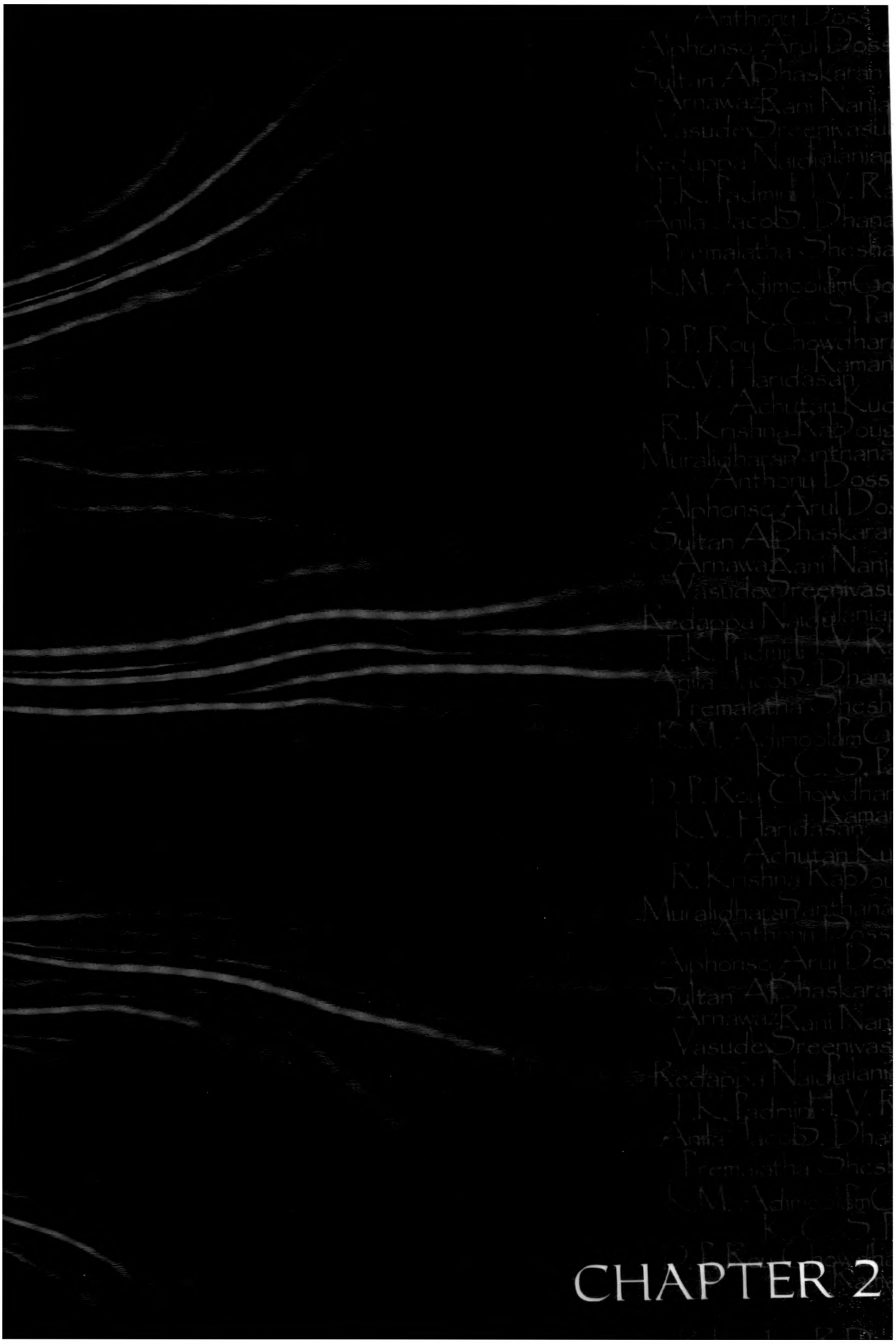
CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER II

NEGOTIATING THE SELF: IN QUEST OF IDENTITY

DEFINING THE REGIONAL MODERN

"To regress was but a 'stage of transition' to further progress. Every step on the road to progress is possible only through the detour of such regression". Oskar Pfister

The College of Arts and Crafts had served as an arena for the development of modern regional art movement in the South. It was the institution, its infrastructure and the regime of power vested in the administrative headship that facilitated innovation, experimentation and exploration of artistic apparatuses making them useful and meaningful. The College of Arts and Crafts has been sufficiently historicized to project this development as earlier analyzed. It remained an inherent Craft School until the headship of the Institution in 1929 passed to D.P. Roy Chowdhary its first Indian principal. Under his regime he dispensed with the politics of colonial pedagogy and established it as a Fine Arts Institution. In 1933 Diplomas were issued to the students after their successful completion. K.C.S. Paniker after graduating had joined the institution as an instructor in 1941. He was instrumental in initiating the study of European modern styles into the curriculum setting the pace for defining its contours in contradistinction to Romantic modernism/Westernism that Roy Chowdhary had privileged. What becomes imperative for my study is that it created conditions allowing the institution to serve as a locus for the establishment of the Madras Art Movement. In problematising the art movement as regional modern, necessarily conditioned by its 'imaginary' geographical location called 'South India' it throws up question of ambivalence of tradition and modernity. Isometrically in defining it as regional modern consequent to certain local features marking it to be distinctive it also made a powerful attempt to establish itself from the periphery. This marginalization, was underwritten from the period of colonial regime after 1770s when the transfer of political power from Madras Presidency to Calcutta was effected primarily due to famines that had wrought economic havoc on Southern India. This chapter attempts to analyze the three problematic dimensions inflecting the Southern art movement.

a. The definition of 'regional modern' within 'national modern'.
b. The binaries of center/periphery inscribed in the power play at Delhi in which the representation from the South [periphery] was minimal.
c. The ambivalence that resulted consequent to the agenda incorporating tradition within modernity in its art practice.

Under the headship of K.C.S. Paniker who was appointed principal in 1957 after the retirement of D.P. Roy Chowdhary, the College of Arts and Crafts became an arena in the late 50s and 60s for dynamic and vibrant experimentations in fine arts.

The post-independence phase marked a time of creative introspection for exploring the vitality of the indigenous epistemological traditions. Many involved and dedicated artists' felt that validity of their art could have valency, if Indian ethos combined with useful experiences of western modern art. This was an aesthetic urgency – an awareness felt by many artists as they accepted 'modern Indian art at its best as an almost sterile version of a European way of art expression, still lacking vital Indian inspiration'[1]. This opened the question of researching Indian tradition for a definition of Indian ethos and authenticity to be configured by the artists' creative and imaginative schema.

