

A Freudian Perspective on Indian Painting: Manifestation of the Artist's Unconscious Mind

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Abstract: The relationship between the human mind, emotional processes, and artistic creation has remained a significant area of study in both psychology and art. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory introduced a new perspective for understanding the role of inner emotions, psychological tensions, fears, memories, repressed impulses, and creative expression in artistic production. The present research paper attempts to interpret the visual manifestation of the artist's psychological world through a Freudian perspective. It examines the influence of dreams, symbolism, colour language, psychological experiences, and creative processes on the production of paintings. The study explores how painting functions as a symbolic expression of the artist's inner emotions, psychological conflicts, and emotional experiences through the application of Freud's psychoanalytic concepts. Particular emphasis has been given to the concepts of the unconscious mind, sublimation, dream analysis, and symbolism in understanding the process of artistic creation. Furthermore, the paper investigates selected artworks of major Indian modern artists such as Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne from a psychoanalytic perspective. The study seeks to interpret the symbolic representation of psychological tension, fear, insecurity, loneliness, social pressure, rebellion, sexuality, and inner conflict reflected in their artworks. The findings of the study suggest that painting is not merely a medium of visual aesthetics but also a powerful expression of the artist's inner experiences, psychological conditions, and creative energy. The study further highlights that the Freudian approach continues to be a significant and useful framework for understanding the relationship between art and psychology, particularly in the context of symbolic expression and artistic creativity. The Freudian approach continues to be a significant framework for understanding art and psychology (Freud, 1923; Jung, 1964).

Keywords: *Freudian Perspective, Psychoanalysis, Unconscious Mind, Painting, Symbolism, Dream Analysis, Sublimation, Art Psychology.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Art is not merely a process of aesthetic creation; it is also considered a reflection of the human inner world. When an artist creates a painting, they do not simply depict external reality but also give visual form to their experiences, memories, emotional tensions, suffering, and psychological states. Therefore, the study of painting is not limited to style, colour composition, or technical skill alone; it is also closely connected to the artist's psychological world.

The relationship between art and psychology became more prominent during the twentieth century through the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, many human emotions, instincts, desires, and impulses cannot be expressed directly due to social norms and cultural restrictions. As a result, these repressed experiences often emerge indirectly through dreams, language, behaviour, and artistic expression. From this perspective, the artist's canvas

can be viewed as a visual manifestation of the inner mind. Emotional experiences, fears, insecurities, memories, and psychological conflicts are often expressed through colours, lines, symbols, and forms within a work of art.

Freud proposed three levels of the human mind: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. He argued that the unconscious mind contains hidden experiences, emotional tensions, and psychological motivations that significantly influence human behaviour and creative activity. During the artistic process, unconscious images, symbols, and emotional experiences frequently become embedded in the artwork, often without the artist's complete awareness of their meaning.

One of Freud's most influential contributions to art studies is the concept of sublimation. According to Freud, fundamental human drives such as aggression, fear, and sexual impulses are transformed into socially acceptable

forms of expression. Art represents one of the most significant forms of such transformation. Artists often express inner pain, loneliness, emotional instability, and psychological tension through dark colour palettes, distorted figures, and symbolic imagery. Consequently, artistic creation becomes a process through which unconscious emotional energy is transformed into meaningful visual expression.

Modern Indian painting provides numerous examples of psychological expression and symbolic representation. The works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne reveal themes of fear, insecurity, loneliness, social pressure, rebellion, and psychological conflict. Tyeb Mehta's fragmented and tension-filled figures communicate existential struggle and human vulnerability. Bikash Bhattacharjee's paintings often create mysterious psychological atmospheres that reflect inner emotional states. Jogen Chowdhury's distorted and expressive human forms symbolize psychological anxiety and social pressures, while Francis Newton Souza's works explore rebellion, sexuality, religious imagery, and inner conflict. Similarly, Ganesh Pyne's dreamlike visual language, dark tonalities, and symbolic imagery reflect themes of memory, mortality, fear, and the unconscious mind. A Freudian interpretation of these artists enables a deeper understanding of their symbolic visual language, psychological processes, and creative expression.

Dreams occupy a central position within Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud described dreams as the "royal road to the unconscious mind." Many artists incorporate dream imagery, imaginary landscapes, and irrational forms into their paintings. As a result, painting often functions as a bridge between reality and the dream world. However, the Freudian approach is not without limitations. Critics argue that psychoanalytic interpretations frequently reduce artistic meaning to sexuality or psychological repression, thereby overlooking broader social, cultural, and historical contexts. Nevertheless, Freud's theory remains a highly influential framework for understanding artistic creativity and the psychology of visual expression.

