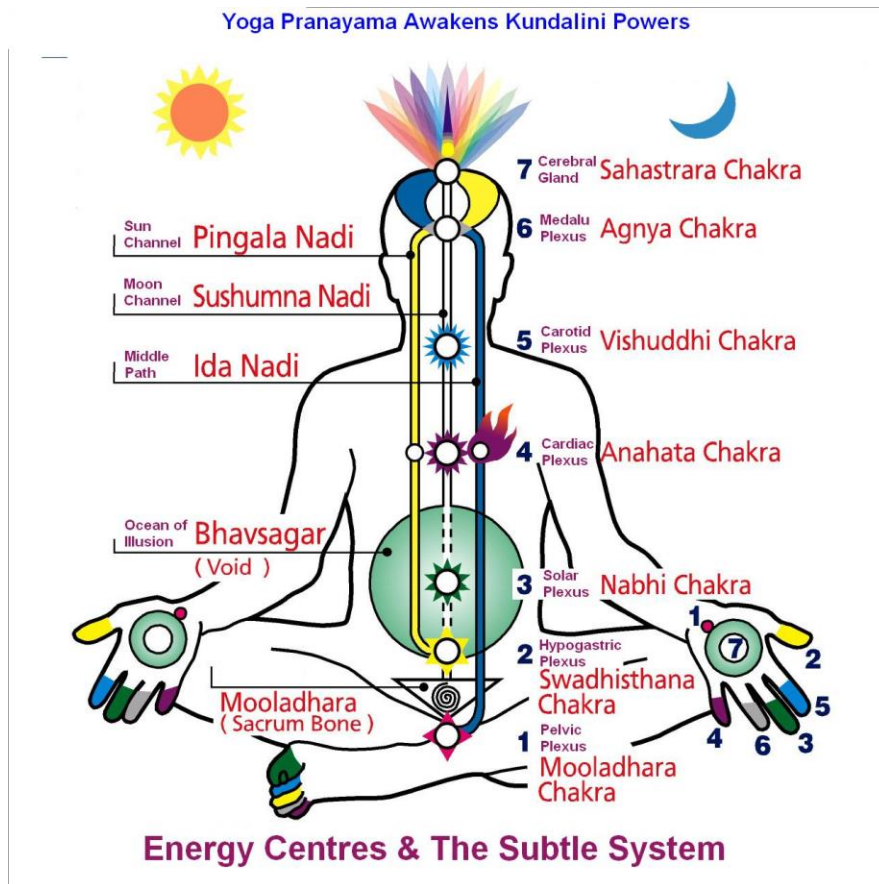


Image taken from <https://www.google.co.in/search>

In the figure there are seven chakras as Swami Shivanand enumerates: Sacral plexus (*Muladhara*), Prostatic plexus (*Swadhisthana*), Solar plexus (*Manipura*), Cordial plexus (*Anahata*), Laryngal plexus (*Visuddha*), Cavernous plexus (*Ajna*) and thousand-petals-lotus (*Sahastra*). These are the governing zones in our physical *mandala* (body). They have the direct relationship with the other part of the body through nerves. The nerves arise from the plexuses have both the sensory and motor function. There are five spinal plexuses, except in the thoracic region, as well as other forms of autonomic plexuses, many of which are the part of enteric nervous system. The spinal plexuses are: Cervical plexus- serves the head, neck and shoulders; Brachial plexus-serves the chest, shoulders, arms and hands; Lumbar plexus-serves back, abdomen, groin, thighs, knees, and claves; Sacral plexus-serves the pelvis, buttock, genitals, thighs, claves and feet; Coccygeal plexus- serves small region over the coccyx. The other autonomic plexuses are: Celiac (Solar plexus) serves internal organs, Auerbach's plexus and Meissner's plexus serve gastrointestinal tract. Here it is very clear that there is the scientific

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truth in the discussion of chakras. Plexuses are the points in our body which create the space according to its potentialities (here, potentialities refers to the stage of the awakening of plexuses). It is also called *Kundalini Yoga*. It deals with *Kundalini – Shakti*, the serpent power, as author Arthur Avalon translates it.

Besides, one of the names of *kundalini* is Goddess *Bhujangni*, literal meaning is the serpent. *Kundala* means coiled, so the serpent power coiled sleeps in the lowest bodily center, at the base of spinal cord. It is also known as *Muladhara chakra*. Our basic concern with the body plexuses is specifically in their relation to the poetic process - how the primal energy churns the primordial sound, and how do the elementary vibrations create and pass through spaces & colors, and how do those vibrations formed and deformed, formulate and de-formulate themselves in ever-going continuum. What, the author has called *Kinesthetic*. It is the combination of two words- kinetic and aesthetic. In a simple way the everlasting and automatic creation process which works as an apparatus of the center and pushes back the hovering physical energy from the circumference to the center. *Chakras* should not be studied only as the centers in the human body but also as connectors between the physical and cosmic energy. The whole scripture of Patanjali's *Yog Sutras* are devoted to the mystical journey of Self via awakening of chakra through Yoga. Prof. Charu Sheel Singh writes in his seminal book *Concentric Imagination: Mandala Literary Theory*:

The 'etheric' center is the source of life of the physical body and this center corresponds to an 'astral' which has four dimensions. Between the two centers, there is a thought to be closely woven sheath through which energy flows as per the state of enlightenment of the practitioner. This is further shown by the variations in the number of the petals of the lotus. When the serpent power is once aroused, a connection between physical and astral body is opened, the gates as William Blake often used to call them (Singh 16).