Within this context, the Bengal School, [the progenitor of the Modern in India] that was debased as 'revivalist' by critics and art historians in late 30's has significant implications. In this quest it would be pertinent to question whether drawing threads from tradition would again be reviled as 'revivalism' or as a retroactive move when in the early decade of 60s exigencies conditioned looking at tradition once again as positive energies for asserting identity not only for the Madras group but for the Indian artists generally within growing internationalism. In the postcolonial scenario this construction of the past was not intended to discover a remote paternity but as an imaginative reworking of canonical and folk art cultural traditions for renewed vocabulary to the question of Indian identity from third world perspective. This move for the Madras artists became relevant at this opportune moment necessitated and conditioned by the question/problem of marginalisation leading eventually towards defining the notion of regional modern in the South. The application of the appellant 'tradition' will acquire new meaning and depth within the Southern region as culture was sourced for different purpose and intent. Within nationalist paradigm the supply of select ideological principles was not for dismissal of modernity but a challenge to make modernity consistent with nationalist project. Similarly in the South the artistic ideology to define the regional modern was at tandem with Dravidian culturalism in which the visibility of its art forms was privileged in conjunction with modernity to realize its aims.

National Modern Aesthetics: Early 20TH Century to Political Freedom [1947]

Within the national modern discourse, it became imperative for the artists' that he define his creative contours by creatively reacting to past traditions in a way that would be meaningful and useful. This action was necessitated by the spread of excessive British academicism in the form known as Company Paintings that was producing sapped out and degenerate art [late 19th and very early 20th century]. The British painters in the late 18th and 19th century had turned towards Britain's imperial colonies to negotiate their artistic space for economic exigencies. Art in Britain was going through a crisis with regimented academicism disseminated by the Royal academy producing sterile and mechanical art forms. And more than the problematic pedagogy was a lack of enthusiastic patronage. Various social and economic factors pushed these artists to look towards its colonies for material support. What resulted was a large number of British painters traveling to India that was marketed as the 'exotic land'. These artists delineated the ethnography of India, its architecture, including Hindu and Islamic monuments as well as its splendid flora and fauna. Initially the works were rendered in water-colours and oils to be later replicated in large numbers in England in the graphic medium. These reproductions were eventually sold to the British public as souvenirs.

When the political fall out with British resulted in the partition of Bengal [1905] the cry for Swaraj dominated the Indian space. This called into question the role art could play in serving the nation. And the response to such a contingency was made from the threshold of the aristocratic household of the Tagores', aided and strengthened by British Orientalists like E.B. Havell, Ananda Coomarsamy, Sister Nivedita, [the Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda] and Bengali intellectuals like Bankim Chandra and others. The emergent consciousness of India's glorious past took a center stage and became the main player, defining the Indian psyche or the national mindset. And the Bengal School reflected the rising nationalist groundswell, by jettisoning the artistic imperialism of the Company School. The Bengal Art Movement was an answer to 'colonial powers' claims to superiority based on a doctrine of cultural difference, and symbolized in art by academic naturalism. The major thrust given by Abanindranath Tagore to the Bengal movement defined the contours of Modern Indian Art by assimilating the innate characteristics of Indian pictorial tradition as well as learning the Chinese and Japanese wash technique from Kakuzo Okakura [a Japanese scholar, ideologue and an art expert]. These sentiments paralleled the political ideology of evolving an indigenous expression that would be in harmony with Indian aspirations. Though the Bengal School today remains a pioneering venture

of Modern Indian art in the 20th century, it however could not sustain its spirit and gravity for long as it sunk to a moribund state producing anemic, over sentimentalized stereotyped formulae.

By 1930's this seminal movement was depleted of its spirit and a demand arose for a new vision of Indian modern. In 1922 the exhibition of Bauhaus prints in Calcutta organized by Rabindranath Tagore after his visit to Weimar in 1921 provided a catalyst to break away not only from academicism but also from Bengal School. This marks the entry of European modern into the field of Indian art and particularly realized in the Cubist works of Gaganendranath Tagore..

During the 40's in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay Progressive Groups were formed. It was also a decade that marked the passage of nationalism and a disengagement of art from its historical exigencies of nationalist perspective. The artists based in Calcutta and Bombay at that time were posited with a dual proposition: on the one hand was the European modernism mediated by war émigrés, books and prints and on the other a struggle to formulate their identity in terms of their Indianness. Art practice at this time was a literal meld of western modernism with Indianness, which was realized through subject matter and style. The former was drawn from the life of the people and its theme romantically and poetically treated, [Sailoz Mukherjee, K.K. Hebbar]. These pastoral themes in art with stylized subject matter and emphasis on line and color negotiated the space in national discourse for an Indian identity.

The decade of 1950s made possible a vigorous process of establishing creative experimentations combining Indian sensibility with European modernism mediated through a spirit of free and aggressive postulation in art practices. This was realized when Indian artists with European experience returned to India to mould the post-independence artistic milieu. They introduced the aesthetics of color and texture in modern Indian art, which until then was dominated by narrative and meaning. By late 50s there was a crisis within the artistic arena across the country, as it was now an independent nation and the artists had to rethink and redefine their ideology to work out a strategy that would enable them to go beyond western modern formulae to express the authenticity of Indian feeling and sensibility. For such a venture nationalism was no longer the dictating factor, so the artists' had to create a dialogue for a meaningful establishment of their identity within the larger ambit of internationalism. Hence the subjectivity of the artist had to be [re]defined, and which could be resourcefully mobilized against its rich cultural backdrop.

THE MADRAS ART MOVEMENT: DEFINING REGIONAL MODERN

The Madras Art Movement was a regional phenomenon starting in mid 1940s, which began forming its specific characteristic features during the second half of 1950s and early 60s. With K.C.S. Paniker in painting and S. Dhanapal **[Figs. 1, 2 & 3]** in sculpture as its leading figures they pushed their initiatives in search for an authentic modernism rooted in the region's cultural heritage by becoming the torchbearers of this new direction. The name though specific to Madras the present day Chennai was more of an 'imagined space' to which artists from the Southern States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka converged to determine its artistic contours. The School of Arts and Crafts served to be an arena for the development and establishment of the Madras Art Movement. The Madras group evolved from this locus where K.C.S. Paniker was the principal [1957-1967], and as the head of the institution mobilized his colleagues and a group of talented, creative, enthusiastic young students to chart a trajectory that led to the formation of this modern art movement. The regional characteristic and content in these, which can be described as the making of a special case of 'regional modernism' in art[2] as distinct from the national and international modernism/s was the result of formidable young talents that gathered here. Paniker with his teacher-artists colleagues like S. Dhanapal, L. Munuswamy, A.P. Santhanaraj, Anthony Doss along with other ex-student artists like Redappa Naidu formed a cohesive group, held meaningful dialogues, discussions and debates in the late 50s and early 60s. This group effected an identity through a construct of regionalism [i.e. South Indian] implying integrity that was region specific and mediated to confirm its own supremacy in visual arts juxtaposed with the nativist agenda that dominantly privileged the two thousand years old Adi-Dravidian and Dravidian culture[3]. The vocabulary specifically adapted, as part of their art language was hybrid, eclectic and polyvalent with native invocations.

The agenda of 'regionalism'or/and 'nativism' in the South became operational in the post-independence milieu. In a sense nativism in visual arts was an attempt to battle the invasion of alien sensibilities and articulating modes of feeling. This called into question the problem of modernity and indigenous identity, the former was tackled technically and stylistically with pragmatic appropriation of modern European formulae and the latter by the definition of Dravidian culture in the arena of regional modern articulating vision in a language either abstract or figurative clarifying artistic subjectivity.