Previous research on art and psychology has largely focused on the application of Freudian psychoanalysis to Western art. While extensive studies have examined Surrealism and other modern Western art movements, comparatively fewer studies have explored Indian painting through a comprehensive Freudian perspective. Furthermore, although numerous scholars have discussed the relationship between art and psychology, limited attention has been given to the interaction between artistic creativity, symbolic visual language, and the emotional experiences of artists within the Indian context.

The present study attempts to address this gap by examining Indian painting through the lens of Freudian psychoanalysis. By analysing the role of dreams, symbolism, unconscious imagery, and psychological experience in artistic creation, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of psychological expression in Indian painting and to highlight the continuing relevance of Freudian theory in

contemporary art studies. Previous studies have highlighted the relationship between psychoanalysis and visual expression; however, comprehensive analyses of Indian modern painting through a Freudian framework remain limited.

➤ *Research Need*

In contemporary art discourse, increasing importance has been given to the study of the artist's personal experiences, psychological states, and unconscious emotional processes. Traditionally, artworks were examined primarily through aesthetic, stylistic, technical, religious, or historical perspectives. However, with the emergence of modern art movements, the psychological dimension of artistic creation has become a significant area of inquiry. Numerous studies have demonstrated that emotional experiences, social anxieties, loneliness, fear, memory, and psychological conflicts profoundly influence artistic production. Therefore, understanding the psychological processes underlying artistic creation is essential for a deeper interpretation of artworks.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory established a new framework for understanding the relationship between art and psychology. According to Freud, human behaviour is largely influenced by unconscious desires, fears, traumatic experiences, and emotional impulses. Since many of these emotions cannot be directly expressed in everyday life, they often emerge indirectly through art, literature, dreams, and other creative forms. Consequently, a painting can be understood not merely as a visual composition but as a symbolic manifestation of the artist's inner world.

In contemporary artistic practice, themes such as personal identity, mental health, existential anxiety, emotional conflict, and subjective experience have gained increasing prominence. Many artists employ visual language to represent insecurity, violence, memory, social pressures, and psychological instability. Interpreting such works solely through formal or aesthetic analysis often proves insufficient. A psychoanalytic approach enables a more profound understanding of the symbolic and emotional dimensions embedded within the artwork.

Artistic creation frequently functions as a process of emotional release and psychological transformation. Through colours, lines, forms, and symbols, artists externalize inner emotions and unresolved conflicts. This process is closely associated with Freud's concept of Sublimation; whereby instinctual and emotional energies are transformed into socially acceptable creative expressions. Consequently, the study of artistic production provides valuable insights into both human creativity and psychological functioning.

Furthermore, the influence of Freudian thought can be observed in major artistic movements such as Surrealism, Expressionism, and Modern Indian Art. The works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne reveal profound explorations of psychological conflict, insecurity, loneliness, social anxiety, rebellion, memory, and symbolic expression. Examining these artists through a Freudian lens facilitates a

deeper understanding of the relationship between unconscious processes and artistic creativity. Their paintings serve as visual manifestations of internal emotional experiences and psychological tensions.

In recent years, growing awareness of mental health and emotional well-being has further emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary studies connecting art and psychology. Investigating the psychological dimensions of artistic expression not only enriches the interpretation of artworks but also contributes to a broader understanding of human emotions, creativity, and the unconscious mind.

Thus, a Freudian analysis of Indian painting is essential for exploring the complex relationship between art and psychology, understanding the symbolic manifestations of the artist's unconscious mind, and revealing the deeper meanings embedded within visual expression.

➤ *Research Objectives*

- To examine Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and its relevance to art criticism.
- To understand the influence of unconscious emotional processes on artistic creation.
- To analyse symbolism, dream imagery, and visual language in painting from a Freudian perspective.
- To study selected works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne through psychoanalytic interpretation.
- To explore the relationship between art, psychology, and the manifestation of the unconscious mind in Indian painting.

II. FREUD'S PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

Sigmund Freud explained the structure of the human mind through three interconnected levels: the Conscious Mind, the Preconscious Mind, and the Unconscious Mind. According to Freud, human behaviour, emotions, dreams, and creativity are influenced by the interaction of these three levels. Among them, the unconscious mind plays the most significant role in shaping personality and creative expression. Artistic production, particularly painting, often reflects the dynamics of these psychological processes.