Here it is very clear that sacral plexus (*Muladhara*), which is located near the coccygeal beneath the sacrum while, its superficial point is located between the perineum and the coccyx, the pelvic bone. Because of its location and connection with the act of exertion, it is associated with the anus. It is said to be the base from which three main psychic channels or *nadis* emerge:

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*Ida, Pingala* and *Sushumna*. It is believed as the subtle abode of lord Ganpati. It has four petals bearing the Sanskrit letters *va, sha, sha,* and *sa* and *vija* mantra is *lam*. The *tatva* (element) of Earth is presented by yellow square. Three *nadis* have direct connection to the *Sahasra*. At this level, collected seeds on the physical plane are accelerated upward. Its awakening position clears the way to march in the second. The author quotes Avalon, "...as the second center, one is conscious to the physical body of all kinds of astral influences, vaguely feeling that some of them are friendly and some hostile without in the least knowing why" (Singh 16). In other words, the second plexus, *Swadhisthana*, is connected with the awareness of astral sensitivity, everything that brings pleasure through senses: food, sex, conversation etc. According to Prof. Singh, "this stage creates most of the lyrical, spontaneous, verbal outflows where dialectic, not yet fully born, is completely subsumed in the gushing currents of an electrifying subjectivity that is so dynamic and dominant in itself that it changes every object, with passionate reverie and verbal treatment, into a subjectivity that is one of author' own." The awakening of different chakras gives birth to a bipolarity of vision.

The lyrical sensitivity, which is the guiding maxims of the British poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, W.B Yeats, T.S Eliot among other sonneteers and lyricists, is transcended into dialectic form where there is the realization of two selves inside the human mind and creates the dialectic tone in the poetry. Such impulse can be seen in the most of the Jacobean Poetry and Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', *The Waste Land* among others.

Basically, these centers are soaked in two basic elements, earth and water. At this level, thought will always be fore-grounded in the social, historical and political issues. Literally, it gives birth to literal definition of literate (Literature is the reflection of the society), but the imperative of literature is something beyond the physical plane, where Vyas, Patanjali, Jaimini, Gautam, Valmiki etc. and in modern tradition, Shri Aurobindo, Tagore and contemporary poet Prof. C.S. Singh are on its periphery. In Indian tradition, poetry is not to provide sensual pleasure, but that has the power to transcend from the state of ignorance to the enlightenment. In Indian tradition, a poet is considered as a *rishi*. According to Shri Aurobindo, "A *Rishi* is one who sees or discovers an inner truth and puts it into self-effective language – the *mantra*. Either new truth or old truth made new by expression and realization" (Aurobindo 227).

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### **Prof. Singh's View of Poetry**

Now, let us come on the point of Prof. Singh's view of poetry, "The element of myth in which the subject is completely submerged during the lyric phase, comes to have a more functional role in the dialectic poem than merely sentimental and emotional" (Singh 17). With the ascending of vital forces, the vision becomes wider and deeper. It fights with senses to be multidimensional and the genesis of concentric *mandala* takes place where the seeds of epic poetry lie.

The concentric cycle is always allured by the circumference of *Mahamandala* on the one side, and the gravity power of mega center on the other side. In this way the magnetic power of the periphery and the gravity power of the center fabricate warp and woof of the great poetry. At this level; rhythm, metaphor, similes begin to break the corporeal hemisphere.

The third center *manipura* with its ten petals and fire elements, has kinetic power (heating capacity) to reproduce new color, vision and form. At this stage, the seeds explore the air to take breath and space for a new form, which get this transforming energies in fourth and fifth – *Anahata* and *Visudha chakras*.

According to Prof. Singh these three centers, "compositely make room for my longer poem which is epic. The dimensions of depth and width are joined by the dimension of length, and extension in space results in the development of a story- a narrative chain of events and sequences either succeeding each other, or preceding-succeeding each other, or doing both things simultaneously" (Singh 17).

The bi-polarity of vision begins to explore the images and symbols from the history, culture and beyond the time and space. The colors perceived at this level don't match to the physical color. The color of second and third circle, red and white which symbolize the blood of lady that is *Shakti* and the semen of man that is *Purusa* merge together and march towards the next center. The fourth center as discussed above provides movement, kinesis to the created body, that's the poem interacting with different images and symbols to give the muscles, bones and arteries, to the recreated self, which is yet to come. At this level the heart begins to palpitate.

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The fifth stage gives a sense of space to the motility of the body, a planet itself among the other planets in the ether.

The sense of hearing becomes stronger and the yogi artist begins to listen *brahma nada*. It gives the new dimension of poetic symphony, which can be heard in the literary art of Valmiki, Vyas; *Savitri* of Shri Aurobindo and *Ten Mahavidyas* of Charu Sheel Singh. The sound and tone enshrined in such great art is transcendental and trans-temporal. It constitutes the *mantras* which are evergreen and everlasting as we can see in *Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita, Divine Comedia, Odyssey, Iliad* among other great epics of this world. This is the visionary stage of the poets like, Tulsi, Kabir, Surdas, Tukaram, and Nanak among others.