Simultaneously the late 50s also witnessed an artistic crisis across the country. The crisis I am referring to is the nagging question of authenticity and the search for identity within the post-colonial experience, whose pre-condition in art circuits was based on widely accepted internationalism. The crisis urged artists across the country to rethink and redefine their ideology, which could neither be a return to older Revivalist style, themes or content, nor a blind following of internationalism. An appropriately worked out artistic strategy in resisting these was in the making, which could largely displace these and replace it with the authenticity of Indian character and sensibility. Against this emergent milieu, the beginning decade of the 60's brought an urgency to move on a different tract and this self-search as already mentioned was evident all over the country. The Madras Group attempted intensive soul searching in order to become nationally visible and the agenda dovetailed to configure contours for the regional movement.

Regionalisation of the modern idiom was pronounced in the artists of the Southern territories in terms of drawing on folk and tribal arts. The experience of this approach bears relevance to the larger context of national identity enriching the national ethos with the profundity of the regional culture. In this respect Tamilnadu's two thousand years old distinct Dravidian heritage served the contingent needs of the contemporary artists when they efficiently appropriated the extant heritage through their discerning sensitivities. One important factor that pushed the development of the regional modern in the South was an incident that took place in London in 1954 where Paniker was exhibiting his works. A remark by the critic Ludwig Goldschieder that his art lacked the "Indian' feel and character changed his approach to thinking towards art. He introspected and arrived at a decision whereby the national character in art would take precedence. This resulted in Paniker turning to tradition to source regional art forms for making creative statements and set the pace for a nativist agenda. This initial move gained momentum with acceptance of its program by the artists.

Thus when Paniker necessarily reevaluated and set in motion his process of intellectualization in visual arts he attempted this cultural identity, as an act of political will. This willed the establishment of difference as a regional movement with a different creative agenda. In order to successfully mark their difference the artists mined their ideas and imagery from a phenomenally rich cultural landscape of their native states, to add a new dimension in their painted and plastic expressions. Paniker manifestly testified to the subsumed tradition when he said, 'all great traditions in art are storehouses of deathless creative energy which under contingencies can kindle

itself anew, vibrate with life and inspire to reach greater heights'[4]. Modernity its language and conceptual vocabulary had been scrutinized but traditional art forms were largely unexamined. What the artists of the Madras group engendered was not only valorization but also a sincere attempt to make it an inherent aspect of their artistic vocabulary. It was not mere translation but assimilation into the creative language with their experimental forays.

The Madras Group as it took shape and defined its regional ideology was neither dogmatic nor doctrinaire becoming purposeful by adequately appropriating the modern European stylistic features to reconfigure the concepts of tradition. Paradoxically it was tradition, which strengthened modernity and in turn modernity acquired authority and acceptance because it was mediated and interpreted with technique and tools that were modern. Paniker realized that modernity could not be overlooked, as it was an essential process of cultural symbiosis within internationalism and it provided the framework within which regional/nativist formulae could be productively worked out. Effecting the changes were the dynamic forces operating from local/regional sources, so as to allow fresh ideas to be inserted and interpreted. Within the broad definition of the Madras Art Movement there were no set artistic formulae and this notion is clarified in the works of K.C.S. Paniker, L. Munuswamy, A.P. Santhanaraj, Alphonso Arul Doss, R.B. Bhaskaran and K.M. Adimoolam to mention a few, who were not only different in their approach and conceptualization towards their artistic statements but also were consanguineous without losing their individuality in this collective endeavour.

The construction of identity involved regional bias that would define a style peculiar to the Madras Group and also provide distinction from national modern. It manifested a process of invoking certain essential characteristics of its native Dravidian culture mediated through the enterprise of painting and sculpture. In this process the defining ideology of nativism/indigenism overtly asserted the cultural will. This was a necessitating factor, which made the concerted efforts of the Madras Group visible as aggressive and dynamic. What becomes relevant was the politics of not discovering but establishing identity by acts of self- representation[5]. This set in process an intellectualization akin to a notion of an organic intellectual operating within an artistic arena, going beyond any dogmas to focus on transformation and change. These transformations and changes were pedagogic in nature introduced into the teaching curriculum by Paniker. The doctrinaired empirical teaching under Chowdhary was slowly phased out, enabling students to follow their creative visions. Paniker in initiating them to be independent after

releasing them from programmed pedantic exercises, created an atmosphere of nurturing experimentations and technical explorations. The late 50s and early 60s witnessed meaningful interaction among Paniker's colleagues and group of dedicated, enthusiastic talented students to debate on issues of reducing European affiliations in art to the minimum and to rethink and deploy traditional regional arts with modern sensibility to contemporaize their expressions. It was this core group that resulted in the establishment of the Madras Art Movement.

Within the Madras Art Movement if Nativism in art was based and formulated on the strength of regional character and content it obliquely had absorbed the ideology that referenced the vital political agenda of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [established 1949], the party that came to power in Tamil Nadu in 1965. This Party was insistent on establishing cultural nationalism [not necessarily territorial] that was central to its ideology. As cultural nationalists the artists gave priority to collective cultural realization through a construction of the self commited to a tradition. Though the artistic agenda was a-political or was indirect, it went in tandem with nativist ideology of D.M.K. While politically D.M.K.'s struggle was for an autonomous state with its agenda based on privileging Dravidian culture and the Tamil language, which negated Brahmanic superiority [in scriptures and rituals stemming logically from their theory of Sanskritic Aryan culture] fundamentally in opposition to a non-Brahmin Dravidian culture; contiguously in art it was marked by a resurgence that emphasized maximum visibility of folk art and culture and inspiration derived from historical heritage of various South Indian dynastic kingdoms. Nativism or indigenism in the Madras Art Movement was a product of collective and intentional experiments with modernism encapsulating definition of regional identity. The process of indigenism inherently called attention to the specter of native art forms in which tradition was arrogated and invested energies to make it integral with artists' creative vision. It becomes an antipode to trenchant modernism to realize tradition as a meaningful trajectory for the artist to define his identity and simultaneously to prove his originality through the vitality of tradition mediated with modernity.

Indigenism within the regional /nativist/micro concept collapses identity and authenticity. This concern towards indigenous or native culture becomes layered or complex in post-colonial situation. Indigenism also translates as nativism when it becomes region specific. The ideology remains true to cultural identity. A fundamental search begins to define cultural identity in relation to the past and aspirations for the future and in that process to discover a contemporary

uniqueness. Nevertheless a socio-cultural reality of the Indian situation was exploring how to develop its own modernity by absorbing traditional values as well as new innovations. Indigenism was not an obsession only for cultural roots, rather served as a springboard for ideas that emanated from its stockpile of repertoire enabling an assimilation of local idiom with modern techniques and styles.

Regional identity by the Madras Group was negotiated and asserted within the space of Dravidian culture premised on its conceptualization to maintain integrity inherent in its tribal and folk art forms. Identity therefore came to be constructed upon Dravidian culture visualized and projected by its protagonist so that its differentiating voice was heard within social, cultural or political milieu. In visual arts within the Madras Art Movement an investment in vernacular forms made Paniker's ideology operational and a driving force. His attempts at grass root level exploration of folk and tribal art forms was a process for activating these familiar but dormant nomenclatures within the parameters of Dravidian culture.