➤ *Conscious Mind*

The conscious mind refers to the level of awareness that contains thoughts, emotions, perceptions, and experiences that an individual is actively aware of at a given moment. It governs deliberate actions, rational decisions, and intentional creative choices.

For example, when a painter creates a landscape painting, the selection of colours, composition, and subject matter is often a conscious process. The artist intentionally

observes natural elements such as mountains, rivers, trees, and the sky and transforms them into visual representations. A sunset painting employing shades of red, orange, and yellow to convey beauty and tranquillity can be regarded as an example of conscious artistic creation.

➤ *Preconscious Mind*

The preconscious mind consists of memories, experiences, and information that are not presently within conscious awareness but can be recalled when required. These latent memories often serve as important sources of artistic inspiration.

For instance, an artist may recollect childhood experiences associated with a village festival, a temple, or a family event and subsequently incorporate these memories into a painting. Although such experiences are not constantly present in conscious thought, they can emerge during the creative process. A painting depicting rainy streets, a cloudy sky, and a solitary figure may reflect recollections rooted in the artist's preconscious memory.

➤ *Unconscious Mind*

According to Freud, the unconscious mind is the deepest and most influential layer of the psyche. It contains repressed desires, fears, traumatic experiences, guilt, emotional conflicts, and instinctual drives. Although individuals are often unaware of these psychological contents, they significantly influence behaviour, emotions, and creative activities.

In visual art, unconscious experiences frequently emerge through symbolic forms rather than direct representation. Fragmented figures, distorted faces, empty spaces, dark imagery, and unstable lines may symbolize feelings of insecurity, loneliness, anxiety, or psychological tension. Such visual elements can be interpreted as manifestations of unconscious mental processes.

Indian modern painting also provides significant examples of psychological expression. The works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne reveal intense emotional and psychological dimensions through distorted figures, expressive lines, symbolic imagery, and tension-filled compositions. Their paintings often explore themes such as fear, isolation, social pressure, existential anxiety, rebellion, memory, and inner conflict. From a Freudian perspective, these artistic expressions may be understood as visual manifestations of unconscious experiences and repressed emotions. Consequently, the psychoanalytic study of their works offers valuable insights into the relationship between artistic creativity and the human psyche.

➤ *Sublimation: Artistic Transformation of Repressed Emotions*

The concept of Sublimation occupies a central position in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. According to Freud, human beings are driven by various instinctual impulses and emotional energies, including aggression, fear, insecurity, guilt, competition, and sexual desires. Owing to

social norms, moral values, and cultural restrictions, these impulses cannot always be expressed directly. Consequently, psychological energy is transformed into socially acceptable and creative forms of expression. Freud referred to this process as Sublimation. (Freud, 1930).

From a Freudian perspective, art represents one of the most significant manifestations of sublimation. Rather than expressing emotional tensions, suffering, anxieties, or insecurities directly, artists transform these experiences into visual forms through colours, lines, shapes, symbols, and compositional structures. Thus, painting is not merely an act of aesthetic creation but also a process through which psychological energy is converted into artistic expression.

When emotions remain unexpressed, they may generate psychological tension and inner conflict. Artists, however, often channel such emotions into creative activity. Experiences of loneliness, social alienation, grief, or emotional pain frequently emerge through intense colour schemes, distorted figures, fragmented forms, or expressive visual language. In this sense, artistic creation functions as a process of emotional release and psychological transformation.

According to Freud, symbols within artworks often reveal the emotional states of the artist. For example:

- Dark colour tones → depression, fear, or emotional suffering
- Red colour → passion, aggression, or intense emotional energy
- Fragmented figures → psychological conflict or existential tension
- Empty spaces → loneliness, isolation, or emotional emptiness

Such symbolic elements demonstrate how personal experiences and unconscious emotions are transformed into artistic imagery.

The influence of sublimation is particularly evident in Expressionist and Surrealist art movements. Artists associated with these movements employed dream-like imagery, distorted figures, symbolic forms, and unconventional compositions to represent inner psychological experiences. Consequently, art evolved beyond the imitation of reality and became a medium for expressing emotional and psychological truths.