For example, hindi poet, Shurdas described the Baal-Lila of Krishna even without the physical vision and Tulsidas, of Rama. According to Prof. Singh, “the sixth stage sees into inside what is outside and is the first pre-requisite for the final epiphany” (Singh.19). This sixth plexus in human body is the connecting point of three *nadis* before merging in the *Shahastra*. We can behold the physical world with our two eyes but this third eye is believed to reveal insight into the future.

This chakra is represented by two lotus which symbolizes *Shiva* and *Sakti* or *Ardhnarishvararupa* of lord Shiva. This chakra is also connected with sixth layer of aura which is known as celestial layer of aura science. The beholder of these powers realizes unity with Brahma, who has the ability to create, preserve, and destroy the three worlds. This is the stage where a yogi poet balances his vision of past and future. A poet becomes a fortune teller or predictor. Such images can be visualized in *Ramcharitramanas, Mahabharat, Bible, Kurana* among other epics of the world.

The rasas produced at this level is *shanta rasa*, and bhava is *samata*. The equation of *trikalas* becomes the center and a yogi poet becomes *trikaldarshi*. All the impurities are erased from the senses. Physical sense organs cease to work. This stage is comparable to Vidur and Arjuna, who after getting celestial eyes in the battle field could read the *Virata* of Krishna in the *Mahabharata*. They beheld *trikal* in the *Mahamandala (Virat)* of Krishna. This is the epic

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phase “which presents not only a linear panorama of historical events but also the forces that transform them and make room for the final epiphany” (Singh 17).

The seventh and the last stage of the mystical journey inside the human body is *Sahasra*. It is described as a lotus flower with 1000 petals of different colors. These petals are arranged in twenty layers, each layer with approximately fifty petals. The perception is golden and within it a circular moon region is inscribed with a luminous triangle, which can be either upward or downward pointing often referred to as a *thousand-petals-lotus*, it is said to be the most subtle chakra in the system, relating to pure consciousness, and it is from this chakra that all the other chakras emanate. When a yogi is able to raise his/her *kundalini*, energy of consciousness, up to this point, the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is experienced. This stage is said to bring about rebirth or the *siddhis* - occult powers of transforming into the divine, and being able to do whatever one wishes. The blurring line between inside and outside disappears. According to Prof. Singh, for every object becomes part and parcel of the thousand-petals-lotus not only a unity of time and space into a single stage of consciousness but of transcendence it as well.

### **Transfiguration**

Now let us shift our concentration on the transfiguration created by Prof. Singh which is constituted with the different geometrical figures. As it is discussed in above paragraphs, each and every particle of this world has a geometrical shape. Even our human body is a *mandala* and a lot of geometrical shapes are visible and invisible in it. It has its determined sound, a deity, both male and female, persuading over that sound; tatvas, carrier, and yoni which is beautifully enumerated in the Table:1, taken from the *Concentric Imagination: Mandala Literary Theory*.

The square, which lies in the foundation the Mount Meru is governed by the deity Dakini which symbolizes the force: creator, preserver, and destructor. In esoteric tradition, “Allegorical calls the chief of these Lilith, *Sangye Khado* (Buddha Dakini in Sanskrit); in Jewish tradition, and in esoteric account “Khado” all are credited with the art of “walking in the air” and greatest kindness of the mortals; but no mind- only animal instinct” (Blavasky Vol.II 285). The second, *Rakinior Chakini Shakti* governs the *Swadhistanachakra* that is symbolized by the crescent.

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Symbolically, thought constituted at this level fall in the shorter length. Earthly pleasures allure the senses. The thought constituted at this level creates the sensual symphony in the poetic art. The third chakra, which is governed by *Lakini Shakti* that is symbolizes by the geometrical figure triangle. She has four arms and three faces. In one of the four hands she holds thunderbolts or *vajra*. In second hand she holds the arrow shot up by the bow of Kama (the lord of sex). Here, the arrow of Kama caught by *Lakini*, refers to the command over the sensual pleasures. And sadhak is ready to inter in the next. The fourth figure, six pointed hexagon which is the abode of *Anahata chakra* is presided by the deity Kakinni. Behind this *kundalini shakti*, stands a lingam in which Rudra Shiva appears as *Sadashiva* (*sada*: “eternal”, *Shiva*: “benefactor”). He is the *shabda brahma* and combination of three *gunas* which are represented by A,U,M.Hanging garland of *narmundas* round the neck of *kali* and garland of 51 pearl round the neck of Krishna are governed by the *Anahata chakra*, which symbolize the 51 *varnas* of Hindi language.