Tradition: Form and Content

If tradition is to serve as a critical agenda in defining the category regional modern, it becomes mandatory to make an epistemological investigation to understand tradition with its form and content. Tradition within a broad definition imbricates unique artistic cultural heritage of a nation. Subsumed within the category of tradition was a distinct notion of indigenism or nativism. Indigenism as Geeta Kapur conceptualized it was a construct that had cultural-ideological implications of colonialism. It concerned the unique feature of one's nation's history and tradition, its surviving culture and its environment. The Madras group headed by Paniker attempted to open avenues that would aid them in reworking tradition that had remained at the periphery due to various historical exigencies caused especially by colonized representation in their pedagogic politics. The encounter of modern Indian artists with traditional art forms and its politics of representation demonstrated the modes of subaltern colonial resistance in which rearticulations of pre-colonial traditions marked their method of artistic protest. The beginning of modern Indian art lies in this resistance[6]. Introspection into the essence of tradition was a common feature of colonial India. This aesthetic tradition was categorized by Matanga as margi and desi [10th century] in his treatise on music. In his typology all contemporary folk styles were desi while conventional and elite styles were margi; marking the latter tradition as nationally pervasive and the former specific to small regions and brief historic periods. Margi was

hierarchical linked to gods and Sanskrit while desi was humanistic and vernacular[7]. Another argument advanced towards this is formulated by colonial cultural technology centered upon the process of defining rituals as either sanctioned by Brahmanical religion or as folk/popular. Hinduism itself was redefined and a rigid separation between the high classical and the low popular religion made, producing the model of the Great and Little traditions. This categorization in Indian culture remained interchangeable and operational until the early twenties.

A different perception of tradition was given by three leading artists of the Swadeshi movement namely Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and Rabindranath Tagore. Abanindranath in his approach to tradition was freely moving between the different positions of a textual scholar, a critic and an artist. Nandalal felt it [tradition] had its own benefits of creatively reworking as he demonstrated with his Haripura posters that enabled a wider reach for the common man since the agenda was political. And to Rabinadranath it presented challenges to manouver tradition and translate it in keeping with the contingencies of the contemporary moments and which would allow opportunities for reworking.

These challenging possibilities of negotiating with tradition aided Jamini Roy to configure the contours of his art when he was attempting to break away from the exhausted emotional urges inscribed in the lyrical and sentimental style of the Bengal School. He discovered it in folk art with its power of simple forms and expressive linearity, linking it eventually to the development of the national conscious. In the whirlpool of nationalism, the conceptualization of the genre of tradition was a matter of wider significance. Its usage wavered between conformity and change. Conformity related to the pride of its spirited profound culture and change in keeping with the notion of progress and growth.

Tradition in this context has understandably ratified the flexibility, to encourage, and allow due reassessments and innovations, by each generation to mark positive embodiments in its artistic language. Indian tradition is rich and diverse with change and transformation as its essence. It has remained fluid and contested, mediating productively to become a harbinger of newness. This expressively becomes apparent when it was interpreted and explored by the creative faculty of the artist. Tradition involved a historical sense, namely perception not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence. The historical sense compels a transcription of simultaneous existence, marking a sense of the timeless and the temporal making an artist traditional and

contemporary. Hence the past should be altered by the present as much as present is directed by the past[8]. In other words it is an active process with the present needing the past in order to become the future. The dialectic of the past and future mediated through the understanding of tradition is of singular importance in the conceptualization of the Madras group. "Terms of cultural engagement... are produced performatively. The representation of difference is not reflections of pre-given ethnic or cultural trait within the fixity of tradition. The recognition that [what] tradition bestows is a partial form of identification"[9]. Sources for tradition are found in the many ways, the past is transmitted to the present and the future. The "texts" namely – visual, literary, oral and aural are a lived experience and therefore not remnants of putrefied past.

The term tradition as it is employed in the context of India's modernity is not what is inherited or established as a disinterested civilizational legacy. This tradition is also what was invented [as Eric Hobsbawm uses it] in the course of the nationalist struggle. Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, seeking to inculcate certain values and norms implying continuity with a suitable historical past. In short they are responses to novel situations, which take the form of references to old situations due to contrast between constant change and innovations. Hence in the nationalist discourse certain aspects of traditions were sourced from religion, the visual arts, symbolism and folklore that were restructured for special investigation to serve a definite purpose[10]. This epistemological maneuvering was to weave a cultural tradition that would be suitable for the contemporary need of the nationalist discourse. And the same cultural tradition was valiantly valorized in the post-independence experience to be reliably authentic for the Indian ethos.

In the post independence era the tradition was again reactivated and forcibly made visible with a greater vigour and for a different purpose. This is where the Madras Art Movement marks an important signpost. The concern lies here within visual representations of a post independence India where nationalism was no more the guiding principle. Nationalism was pitted against internationalism where the objective was to achieve a uniform status quo with the coexisting cultures. There was also an urgent need that postulated a concerted effort in absolving the deep-seated psyche of submissiveness to the imperial powers. This had reappeared in the guise of American hegemony, which had passed from excolonialism to neocolonialism. In the visual arts this was Abstract Expressionism and largely European abstraction based on semi-figurative style of post-war French development. Since this mode of stylized mannerism was largely borrowed

and not an original contribution by the Indian artists, it became obligatory that this practice of Western artistic expression should be reduced. This urgency became visible in late 50s and early 60s and made it increasingly evident that new avenues had to be opened up that would enable an establishment and visibility leading to a stress on identity and authenticity. This question once again opened up the discernable traditional space. The versatile and fluid cultural art forms proved efficient with their inherent strengths to facilitate encounters with it, so that by its interrogation, tradition would once again be vitalized in the practice of contemporary art.

The return of the tradition marked a positive posture whereby the artist who was an inheritor was in a position to discriminate as part of his creative faculty, whether the ideas and concepts could carry the freshness of his experiences or whether he would have to necessitate changes to make it contemporary by forging a new vocabulary. Change therefore was an important facilitator, which remained central to creative activity. This dimension of change held great valency for the poet Rabindranath Tagore especially in the use of language, and equally applicable in art, maintaining that without change there could only be a stasis. In this context says the poet, 'all great languages have undergone and are still undergoing changes. Those languages, which resist the spirit of change, are doomed and will never produce a great harvest of thought and literature[11]. Or Walter Benjamin emphasizing the importance of the past "every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretievably"[12]. What is implicated was the dialectic of change that becomes mandatory in order to chart new trajectories as the Madras artists so avowedly declared, especially, Paniker, Redappa Naidu, Haridassan Dhanapal, Santhanaraj [to name a few]. What they particularly ventured to do was to explode the stereotype found in the regional local imagery and patterns and valorized them to seek a new vocabulary that would suit their creative expressions and underscore their nativist intentions.

Ambivalence of Tradition and Modernity

The intellectualization that set in process the definition of identity that was regional, national and international was beginning to make the artist conscious about his creative possibilities wherein art to have validity, should be reflective of the spirit of the people of his region. And it is this aim, which defined the usage of tradition tangentially with modernity.

