Conclusion

Mimesis and beyond: A major philosophical trend in modern painting, this research study encompasses the strategy of Indian artists effectively keep an eye on ‘modernism’ in painting, one of the primary disciplines of visual arts during pre and post-Independence period. All through this period many of the Indian artists interpret the meaning of the term ‘modern’ related with image making, representation, content, idea, concept and its application projected by philosophical claims and metaphysical implications. The word ‘modern’ stand for a period span in a relative sense, but the term has been applied for definite features and deviations in approaches and attitudes, which occurred for a while with a global impact that is still predominant. It also has adopted fluctuations in philosophical attitude in intellectual and creative expressions of artists throughout the world and India is no exception. This stretch of modern period was packed with social, political, and cultural disorders in the history of India, which turns into a means of provoking the creative artists and stimulating the convenient fury of the society. Both natural and manufactured tragedies have given rise to fury, desperateness, desolation and absurdity of social aspirations to such elevations that it has entirely transformed the perception and expression of all artists rationally. In due course, this anger, despair and absurdity had become the subject matter of creative arts like painting, sculpture and literature (Levenson Michael).

The innovative and radical deviations in social and philosophical settings were in authority for the changes in the art form, techniques and unconventional material as medium of art which directed to the progression of art as expression or
imagination from image making or representation of life. The artistic passion was also consequently provoked or forced them to experiment in content and techniques in conjunction with the values of the art. Largely, the collective individualities of this stimulus proceeding modernity prepared their own divisions to deny the conventional norms of beauty. Moreover new aesthetic thoughts of desolation, privileged, irrationality and normality, and were accepted in painting with regional distinctions and differences in artistic philosophy.

Discussing the philosophical trends in art as a whole, the principal theory of beauty was proposed by the ancient Greeks in particular Plato. The concept of mimesis owes its existence primarily to Plato and Greek thought. This principal theory of art is important but at the same time an elusive concept for its association with some other concepts. In its broad sense, it is associated with the concepts like methexis (participation), homoisois (likeness) and paraplesia (likeness/half-striking). Basically all such terms speak of a relation of correspondence between an image and its archetype. The word mimesis and its adjective mimetic are used in our context in their narrow and stringent sense. It means sheer reproduction, copying, and imitation. It is in consonance with photographic realism. The value of imitation or mimetic approach to art, however, cannot be altogether denied. What is questioned is the aesthetic theory that assigns a primacy to it and does not thereby distinguish between learning art and creating art.

In classical Indian aesthetics Sadrisya or semblance has been considered to be a major component in art creation. Sadrisya speaks of the representative character of painting, but representation does not there mean copying in Plato’s
sense, because cultural basis of perception is at the back of any representation in painting. Also, visual art forms, according to the traditional Indian aesthetic concept of ‘rupabheda’, must be distinguished from the forms that are not with life and beauty. According to Abanindranath Tagore, the difference of forms can be known in terms of a deeper insight that is not possible simply through senses. He says,

“The difference that exists between outer forms gives us only the variety, and not the verity which underlies all ‘rupa’. Only the knowledge of appearances gained through our inner sight will enable us to see and show the real difference of forms”

(Abanindranath). Hence it is never one-to-one correspondence that dominates any theme of painting.

The history of art in general can be inscribed with reference to particular themes. The thematic representation in art creations gradually reveals a thematic-problematic tension in moments of creation and art appreciation. Creativity is thus essentially different from imitation in the sense of copying. Modern Indian art exemplifies this philosophy.

Modern Indian painting presents problematized versions of the world that includes self, nature, society and reality as such. The aesthetic philosophy latent in it is normally against sheer reproduction, imitation, unproblematized perception of the tradition and blind acceptance of it. In modern Indian painting, tradition is recreated, contemporaneity is reflected, deeper aspirations of human life are imaged, and failures and successes are projected for further transcendence. From this point of view it occupies a central place in the cultural life of people in defiance of the mimetic concept of art. Even the realistic trends in Indian art do not reflect
any primacy of mimesis in terms of one-to-one correspondence between what is imaged and the real.

History of modern Indian visual art is often based upon rise and decline of schools. The present study points to a thematic unity among the modern Indian painters. Conceptually the theme is negative in the sense it speaks more of what modern Indian art is not. But at the same time a transition from pre-modern naturalistic trend in art production in India that comes in little proximal terms with mimetic notion of art to the problem of abstraction-representation, balance and also the unfolding of a deeper reality parallel to the existing world of facts and events. In the latter aspect, modern Indian art is close to the notion of art as dialogue where an interpretative understanding of the reality and reality as imaged in visual arts plays a major role.

If we analyze the concept of representation in the sense of Sadrisya, modern Indian painting manifests a tension between representation and abstraction. As Binodebehari says, “No art can be wholly representational, or symbolic. Both these qualities are there in the art of any country. So art can neither be purely formal nor fully imitative of sensory images” (Binodebehari, 2006). The nature of representation too has certain ambivalence because in modern Indian painting it is never representation per se that is important. In realistic paintings it may at most be representation on the basis of some interpretation of the real. Hence a re-understanding of the concept of mimesis even in the sense of representation in the context of modern Indian painting is necessary both by taking the writings and works of selected artists and art critics and in terms of a theoretical explication of

222
and comparison between the concepts of *mimesis* and *sadrīsya*. The philosophy dominant in modern Indian art is a dialogical in terms of human-world, human-human, and human society relationships.