Shape of Mandala	Bijaand its Vahana	Devata and its vahana	Sakti of the dhatu	Linga and Yoni	Other tattva here dissolved
Square	Lam on the Airavata	Brahma on Hamsa	Dakini	Svyambhutraipuratricon	Gandha(smell) tattva; smell (organ of sensation) feet (organ of action)
Crecent	Vam on Makara	Vishnu on garuda	Rakini	...	Rasa (taste) tattva;taste (organ of sensation); hand (organ of action).
Triangle	Ram on a ram	Rudra on a bull	Lakini	...	Rupa (form&color; sight) tattva; sight (organ of sensation);anus (organ of action)
Six	Yam	Isa	Kakini	Bana and tricon	Sparsa (touch and

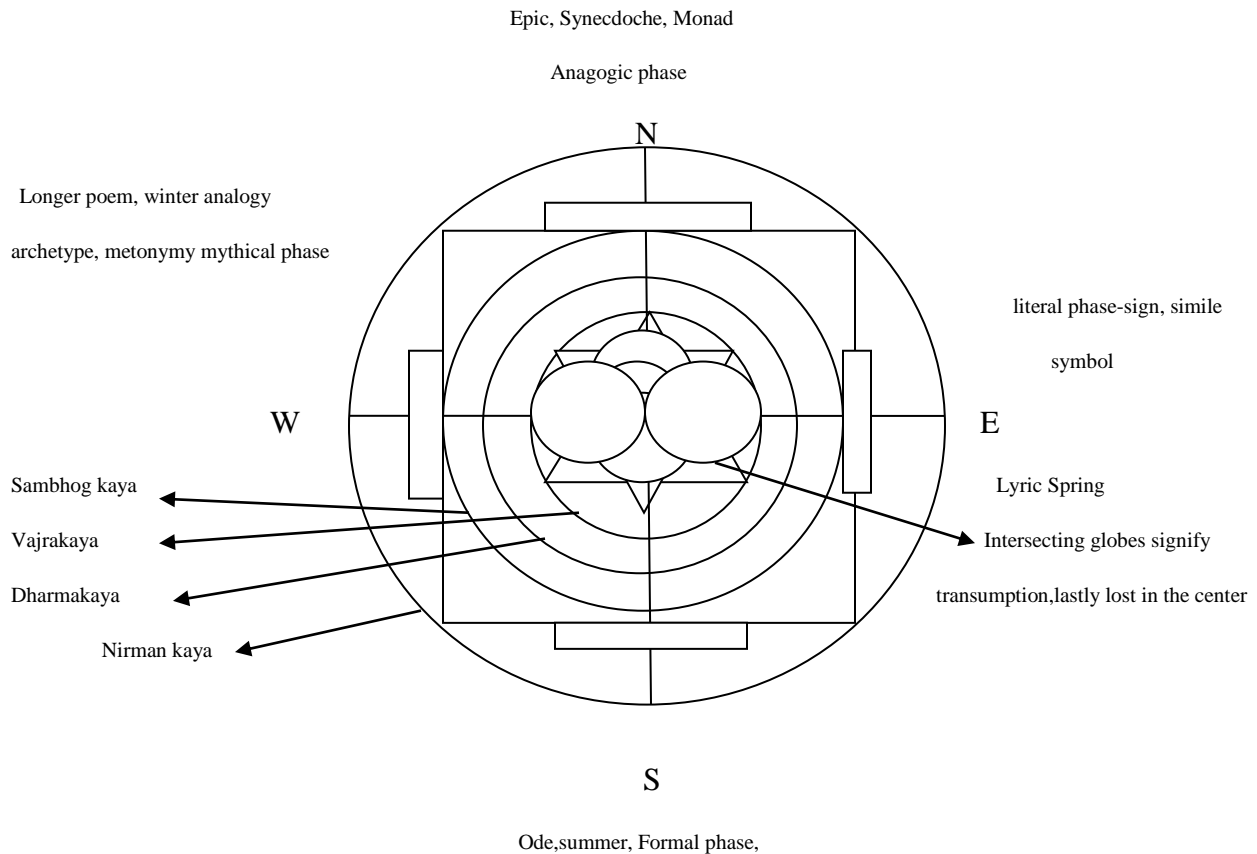
pointed hexagon	on antelope				feel) <i>tattva</i> ; touch (organ of sensation); penis (organ of action)
Circle	<i>Ham</i> on white elephant	<i>Sadasiva</i>	<i>Sakini</i>	...	<i>Sabda</i> (sound) <i>tattva</i> ; hearing (organ of sensation; mouth (organ of action)
...	<i>Om</i>	<i>Sambhu</i>	<i>Hakini</i>	<i>Itara</i> and <i>tricona</i>	<i>Mahat</i> , the <i>SukshmaPrakriti</i> called <i>Hiranyagarbha</i>

Table: 1

### Chakras, Poetics and *Mandala* Theory

The next geometrical figure “Circle” corresponding to the *Visudha chakra*, is governed by the deity *Shakini*. She sits on a pink lotus and holds a skull, an *Ankusha*, and the scripture. The Skull symbolizes the detachment from the illusionary world of sense perceptions; the *Ankusha*, symbolizes controlling power; and the last scriptures represent knowledge. The next, that is *Ajna chakra* which goes beyond the perception is governed by the energy (*shakti*) *Hakini*. She has four arms, six heads. She sits on red lotus with her left foot raised. She is the abode of the knowledge of unconditional truth, the awareness of non-duality. She assimilates all the cosmic energy and the perceptions go beyond to beyond. It is the confluence of all three streams which takes their origin in *Muladhara*. All these deities residing in different governing zones of human body enlighten the path of Eternity.

The above discussed elements perform the role of components of *Mandala* figure drawn by the theorist. The different *kayas* are formed which corresponds to the different form of poetry. As the seeds sowed in the womb (center) of the earth (*Mandala*), after a particular time, with the potentialities of fertility of the land as well as its own, try to sprout in the form of sapling.