Tradition and modernity were constantly repositioned in the discourse of the modern Indian art, becoming even more relevant to the Madras Group. Its co-existence was brought into a larger

discourse by the nationalist factor. The twin concepts of tradition and modernity need reevaluation especially in the post independence milieu. According to Geeta Kapur, "Tradition should be considered as a material historical affiliation and modern a self-reflexivity necessary to bring about change. To the term tradition should be accredited the concreteness of the extant practice; to make a genuine extension of small particularities, resourced from ancient and contemporary practices, into new configurations. At the same time the term modern should be made less monolithic, formalistic and institutional to make it again a vanguard notion leading to a variety of experimental moves"[13]. This notion of tradition and modernity effectively theorized by Geeta Kapur rejuvenates the forms of tradition and defies conformism. This rethinking imparted an autonomous trait even if it was subsumed under eclecticism. Reconfiguring and equating tradition and modernity valorizes the criterion by which the artists now make their forays [Paniker, Viswanathan, Senathipathy, Dhanapal, Nandagopal to mention a few]. "Hence all breakthroughs have a future in mind and all futures are rhetorically prefigured in contemporary practices"[14].

"Tradition and modernity as they figure in modern Indian art discourse could be grouped as essential categories and options. Tradition has the power to transform routinely transmitted material from the past into volatile forms that merit the claim of contemporary. If tradition were to be functional it would involve the study of genres, conventions, rhetorical devices, symbologies and other features. There is a kind of plunder involved in the living use of tradition along with a continual replenishment of desacralized resources"[15].

Along this structured thinking, an emphasis on the past or a 'return to the sources' as Amilcar Cabral called it was not an attempt to resurrect the past and defy forces of progress. Nor did modernity in the Madras group involve a rejection of the past, since traditions served as a powerful tool in the effort to realize modernity.

The interplay of tradition and modernity provided the framework for the Madras artists enabling them the visualization of their expressions. This ambivalence/dichotomy was unavoidable implicating the process of researching classical and vernacular ethnic forms with wider significance within the paradigm of modernity. For the Madras group modernism involved simultaneously an anti modern return to nativist origins. This opens the question to 'primitivism' with regional invocations and as a site for asserting authenticity. A search for roots and reworking

cultural signs implied going against the grain of modernist ideology which primarily was to project progress and growth related to industrialization. In aligning primitivism to the nativist agenda it was primarily to valorize those Dravidian art forms belonging to the tribal and folk arts that colonizers had marginalized as 'low art'. Unlike the European use of the ideology or concept of Primitivism, in the particular instance of the Madras Art Movement the attempted establishment of relations between the episteme or the question of primitivism and nativism, was to open up space to negotiate and asserting identity. Primitivism with regard to nativism marks it as an important site for asserting identity. For instance to Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighton, "Within the context of modernism, 'primitivism' is an act on the part of the artists and writers seeking to celebrate features of the art and culture of peoples deemed 'primitive' and to appropriate their supposed simplicity and authenticity to the project of transforming Western art" [16]. The concept of Primitivism here is the product of the historical experience of the West and more specifically as an ideological construct of colonial conquest and exploitation. The artists of the Madras Art Movement effectively employing cultural signs like kolam/kalam or the floor decorations, the folk deities or the *gramamatas* ubiquitous in the rural areas guarding the entrance to the villages, the puppet forms, the wooden toys, dance masks, tantric yantras, astrological diagrams, the textile designs, epigraphy, iconography, temple carvings, epics and religious texts possibly were also fundamentally involved in the same process of transformation and change as the Western artists did, but the agenda indirectly created an interplay for emphasizing regional authenticity.

In their creative appropriation they evoke those characteristics of simplicity, unsophistication, boldness, iconicity, frontality, effulgent colours and power of subjectivity to provoke visualization of imagery that was akin to Paul Gaugin, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee. Reinforcing the basic simplicity of their art forms, the Madras Group also exhibited a quality of decorative patterning, which effectively could be ascribed to the inherent craft oriented curriculum of the colonial pedagogy that finds its productive engagement at this juncture. This was the strong design element that served as the linking thread helping largely to bind the works of the Madras artists. The design element nevertheless was integral to Indian art evident in kolams and accoutrements of performing arts. Patterning was inherent in the works of Gaugin who had taken the first important step towards a conceptual, synthetic and stylized art. He had melded the realism of Impressionism with flat decorative effects and stylized forms whose antecedents were in non-illusionist arts as Egyptian, Peruvian and Breton folk painting. This also

throws light on ethnocentrism of Dravidian culture in which the unique approbation of its art forms was invested with modernism resulting in cross-cultural fertilization.

Primitivism' emphasized romanticism and eschewed the rational [opposition to classical norms]. In the 1984 Exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern art and catalogued by William Rubin, 'primitivism' was defined as a twentieth century phenomenon. In this line of thought Primitivism was characterized as stylistic influences from so called primitive styles particularly Africa and Oceania leading to the overthrow of the classical hegemony in western art.

The story modernism wrote for itself was that the encounter with primitive art was an epiphany, inspiring avant-garde artists to break free from the past, not simply from academic conventions but also from their cultural patrimony. The assimilation of the primitive led to the overthrow of the hegemony of academic classicism. The driving force behind primitivism was a desire to return art to its vital origins, to reembody it by eschewing the rational and the verbal. Modernism in the west hence involved a search for origins; and primitive energies emerged as a cultural force and dominated the arts, to become one of the principal directives for modern European culture.

If a search in this direction was profoundly modern, a calculated defensive appropriation in the visualization of traditional or local culture for the Madras group could be described as a tactical move for the regional modern to define authenticity and establish identity as also difference within the tradition of modernity. Historically within the national discourse, in the first phase of artistic nationalism the past had been identified with the nation. From 1920s it began equating the nation with the soil in which the rural and peasantry were romanticized. From 1920's the Santhals of Eastern India emerged as the stereotyped image of 'primitive' group of India that had already been created by colonial anthropology. Santhals came to stand for the timeless purity of the primitive, set against the corruption of civilization. This paved the way for the admiration of the tribal art by the elite, who discovered its affinities with European modernist works. The quest for rural art as an expression of an indigenous resistance to colonialism became a significant aspect of modern art in India. If this resistance to colonialism valorized the tribal arts implicated in the works of Jamini Roy, the post independence scenario especially in the 60s for the Madras Group constituted a construction of identity by valorization of native Dravidian culture. In pursuing a nativist agenda it was not declaring a rupture with modernity nor monotonously repeating inherited pictorial and plastic stylistic traditions. It rather congealed the two opposing

strands of native tradition and modernity with contemporary experiences. It is this experience, which was the contingent moment at the periphery i.e. the South and especially at Madras that marked a posture of difference within the national modern.

A search for native roots involved a program of rethinking and reinterpreting the local regional traditions within the larger ambit of the national modern. In this calculated endeavour borrowing be it local or modern had been an inherent aspect of art from time immemorial. 'It started with artists in Egypt borrowing Assyrian and Phoenician motifs, archaic Greek sculptors borrowing the smile, stance and canon of proportion from 25th and 26th dynasty Egypt, medieval monks borrowing from Persian miniatures. In the mid 19th century Japan and its aesthetics were revealed to the west...Cross cultural distortions or the exaggerations however flawed, produce intentional creative misunderstandings provoking new developments'[17].