Artists selected for the study were Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Binodebehari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Vaj, K.C.S Panicker, K.G Subramanian, Ganesh Pyne, Jogen Choudhury and Sujata Miri.

Art beyond Representation: Rabindranath Tagore and his works, give in a diverse attentive trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. Rabindranath Tagore’s paintings had better assimilation of the concept beyond representation or ‘*mimesis*’ and also an evocative visual invention. A review of the artwork and his practices mark the adoption of the innovative procedure, which authenticates how Tagore’s visual practices can be discussed as the institution of all significant ‘new’ in modern Indian art.

A Woman’s self: Amrita Sher-Gil and her works, stretch in a dissimilar observant trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. Amrita Sher-Gil, a woman artist, is not only a representative of the modern Indian art, but also a cross-cultural representation of the self in her paintings. She was away from the concept of *mimesis* or mere representation, but she drops the various rigid domestic margins of modernity in Indian art.

Art Quest (Shilpa Jijnasa): Binodebehari Mukherjee and his works, expand in a divergent perceptive trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. Binodebehari Mukherjee’s entire lifetime- involvement in modern Indian art is characterized by an innovative level and it remained a mission for him to always do
something ‘new’ unlimited evidence of the subject matter or theme particularly ‘nature’ through a concept, which resulted in making a picture of representation in colour. The language of expression is through the form and colour which he experienced. The dominance of the conflict with the choosing subject matter, from the nature made his objective of a creative urge that led to a kind of mission or expedition in the modern art scene in India, rather than a ‘mimesis’ input.

Human in Art: Ramkinkar Vaij and his works, on the contrary, provide an insightful trend of philosophy in modern Indian art. Ramkinkar’s courage of experimentation and his revolt against the accepted practices in modernity resulted in a kind of revolution in the art world. He also adapted certain social and political ideas of the time. But he was instrumental in stimulating others to innovative practices in order to revive the visual art in India beyond the ‘mimesis’ the principal philosophy, into a diverse advancement.

Art and Reality: K. C. S. Panicker and his works, spread in a conflicting intuitive trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. He is one of the important painters, who radically devised a pictorial language for the concept of reality as subject matter in modern Indian Art. K.C.S Panicker, who shaped a distinctive direction and imagery on varied solicitation of modern art which later inspired the other artists of the day. His paintings have an ambience of inner exploration, focusing on linearity, within an idiom cherished by the traditional South Indian craftsmanship. His striking features of the paintings have a conceptual insistence. He has provided a decisive and fascinating kind in creative options in Indian art. Frequently the artists of India have rebelled against European naturalism in art, they
had an adequate determination to explain its significance in their representation beyond the concept of ‘mimesis’. This kind of resistance of reality is proved by K C S Panicker in his paintings. He also established the artistic precision, advanced consistency in the concern of making new and the degree of the reality- a rationalization of aesthetic delight in the modern Indian art.

Art and Tradition: K. G. Subramanian and his works, range in a consistent instinctual philosophical trend take on in Indian modern art scene. Western modernism was synthesized in K G Subramanian’s work, which was essentially rooted in an indigenous folk tradition. In the late 1970s Subramanian shifted from his early efforts and focused on a two-century old vibrant craft tradition of reverse painting and created a new language for the medium that was appropriate to his own outlook and our modern responsiveness. In the process, he brought a new life into the medium. A man of multifaceted endowments, Subramanian erased the distinction between artist and artisan. He also experimented with weaving and toy-making. He also dabbled in several mediums earlier used in Indian art. Terracotta murals and glass paintings received a new lease of life with his experiments. Subramanian believes that all visual arts are primarily based on visual facts and our responses to them. In accordance with the multifaceted responses involving sensation, interpretation and emotional expression, his works feed on many-layered impulses that temper romanticism with wit and eroticism. Each medium which Subramanian explores is a response to a particular sensibility element. This characteristic of the artist positioned in Indian art, beyond the principal
philosophical concept ‘mimesis. The sensuous works he has produced have been
drawn upon the rich resources of myth, memory and tradition.

A Different Light: Ganesh Pyne and his works, deliver successions of a
reliable reasoned trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. Ganesh Pyne is
the one who experimented with all types of mediums, principally tempera and
gouache. However, he also has a huge variety of works in various media including
drawings, pastel, oil and water colour. Ganesh’s paintings are multi- layered. He is
possibly the most imaginative painter of the time; he tells stories, portrayed death on
numerous occasions and also demons and myth. All these pictorial means are
employed in his pursuit of a new concept of beauty.