### Mandala Literary Theory

Further, it grows into stem, leaves, branches, height, thickness and then, when it touches the height of maturity, one becomes many (*ekoahambahusyami*). But even all these components of the tree can't be considered without a shape, color and its essence. The same process is with the poetic creation. Particular form of poetry takes shape under the different impressions of blooming petals. As it comes out from the soil different metaphor, similes, and other figure of speech empower its genesis. The mystic substratum has been very beautifully encompassed in the above figure of Mandala.

The different Buddhist *kayas* which are achieved in the different stages of *tapasya*, create particular essence and get its conversion into a particular substance. In the above figure there are a lot of geometrical figures: four circles, one square, four intersecting circle, two interlaced triangles which form hexagon, one circle in intersecting triangle with one mega centre inside the circle form the *Mandala* theory of poetry and poetic process. In the words of the theorist, "The three circles outside the intersecting complex which I have designed as forming the three bodies

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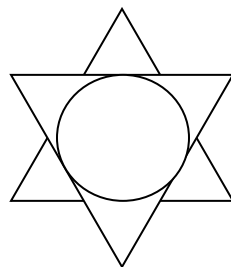
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of the Buddha, are, from the outside to the inside, the manifestations of the *Nirmankaya*, *Sambhogkaya*, and *Dharmkaya*”(Singh 102-103). These three forms of *Buddhakayas* correspond to the three categories of poetry and three *gunas* of *Gita*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, goodness, passion and darkness.

According to the theorist, “when the yogi artist transcends peripheral boundaries of such categories, there is a churning or melting pot beyond the three in which there is a consummation of categories, or transumption. The body is exhumed of defilements, pilferages, wastes of energy, and finally attains to its original androgynous nature symbolized by the intersecting male and female” (Singh 103). Here, the theorist wants to say that once the journey of life energy begins and it moves towards the mega center, the mixed up essence of three *gunas* (contained with different *rasas*) is churned and impurities are melted into wastes. At this stage, the reflection of *Ardhanarishwar*, the cause of creation is felt by the yogi poet. The blurring line between *sanasara* and *nirvana* begins to disappear. The vision begins to go trans-temporal. The body plexuses are proved to be the ladder to ascend upward.

The following figure which is the combination of two interlaced equilateral triangles, one circle with a centre, which lies in the center of *Mamdala* has its own mystical interpretation.



According to H.P Blavatsky in esoteric tradition, the lower equilateral triangle with its apex downward is the symbol of Vishnu, the god of moist principle and water (*Nar-yana*, or the moving principle in *Nara*, water); while the equilateral triangle with its apex upward is Siva, the principle of Fire, symbolized by the triple flames in his hand (Blavatsky Vol.II291). In this way the six petals of a lotus is created. In the ancient mysteries the number six is accepted as the emblem of physical nature. For six is the presentation of the six dimensions of all bodies: the six lines which compose their form, namely, the four lines extending to the four cardinal points,

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North, South, East and West, and the two lines of height and thickness. Therefore, while the *Senary* (two interlaced equilateral triangles without a center) was applied by the sages to physical man, but the center inside it, forms the concept of *Septenary* which symbolizes the man plus his immortal Soul. Madam Blavatsky writes in *The Secret Doctrine* that “hieroglyphic *Senary*” shows the symbol of the commingling of the “philosophical three fires and three waters, whence results the procreations of the elements of all things,” which is comparable to the Indian view of interlaced two triangles, which refers to the meeting point of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. That is the cause of creation.

The *Mandala* figure drawn by the theorist has one square that symbolizes four directions. Further the number 3 and 4 are very mystic numbers which respectively symbolize “male and female or Spirit and Matter, and their union is the emblem of life eternal in spirit on its ascending arc and in matter as ever the resurrecting elements- by procreation and reproduction” (Blavatsky592). As Prof. Singh has mentioned about the copulation of thoughts and senses. This is the state of lowest chakras *Muladhara* and *Swadhisthana*, where dominant flavor will be limited to the terrestrial plane which we find in the Lyrics, Sonnets, Ballad, Odes etc. Most of the British Romantic poetry except P.B Shelley among few in this category. This phase lies in the east, south and west, directions of *Mandala*. But we can’t negate the reflection of eternal seeds. It depends on its potentialities. As the yogi poet perceives such vision, with the heat of austerity, he tries to transcend poetic energy on the higher plane. The sensual pleasures begin to melt down and its binary opposition arises. The theorist quotes Prof. Dasgupta,

The *bindu* in *Nirman-cakrais* composed of earth, fire, water, air and ether; but when the *bindu* in its upward march leaves the *nirman-cakra*, the elements of earth merges itself in to water, and in this way, with further march of *bodhichita*, the element of water merges itself in fire, fire in air and air in *citta*, and thus in the highest plane, i.e. *Usnisa-Kamala* it becomes pure effulgence (Singh 103).