Within the Madras Art Movement the ambivalence of tradition and modernity was subsumed within its artistic cultural space in the 60s. In Europe, artistic tradition was first challenged and rejected for an "art of our time" i.e. the modern experiences negating recalcitrant academicism. But for the Madras Group, tradition served the major cause of art in articulating and defining modernity, located within its region, serving to make it distinct. Modernity on the other hand was crucial to enable concretization of their creativity. It was akin to an armature within which stylistic European features could be integrated at will with traditional art forms serving to be the critical elements in their dispensation. The characteristic of modernity was also implicated in involvement with constant experimentation and shifts laying a basis for culture of materials.

The Madras group evolved with consistence; its agenda of tradition combining with modernity aided in construing a regional identity energized by various experimentations forged an existence of difference within the broad specter of the nation. An inherent aspect of the mental make up of the South Indians in their epistemological and ontological field was to exercise logic of arguments and validity of constructions. These cerebral maneuvers had its repercussions in the creative ventures that led Madras Group to work out its own native agenda different and dissimilar from the artistic solutions worked out in Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta. In negotiating the regional space, what Paniker and his group offered was the strength of technical adventure and material exploration in terms of stylistic devices offered by Impressionists, Post Impressionists, Fauves and the cubists juxtaposed with native pictorial and plastic forms. This

strategy was akin to standing on the threshold looking backwards and forward; a calculated effort not at polarization within the geopolitical boundaries of the nation, but an attempt to mark their trace as the leaders in the south.

The Southern Posture: The Binaries of Center and Periphery

Besides defining the regional modern the contestation of identity also focused on the binaries of center and periphery. Historical Modernity applied its civilizing program by beginning with an image of the center that could serve as a universal foundation for its dominant western rationality. Similarly in debating its problematic identity the South long captive to this linear contraposition [a definitive posture from colonial rule] between a center that irradiated light and a periphery shadowed by backwardness, a plentiful center and a lacking periphery, the Madras Group worked towards projecting an identity to contravene [the binaries] and project their regional space within the national modern. And it is precisely this factor, which made palpable the question of identity for the southern artists located at Madras within the institutional framework of the art college. The artistic culture of the regional modern was to negotiate an identity not through separation from the center, but within it to mark a posture of difference. By taking such a position it imagined greater visibility and authority.

These binaries however were already scripted in the pedagogic politics of the colonizers in the establishment of the colonial art school. Within the imperial hegemony the Madras School of Arts and Crafts had its role defined to be primarily a craft oriented institution cloaked in the euphemistic revival of craft traditions. This however did not materialize and the school remained a commercial craft venture. In the Swadeshi struggle, Bengal played a proactive part in visual arts that led to emergence of modern Indian artists from that region playing a seminal role in the first decades of the 20th century As the decades marched ahead, there appeared artists on the front lines of modern Indian art from Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta. Ramkinker Baij, Binod Bihari Mukherjee, Sailoz Mukherjee, M.F.Husain, B. C. Sanyal, Ara, K.K. Hebbar, F.N. Souza, Pradosh Das Gupta, Nirodh Mazumdar, Paritosh Sen, K.S. Kulkarni [to name the most prominent] were veterans in their field in the 50s and 60s having already established themselves in the 40's and 50's. Within this artistic circuit, there were no artists from beyond the vindhyas, particularly Madras whose voices could be heard. This overview clarifies that beyond D.P. Roy Chowdhary and Paniker there were no emergent artists of caliber to define themselves on the national scene from Madras till late 40s. Relatively the posture of Bombay and Delhi as the

commercial hub and political epicenters respectively had their constructive roles defined and they were ably aided because of their position to mark their trace in artistic arena. Madras from the colonial period was not strategically located to be within the center's ambit and perennially remained a region 'beyond the Vindhyas'. With no crucial role either economically or politically it remained at the periphery.

To analyze this peripheral distinction it becomes necessary to highlight the regional political developments [1930 onwards] during the nationalist struggle - a struggle that was not a social revolution as in Mexico but for political freedom from the hegemonic yoke. Politically the Southern region was a node for the emergence of many regional parties particularly the D.K. [Dravida Kazhagam, 1944] and the D.M.K. [Dravita Munnetra Kazhagam, 1949]. The history of Chennai is inextricably associated with the initial momentum of the freedom movement, followed by the formation of the Justice Party allegedly inspired at the turn of the 20th century [1916] by Lord Pentland, the then Governor of Madras. The politics was also dominated by the 'Brahmin-non-brahmin' conflict and this increasing Brahmin dominance could be attributed to the British rule. Brahmins entered the British administration and newly created urban professions in disproportionately large numbers. The consolidation of the British rule in this region was directly equated to the improvement of the Brahmin position. Urbanization and Brahmin dominance were interrelated features of the 19th century social changes that spilled into the 20th, resulting in the dichotomization of socio economic elites, into non-brahmin and Brahmin segments. The ideological category 'non brahmin' was preceded by the development of a sense of Dravidian cultural history separate, distinct and perhaps superior to that of the South Indian Brahmins.

During the nationalist struggle the British support to the Brahmins came under a cloud because of their involvement in the freedom movement, which posed a serious threat to them. Non-Brahmin politicians on the other hand provided the shoring with the British, arguing that their departure from India would result only in complete domination by Brahmins. Politically and economically powerful non-Brahmins deserted all India national politics in favour of the quest to establish a separate political entity in peninsular India composed of all Dravidian Linguistic groups.

The socio-politico-economic factors in the South enabled a rift, suspicion and separatist agenda to successfully operate among the natives [ethnic Dravidians] to undermine the potency of the nationalist movement and create an identity for them. Partha Chatterjee explicates this at a macro

level, 'the colonial state was not just the agency that brought the modular forms of the modern state to the colonies, it was also an agency that was destined never to fulfill the normalizing mission of the modern state because the premise of its power was a rule of colonial difference namely the preservation of the alieness to the ruling group'[18]. At the micro level the Southern regional parties [Justice party, 1916] gained power and momentum, basing their ideologies on the strength of this mission of alienation, and the policy of divide and rule motto of the British.

In the Madras Presidency, during the same period as in Bengal, that usefully had defined its artistic contours within the nationalist discourse, no such program existed or was visualized, that could articulate the nationalist ideology within the portals of the Madras Art School. The strategically defined separatist political agenda, dominated by the regional parties had become operational because of the socio-economic exigencies. Nevertheless till 1929, the School of Arts and Crafts remained purely a commercial craft venture until D.P. Roy Chowdhary took over the administration and wrought radical changes. In 1941 Paniker joined the teaching faculty and through his instructions effected an awareness of modernist formulae that were appropriated with Indian subject matter. This however was a common art practice with artists in various centers at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta

Within the domain of the School of Arts, Roy Chowdhary held fort with his awesome presence. This made Panıker's predicament uncomfortable in the 50's. Roy Chowdhary however made attempts to project the Southern artists when he was made the first Honorary Secretary on the founding of the Lalit Kala Akademi in Delhi in 1954. But he could not gain much ground as he retired in 1957 after serving the Madras institution for thirty years. Though he retired Chowdhary's presence lingered in his students compounding Panıker's problems when he assumed the principalship in 1957.