Art from the depth of self: Jogen Chowdhury and his works, bring
progressions of a steady rational trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene.
The Indian art, music, and literature have distinct features with rich psyche,
consciousness and spirituality within its nature. Johan Chowdhury exhibited it
through his drawings and paintings, a great deal of self-knowledge which arose
from a profound source of understanding within him. In this modern epoch, the
rebellion of the artist is against the fundamental art principles, besides the creative
urge and contradiction of his personal effort which also proves the reputation of an
artist. But these are an extension, socially, of the process that prompted subjectivity
with the inclination and conception of the identity to be an artist, in addition to a
‘new’ from the depth of the ‘self’.

Trans-mimetic presentation of life-world in Sujata Miri’s works, reflects the
evolution of a coherent trend of philosophy in Indian modern art scene. Sujata
Miri’s paintings exemplify the latent concept of delimited space, where the viewer moves from one physical space to another and from one juncture of progress to another. The approach in her initial paintings becomes a ‘metaphor’ for the mimetic process where she translated her works into the final trans- mimetic result. Her paintings are from the practices of memory, image and probability. They represent receptiveness to the materiality that they represent and yet have innovative insights and experiences, allowing the subjective nature of artistic activity to combine symbolic essentials.

Largely ‘modernism’ contains modern thought, character, or a practice, and the term describes both a set of cultural tendencies and an array of associated cultural movements, originally arising from wide-scale and far-reaching changes to Western society in the late nineteenth century. Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism. The term encompasses the activities and output of those who felt the ‘traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social and political conditions of an emerging fully industrial world.

A salient characteristic of modernism is self-consciousness to each one of the artists selected from the modern period and it is revealed in diverse ways in different parts of India. This has often led to experiments with form, and content that draws an attention to the processes and materials used and expressed for creating an innovation. This proposition prepared in turn, has a maximum number of the artists open up to the ‘new’ notion beyond the perception of mimesis, the principal philosophy of art.
In Western traditions of aesthetic thought, the concepts of mimesis or imitation have been central to theorize the principle of artistic expression, the characteristics that distinguish works of art from other phenomena, and the numerous ways in which we experience and respond to works of art. Mimesis is an extremely broad and theoretically elusive term that encompasses a range of possibilities for how the self-sufficient and symbolically generated world created by people can relate to any given ‘real’ or significant world. Mimesis is integral to the relationship between art and nature, and to the relation prevailing works of art themselves.

Pre-Platonic thought tends to emphasize the representational aspects of mimesis and its denotation of imitation, representation, portrayal, or the person who imitates or represents. Plato believed that mimesis was manifest in ‘particulars’ which resemble or imitate the forms from which they are derived; thus, the mimetic world is inherently inferior in that it consists of imitations which will always be subordinate or subsidiary to their original. In Republic, Plato views art as a mimetic imitation of an imitation, artistic representation is highly suspect and corrupt in that it is thrice removed from its essence. The relationship between art and imitation has always been a primary concern in examinations of the creative process. Mimesis is conceived as something that is natural to man, and the arts and media are natural expressions of human faculties. In contradiction to Plato, Aristotle views mimesis and mediation as fundamental expressions of our human experience within the world - as means of learning about nature that, through the perceptual experience, allow us to get closer to the ‘real’. Mimesis not only functions to re-create existing
objects or elements of nature, but also beautifies, improves upon, and universalizes them. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century conceptions of aesthetics, mimesis was bound to the imitation of nature. Aesthetic theory emphasized the relationship of mimesis to artistic expression and began to embrace interior, emotive, and subjective images and representations. In the twentieth century approaches, mimesis relates to social practice and interpersonal relations rather than as just a rational process of making and producing models that emphasize the body, emotions, the senses, and temporality.

What is new in ‘modern’ Indian art is that its specialized place is under restriction from all sides and its ancient beauty concepts and ‘mimesis’ a theory of art principally derived from the West simply do not hold good. During this period, we had to consider the surge of Indian nationalism; a common agenda of cultural reconstitution during the period of decolonization. The Indian national state when it came into its existence in 1947, helped to realize the hope of a secular democracy. The artist’s symbolic supreme power based on a new philosophy was to be absorbed and put into a responsible task of representation. This is representation of the people which may include the representation of mythology, peasants and the working class people and their day-today life. A rich figurative painting on social themes which includes real identities through styles of realism, abstraction and ironical identities through an expressionistic notion, dominates the Indian art scene till date. Each of these options has ideological resonances with the artist’s identity, resisting the conventional categorisation and situations of ‘modern trend’. At the other end, of a principal break was brought by the ideas from the colonial institutions and the
cultural space fashioned by the British rule. All nine artists, Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Binodebehari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij, K.C.S. Panicker, K.G.Subramanian, Ganesh Pyne, Jogen Choudhury and Sujata Miri, share the same modernized space that emerged from a new molded philosophy and art in India. The demarcation and consciousness of a ‘new’ arena of art, aesthetics and philosophy in modern India hold these artists together as a broad unit, even as the meaning of tradition or the objectives to be modern keep flowing and surfacing in unity. In spite of all the extensive artistic renovations of this period, its unity can be seen to be maintained by the unique regulating philosophy, which is against the ‘mimetic’ notion of art.