Here, the creation of thought process can be simplified with the analogy of a potter and his earthen pots. When a potter creates earthen pot, it goes through different stages. In the first stage, the clay which gets its particular shape according to the imagination of the porter (for a

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poet, it is poetic imagination), is dominated with earth and water elements. In the second stage it is baked in the *bhattha* (kiln) on the highest temperature (that it is the heat of *tapasya*), the dominant element is fire. And in this way a pots comes in existence. The next phase provides the beauty that is the aesthetic power which pleases today and forever. Few poets leave their creation in the initial phase, but those who are ready to bear such suffering and pain of creation; they march into the higher plane. Vergil, Homer, William Shakespeare, John Milton among few others in West and Vyas, Kashyap, Valmiki, Dadu, Nanak, Rabidas, Shri Aurobindo, in present generation Charu Sheel Singh among few others in East can be taken as examples who have crossed this phase and entered in the higher plane.

Clockwise, after starting the journey from the east the sun approaches in the south, where the genesis of lyric and odes lie as discussed above. The elegy and longer poetry may be considered between the physical plane and *chhidakash* (highest plane) in *Dharmakaya*, where the poet realizes the fact of the human suffering, and he assimilates himself in to the art of Creator. At this level he achieves the transcendental power. Further, the sun reaches in the west which is the shifting point from *Nirman-Sambhog-Dharma* to the *Vajra kaya*. Up to this level thought has been completely baked under the scorching heat of austerity and concentric imagination grows up stronger. The white line becomes visible. In the words of Prof. Dasgupta, as quoted in *Concentric Imagination: Mandala literary Theory*:

When this *bindu* becomes pure effulgence perfectly motionless in the highest plexus the *sadhaka* attains a transubstantiated divine body with divine eyes and ears; he thus becomes omniscient and all-pervading and thus becomes the Buddha himself (Singh 103).

Here, the term, ‘motionless in the highest plexus’ might be taken as the state of *sunyata*, where all the fluctuations of mental stuff come to an end. All the hindrances of the mental lake are smoothed. The poet achieves the power to sustain unchanged state and to be an unmoved mover. The reign of ten horses is comes in the hands of higher intellect. This is the *Dharmakaya*, which lie near the ‘intersecting globe which signifies transumption’ and is likely to be merged in the Center. It is reflective in the above figure of *Mandala*. The intersecting globe is contained of four intersecting cycles and two interlaced equilateral triangles and inside the *senary* there is the

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mega cycle interlaced by four circles. In this way, *Vajrakaya* comes in existence. The four intersecting circle which is visible in the intersecting globe are symbolic of four *kayas* assimilated in the *vajrakaya*, and accordingly create the mythical and archetypal characters and their sentiments. At this level the *Sadhaka* attains the celestial eyes and ears. The trans-temporal objects become visible. Pof.V. K Gokak considers the poem as an *avatara* of the poet. The poet vision incarnates itself in layers which form concentric cycles. These concentric cycles emerge out of the center and are inherent in its manifold capacities:

The center transforms itself into the first concentric circle even while it remains as a center. This first concentric circle transforms itself into the second even while it remains as the first till we come to the outer most or largest concentric circle which holds within itself the substance of the other five concentric circles as well as the center itself (Singh 85).

The discovery of the center in itself is a regenerative process; it electrifies the space in relation to the center. The nerves, arteries, bones, the whole flesh and meat of the poets being, whose body is the *mandala* with center within the heart of the poet, reverberate with primordial and elementary sounds, through the ceremony, often known in religious circle as the ceremony of creation.

### **Essence of Supreme Art (*Satchidanand*)**

Now, let us discuss the revolution of the sun, as it approaches in the west the thought which has longer string and creates symphony in the poetry, attains the power to merge in the North, where the genesis of epic lies. The whole process can be enumerated in the following table:

<b>Form</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Geometrical figure</b>	<b>Body- Part</b>	<b>Phase</b>
Lyric	Earth (generation)	East	Cube	<i>Indriya</i> (sense)	Literal- descriptive
Longer Lyric	Water conception	South	Cone	<i>Manas</i> (mind)	Descriptive- literal

Longer poem	Fire (creation)	West	Hemisphere	<i>Buddhi</i> (Intellect)	Formal mythical
Epic	Air movement (recreation)	North	Sphere	<i>Atman</i> (soul)	Mythical formal

Table: 2

All these forms of the poetry, by the virtue of its figure of speeches, emotions, vision and sentiments, correspond to the Table: 3 and produce different *rasas* A(Sentiments), but I have added one last column that covers all those types of literatures that have true sublimity. That creates the feeling of *sat-chit-anand* (existence, consciousness, and bliss or truth, consciousness, bliss). All the scriptures written in the holy texts which are the perpetual fountains of spiritualism emerge at the highest level of concentration. An art is dry or barren in absence of essence. The word *rasa* is mentioned in Vedic literature. In *Rigveda*, it connotes a liquid, an extract and flavor. In the *Atharvaveda*, it connotes “test”, and also the sense of “the sap of grain”. According to Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, *rasa* in the Upanishads refers to the “essence of self-luminous consciousness, quintessence”. In post *Vedic* literature, it generally connotes “extract, essence, juice or testy liquid”. In the sixth chapter of the *Aitarey Brahmana* it is mentioned as:

Now (he) glorifies the arts,  
the arts are refinement of the self (atma-samskrti).  
With these the worshipper recreates his self,  
that is made of rhythms, meters.