Politically, the Art School throughout the nationalist struggle remained insular. In painting, the Southern artists expounded the rural and the pastoral romanticized subject matter that largely was consanguine with the rest of the artists working in this mode within the country, during the nationalist struggle. The predilection of Roy Chowdhary towards romantic western formulae made this possible but it was not consciously effected to be contiguous with the tide of nationalism, though indirectly it was. Further compounding the distinction was Chowdhary's personality - elitist and aristocratic that had the effect of alienating him from his students. He

remained an icon fortified in his studio to which the students were 'invited' to observe him at work. A.S. Raman gives an anecdote of Roy Chowdhary's attitude on the art scene in Madras. Says Raman, "he was fond of reminding me that there was no need for his boys to look beyond their civilized city for achieving and consolidating their professional careers since the scene in other three metropolises dominated by pseudo-modernists, was not worth their attention"[19]. Chowdhary had never professed faith in the European modernism except the Impressionist Rodenisque permutations in his sculptures.

These were the vital factors why Madras could not align itself to the crucial movements taking place within the country in breaking new grounds and opening new directions in artistic values and concepts in the 40's and early 50's. R. Nandakumar also reinforces this fact[20]. These exigencies could not be countered, as the School's agenda provided neither space nor articulation of European modern formulae under Roy Chowdhary's regime. This was furthur disabled by the insularity of its teaching programme in the visual arts emphasizing only the empirical and the perceptual mode of delineation. What it eventually engendered was a threatening obscurity, a lack, which became difficult to bridge after the nation became independent. This was one prime factor that disallowed the penetration of innovative ideas reaching the art practices in the South from other centers. In the mid 50s the contingencies that pushed the efforts of the artists to evolve a working process and an artistic direction to configure their identity within a nativist framework was consequent to Paniker's sojourn to London. At his exhibition a critical remark was made to inscribe his paintings with a larger concern for Indian feel and ethos. This contingent need in late 50s and early 60s for Paniker, seemed also to parallel the urgency within the nation, in order to mark its cultural posture for a similar authenticity within international ambit.

Crucially till the 50's Chowdhary was the only name to reckon with from Madras, though Paniker was marking his presence by holding exhibitions at the national and international levels [1944 onwards]. When the 1890 Group was formed in 1963 with Redappa Naidu as its Madras representative, J. Swaminathan condescendingly remarked, "there is no art beyond the Vindhyas" almost duplicating the colonial stance[21]. This was an insinuating statement and it rankled within Redappa Naidu. A similar instance is given by A.S. Raman when he asked J. Swaminathan, "why do you in the North keep the South Indian artists out of your exhibitions? To which he replied rather insolently "where are the artists in South India?" [22]. The dearth of artists from

Madras underlies these cryptic remarks by J. Swaminathan who was the most verbose. This perhaps was the ground reality, for Chowdhary had made no concerted efforts to showcase talents at the capital though unfailingly he provided that space within the city. These were the eventualities facing Paniker when he became principal in 1957. His task was made difficult as mentioned earlier by the lingering influence of the presence of D.P. Roy Chowdhary among his colleagues. So there was resistance when he initiated changes within the curriculum towards not only assimilating European stylistic devices but also appropriating native art forms productively. But after initial resistance from his colleagues Paniker succeeded in weaning his students' away from routine over worked and romanticized western formulae and introduced an awareness of modernist canons. And pushing his ideas and intellectualization furthur on his introspection with regional traditions, Paniker had set the stage for defining not only the regional contours but also making the Southern scene visible within the national milieu.

Such a debilitating set up required vision and a single- minded pursuit to translate innovative ideas, which Paniker affected after the initial struggle. In the 60's it had become imperative for the Madras Group to be heard and to assert itself. Stentorian voices of artists like G.R. Santosh, K.G. Subramanyan, M.F. Hussain, J. Swaminathan, Satish Gujral, Ganesh Pyne, Nirodh Mazumdar among numerous others was making an impact in the country almost defining their territories. There was enough presence of these artists at various national exhibitions and when biennale and triennial [late 1950's] became a common feature the feeble presence of the Madras group threw light on its existence that it was not powerful enough to command an identity of its own. Also the regional or the state factor was operating within these national bodies as Redappa Naidu recalled that "when it came to exhibitions only artists from those regions or states were prioritized who had a representative at the center"[23]. The politics of representation hence in these prestigious government bodies was maneuvered by the heavyweights for visibility of their particular region. The only ubiquitous persona familiar on the national scene was Paniker who seemed to have become the vanguard of the group. Redappa Naidu was yet another artist who brought the Madras group on the national scene with his participation in the 1890 group exhibition at Delhi in 1964. With Neo Tantricism [1968] rocking the Indian modern in its quest for indigenism, Haridasan who was an initiator of this movement in the South was an artist made more visible at the national level from the Madras group.

Taking the above factors into consideration and tangentially the identity crisis within the country then, the Madras Group effected an essentialist identity to define the regional modern and simultaneously made their presence felt at the national level as a heterogeneous group[24] from the South with a common goal and an agenda effectively worked out by artists who though pursuing creative freedom in their works were bound by commonality of their regional traditions. Within the art historical perspective the exigencies and contingencies that effected the regional modern soon acquired an identity. Soli Daruwalla parodied this regional movement when he said, "Have you heard of Western artists, or Eastern artists, or Northern artists, well there are only 'Southern' artists"[25]. This obliquely referenced the artists as separatists who made no attempt to flow within the mainstream Indian art.

Paniker, it should be stressed, was the lone voice from the South who attempted to bridge and bring the Madras artists on the national scene. He was able to further his interests and those of the group primarily because of the powerful infrastructural back up and support provided by the Art Institution. As Bhaskaran commented, "If not for the Art School in Madras there would have been no productive art creativity, considering the conservative and unsupportive public as well as the media"[26]. Having been nominated member of the Executive Council Lalit Kala Akademi, Paniker was able to productively manouvere this position to advantage. A S. Raman vindicates this position when he said that, 'as a charismatic father figure with the deadly combination of creative energy and crusading zeal, he took the Chennai artists out of their ivory tower and made a serious attempt to achieve for them a strong presence on the national circuit. A resolute and redoubtable fighter for right causes, Paniker had tried very hard to project his colleagues and students nationally. This was affected through his own initiative as well as through the institutional back up he received from Cholamandal, his dream in action'[27].