— Aitareya Brahmana 6.27 (~1000 BCE), Translator: ArindamChakrabarti

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rasa\\_\(aesthetics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rasa_(aesthetics))

In the absence of aesthetic power, art is incomplete. The quality of sublimity depends on the potentialities of ‘self’ created by the artist. In the above quoted scripture “With these the worshipper recreates his self” refers to the artist, who has the power to transcend his enlightenment in the recreated Self, that is made of rhythm. The symphony of life is enshrined in the recreation. According to Bharat Muni the main objective of theatre or literature is to create aesthetic pleasure. As mentioned above about the creation of poetic art, the aesthetics are produced in the awareness of different chakras. The holy texts like, *Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Bhagavad Gita* among other texts are created at the highest level of concentric imagination, achieved by the yogi poet. Such art has the power to produce *satchidanand* and unfold the

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thousand petals lotus. In yoga philosophy there is the discussion nectar, which flows from the *Sahastra* in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. At this stage, *sadhak* goes beyond the time and space. This nectar can be transcended in the art by such yogi poet as we find in *Durga Saptasati*, *Shriyantra*, *Puranas* etc. among other holy texts.

Dominant figure of speeches	Mode group	Gunās group	Vision	Kaya-cluster(bo dy mandala)	Rasas (Sentiments) aesthetics
Metaphor	Romance-irony	<i>Tamas,-rajamas-sattva</i>	Onefold	<i>Nirmankaya</i>	Krodha (anger), bhayas (fear), Rati (love),
Synecdoche	Irony-romance	<i>Rajas-tamas-sattva</i>	Twofold	<i>Nirman-sambhog-kaya</i>	Rati (love), krodha (anger), bhayas (fear)
Metonym	Tragedy-irony&satire	<i>Rajas-sattva-tamas</i>	Threefold	<i>Sambhog-nirman-dharma-kaya</i>	Bhayas (fear), soka (Sorrow),vishmaya(wonder), utsaha(courage),jugupsa (aversion)
Transumption	Tragedy-comedy, irony, satire and romance	<i>Sattva-rajastamas</i>	Fourfold	<i>Vajra-dharma-sambhoganirmanakaya</i>	Utsaha(courage), Hasa (mirth), Krodha (anger),Bhaya (fear),Jugupsa (aversion), rati (love)sattvika bhava
Archetypal images from trans-temporal	Scriptures <i>Vedas</i> , <i>Upnishads</i> among other holy	<i>Sunyata</i> (emptiness)	Beyond	Blurring line between body and soul	Satchitanand (Eternal bliss that is)

	texts of the world			disappears	
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Table: 3

## Reader Responses

*Chakras* are also *mandalas*, which is either as the individual, or as the poet, or as the reader. It is very difficult to go inside and come out side of the *mandala* as it is discussed in above paragraphs. It has a comprehensive place in Buddhism as well as Hinduism. Geometrical shape is created on any specific occasion to perform the special rituals. In Hinduism, it is known as *chauka* that is square with two interlaced triangles or other geometrical shapes according to the occasions. And rituals are performed only by the assigned person who is allowed to enter in it. In the same way the poetic thought created on the particular stage, requires particular intellect to comprehend it, otherwise the thought constituted at the highest level is spoiled in concern of immature perception. The reader can never test the real symphony enshrined by the poet. Once again it represents the image of Krishna and Arjuna that *Virat-Rupa* can never be comprehended without the celestial eyes. To quote the 8th scripture of eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavat Gita*