Another factor A.S. Raman contributes was the lack of support from the media. This was a crippling move as it posited the Chennai artists unfavourably especially in its formative years, in relation to their contemporaries elsewhere in the country. The early 50s saw the presence of many European émigré artists who had popularized modern Indian art through their writings. These writers' essentially were Rudy Von Leyden from the Times of India, Bombay, Charles Fabri from The Statesman, Delhi and Lindsay Emmerson from The Statesman, Calcutta. In contrast, the Madras based Dr. James H. Cousins had an abiding interest in Indian art but could not go beyond Bengal School[28]

Other contributory factors creating tensions for a discourse between Madras Group and the artists stationed beyond the Vindhyas were an absence of promoters, such as dealers, critic, collectors, publishers' and others with a sense of mission. The basic ethos and ambience of Chennai city itself cautioned aggressive self-marketing by the artist. These were the fundamental blocks that prevented better dialogue between the Madras artist and the national audience. But for Paniker's determined efforts, and relentless fights on their behalf, the Chennai artists would have remained irredeemably marginalized. Even today their art is on the periphery of the national scene. In this context S. Nandagopal has this to say, "there is no longer a north-south divide. If, the Lalit Kala Akademy today is defunct, it is because other galleries have taken over. But when my father [Paniker] was in the National Akademy there was a lot of politics. When it came to awards, international exhibitions etc. each institution looked out for their students. In the early 60's my father did a lot to bridge the north-south divide"[29].

Undeniably as the study proves, Paniker's services were productive enabling a visibility at the center and elsewhere to carry Madras Art beyond the Vindhyas. This is furthur buttressed by views of prominent artists [Balan Nambiar, Alphonso, Santhanaraj, Anthony Doss Sulatan Ali] from Cholamandal and his students working elsewhere within and without the country. In his various capacities - as a Principal, Teacher, Honorary Secretary, and Executive member, Lalit Kala Akademi, Delhi, founder of Cholamandal Artisits' village, President of Progressive Painters Assosciation, Editor of Art Trends, the quarterly bulletin on contemporary art - his energies were unlimited. Yet, despite the selfless services rendered there were dissenting voices. For within the Madras Group, despite identifying their collective efforts under the nomenclature of the Madras Art Movement, it however was not without its tensions and fractures. Not all the artists subscribed to the nativist/indigenist agenda in their creative formulations as the works of L. Munuswamy, Adimoolam, Bhaskaran, Alphonso and others clearly explicate. Kerala artists [that is alumnus of College of Arts, Chennai] themselves had a grouse that he did not do enough for them [in conversation with Haridasan] since Paniker's family lineage was from that state. He never attempted a Tamilian/Malayalee divide as Haridasan and Gopinath vehemently denied it as propaganda measures, [in conversation with them]. But what cannot be denied was Paniker's dominating, authoritarian and an aggressive personality to define the region's modernity within the larger framework of the nation's aesthetics based on vernacular inspiration, which was not acceptable to everybody.

NOTES ON THE CHAPTER

[1] Artrends, Editorial, Oct. 1961, [a quarterly Art Bulletin of the Progressive Artists Association]

[2] The question of defining regional modernity in art was first raised by Shivaji Panikkar in his presentation "Representation as Language. A Case in the Direction of Defining Regional Modern – The Madras Experience", at the national workshop on "Politics of Representation Visual and Verbal" at the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, M.S University, Baroda, October, 2000 His argument of the 'regional modern' was made stressing on the need for an art historical perspective of the regional study of the South Indian Modern Art within its milieu to be characteristic of that domain and simultaneously distinct from the "national modern".

[3] the Dravidian culture prevailed in the Southern Region of peninsular India from pre-historic times. From literary and religious records it has been established with certainty that by the fifth century B.C. there were Tamil kingdoms on the western and eastern regions of Southern India. The Tamils have used their culture including language for well over 2000 years to seek and maintain political and territorial integrity. This clearly implied a literate civilization having cultural significance. The Tamil country had three major kingdoms: Pandya Nadu in the Southern tip of India, Chola Nadu in the S E. and Chera Nadu in the S.W with each of these kingdoms under several vassal kings and chieftains. After the 15th century Tamil political autonomy in large areas of Tamil country was lost to Telegu, Muslim and Maratha rulers of Central and Eastern regions of India Finally it surrendered to the British at the end of the 18th century when direct political control was established over the Tamil territory with the exception of the princely kingdom of Travancore

[4] Artrends, Editorial, Jan. 1962

[5] By representation is meant a cultural practice having signified systems as sites not for the production of beautiful things evoking beautiful feelings. It stresses that images and texts are no mirrors of the world merely reflecting their sources. Representation stresses something refashioned, coded in rhetorical, textual or pictorial terms. In postcolonial theory [Spivak and Bhabha] the term representation always invokes the cultural networks within which the artistic strategies function and the agenda of power in which they participate. [Eric Fernie, Art History and its Methods A Critical anthology, Phaidon 1996, 359]

[6] K G. Subramanyan, The Living Tradition: Perspectives on Modern Indian Art, [Calcutta: Sea Gull Books, 1987] Chapter II.

[7]Makarand Pranjape, ed. Nativism Essays in Criticism, [New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997],10-53.

[8] T.S. Eliot, Tradition and the Modern Individual, Art Trends Magazine, 1962.

[9] Homi K. Bhabha, Location of Culture, [London: Routledge, 1996] 2.

[10] Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, eds. The Invention of Tradition, [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983], 1-13.

[11] K G. Subramanyan, quoted in the Moving Focus, [New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1978] 4

[12] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' quoted in 'The Allegorical Impulse Towards Theory of Postmodernism, in 'Rethinking Representation: Art After Modernism, [Boston Contemporary Art of New York, 1984]

[13] Geeta Kapur, When was Modernism:Essays on Contemporary Cultural Practice in India, [New Delhi:,Tulika, 2000], 278-279.

[14] Ibid 283

[15] Ibid. 268-273.

[16] Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighton,."Primitive", in Critical Terms for Art History, eds Robert S. Nelson and Richard Schiff, [Chicago. The university of Chicago Press, 1966],170.

[17] Kim Levine, 'Contemporary Arts in the United States', Art Asia Pacific, Vol 3 No. 4, [1996].

[18] Partha Chatterjee, Nation and its Fragments, [New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992], 10.
[19] A.S. Raman, 'Regional Accent in Modern art', Nunkalai Magazine, [Madras March 1998], 27

[20] Ibid. 27.

[21] In conversation with the artist at his residence in August, 1998.
[22] A.S. Raman, 'Regional Accent in Modern Art', Nunkalai Magazine, [Madras March 1998], 26.

[23] In conversation with the artist at his residence in August 1998

[24] The heterogeneity of the group was also underscored by Mlle Jeannine Auboyer, curator of Musee Guimet, Paris, after looking at the 2nd Annual exhibition of the Arts and Crafts of the Madras Lalit Kala Akademi in 1963. She said, "The one thing which has struck me most is the great diversity of talents which expresses themselves freely, preserving with care the personality of the individual artist...Many of the works here do not merely hold out a promise but indicate that the artists have already arrived. May these artists through their pain and investigations further perpetuate the great artistic tradition of India while giving it a new face". Quoted by M.V. Devan in Lalit Kala Contemporary 3, 1965, 35.
[25] in conversation with the art dealer at his residence in Chennai, March 2002.
[26] in conversation with the artist at his residence in Chennai, June 2002
[27] Raman, A.S. Regional Accent in Modern Art, Nunkalai Magazine, p. 26, March, 1998
[28] Ibid pg. 28

[29] Drawing the Line, The New Sunday Express Magazine, 5th August, 2001,