*Na tu mam sakyasedrastum*

*Anenanivasvacaksusa*

*Divyamdadamitecaksuh*

*Pasya me yogamaisvaram*

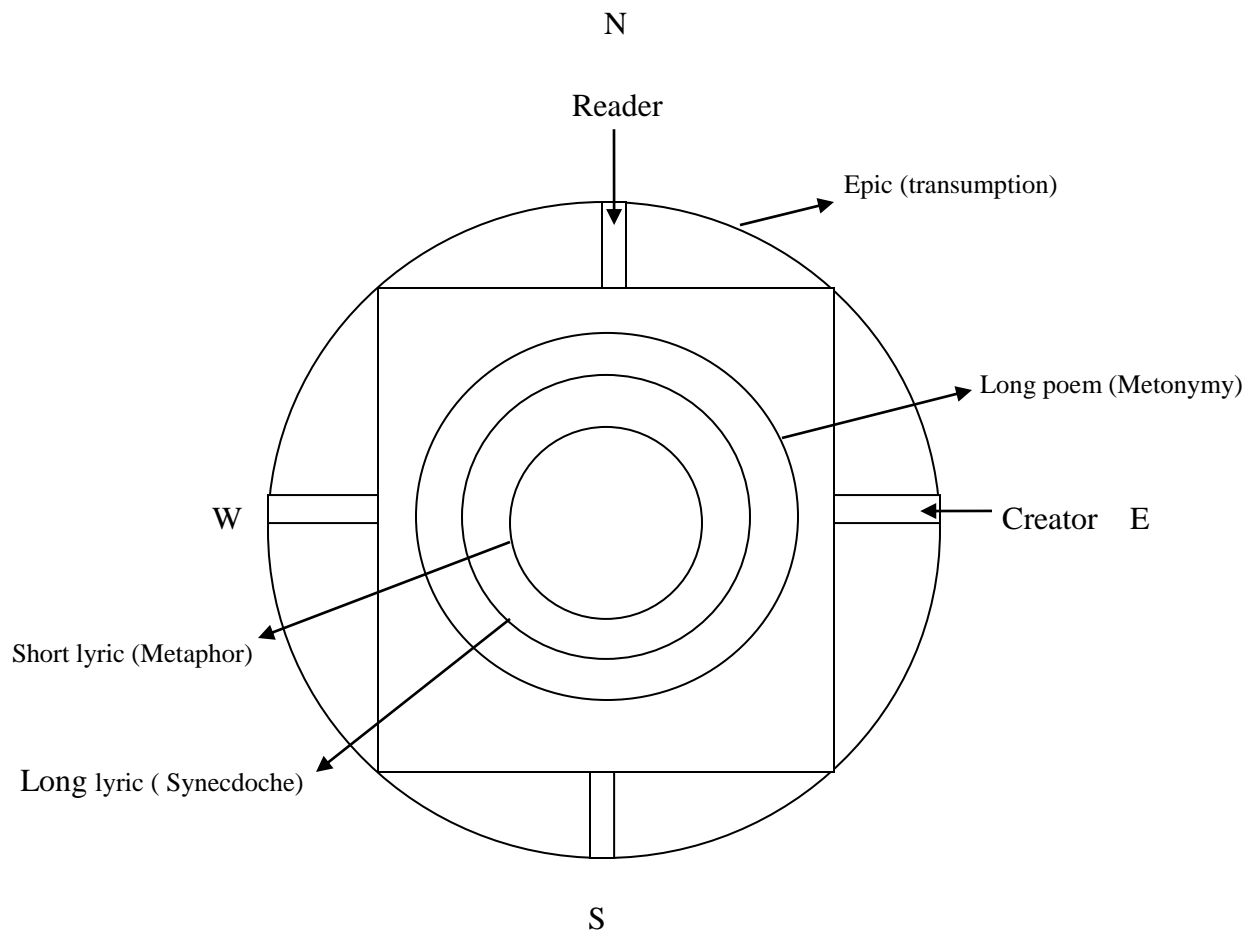
Further, S. Radhakrishnan translates it, “but though canst not behold Me with this (human) eye of yours; I will bestow on thee the supernatural eye. Behold My divine power” (Krishnan 271). Here, the configuration (*Virat-Rupa*) may be taken as the supreme text, which is the climax God’s creation. It can’t be comprehended by ordinary readers. Ordinary reader enters just reverse direction to the creator. Generally, through the north direction where one revolution of sun has come to an end, the reverse direction is in dark. As a result true sublimity remains far from the approach. It is clear in the above diagram of Mandala. When Duryodhana goes for the favor from Krishna, he sits near his head but Arjuna occupies a place near his feet. As a result, first of all Krishna beholds Arjuna then Duryodhana. This can be symbolically associated with maturity of a reader. It is an art to enter inside the *mandala* of poetic art. If approach is not appropriate he gets nothing but puzzled army of Krishna but not the essence of army.

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The *mudras* of a reader is equally responsible to comprehend the meaning of a text. Prof. Singh writes in an article, “Readerly Text, Ideas in Motion, and Kinaesthetic Form”:

The critic’s journey is from transumption (of all categories) through metonymy, synecdoche, to metaphor; the poet is reverse order from metaphor through synecdoche, metonymy and transumption. Each figure, however, is in the other (as the critic is in the creative artist and occasionally vice versa) though, the particular figure of speech can only manifest themselves fully at given compass-points, astrological positions, gravitational relationships and geometrical notations” (Singh 141).

The *mandala* of an individual, enshrined plexuses, their awakening positions, zodiacs, the relationship of mind, body and soul, divide a reader that whether, he is in the category of Literal-descriptive, or descriptive-literal, or Formal mythical, or Mythical formal or has the celestial vision to behold trans-temporal. It can be clarified with an example taken from the *Concentric Imagination: Mandala Literary Theory*. *Mudras* are not artificial things which can be made and purchased from the market. These are developed after years of penance and sacrifice. When objects come in their contact, the fore-grounded mysteries begin to overt. It means, the analysis of a text depends on the level of the enlightenment of a reader. For example, “*OM manipadme hum*” (Singh 179), is a Tibetan mantra of six syllables, each of the syllable piercing the six chakras or centers of the body and finally liberating man into the reality of thousand-pedals-lotus. Likewise literal meaning create their own centers, a lot depends on the reader’s power of connecting details, approaching them, and even annulling them in order to realize their true intent.

To conclude, the above discussed topic enriches the Indian esoteric tradition of literary theory. The human *mandala* and the *chakras* situated in the Mount Meru (backbone) of a creator, a critic, and a reader define the strength, empire, time and space of a literature. It is a serious concern to discuss the potentialities and the level of *mudras* of the poets and scholars like, Ved Vyasa, Valmiki, Kashyap, Bhartrihari, Panini, Patanjali, among so many others in East and West. Words have power to enlighten a person which, in oriental tradition is *mantras*. It is clear that the *shabda* can be perceived as Brahma and likewise, *tatvas* can be created by an enlightened artist. All the scriptures of *Vedas* and *Upnishads*, *Puranas* are *mantras* in themselves and full of the mysteries of the development of language, literature and culture of the human civilization.

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