The process of sublimation is also evident in Indian modern painting. The fragmented and tension-filled figures of Tyeb Mehta symbolize human vulnerability, violence, and existential conflict. The mysterious atmosphere and emotionally charged imagery found in the works of Bikash Bhattacharjee reflect deep psychological experiences and unconscious anxieties. Similarly, Jogen Chowdhury's distorted human figures reveal psychological unease, social pressure, and emotional instability. The expressive and aggressive visual language of Francis Newton Souza, characterized by distorted forms and forceful lines, reflects rebellion, sexuality, social conflict, and inner turmoil. Ganesh Pyne's dark, dream-like imagery, skeletal forms, and symbolic narratives often evoke themes of memory, death, fear, solitude, and the unconscious mind.

Sublimation should not be understood merely as a response to repression; it is also a powerful source of creativity. Personal experiences, emotional conflicts, and psychological tensions frequently contribute to the production of significant artistic works. Therefore, art serves as a medium of self-expression, emotional transformation, and psychological balance.

Thus, Freud's concept of sublimation suggests that painting represents a refined artistic manifestation of human emotions, psychological energy, and unconscious experiences. Through artistic creation, individuals transform their inner conflicts into meaningful visual expressions. Consequently, painting can be understood not only as a visual experience but also as a profound reflection of human psychology. Freud's concept of sublimation continues to be regarded as an important framework for understanding artistic creativity and symbolic visual expression (Patel & Singh, 2022).

➤ *Dreams and Painting*

Sigmund Freud assigned great importance to dreams in his exploration of the human mind. According to him, dreams are not merely imaginary experiences occurring during sleep but symbolic expressions of unconscious emotional processes and psychological experiences. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud described dreams as the "royal road to the unconscious." (Freud, 2010). He argued that unfulfilled desires, fears, emotional tensions, childhood memories, and psychological conflicts are often expressed indirectly through dreams.

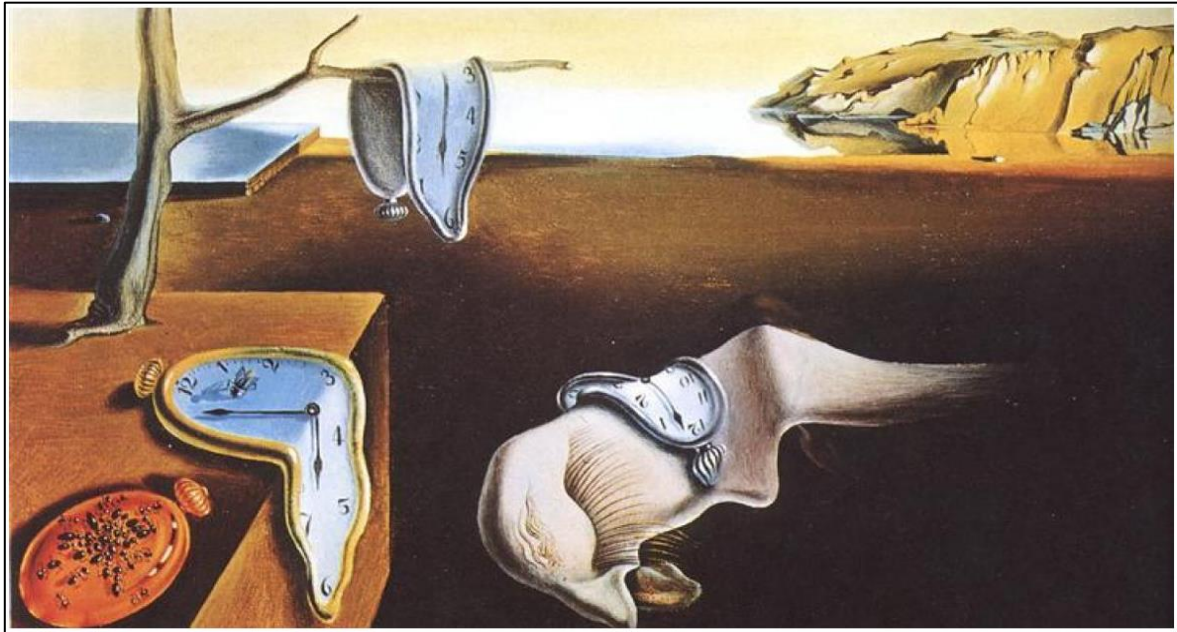


Fig 1 Salvador Dalí, The Persistence of Memory (1931)

Freud's theory established a significant connection between dreams and artistic creation. Many artists have incorporated dream imagery, irrational scenes, and imaginary constructions into their paintings because dreams transcend the logical structure of reality and reveal emotions through symbolic forms. Consequently, the dream world became an important means of expressing inner psychological experiences.

Freud distinguished between two levels of dream content: Manifest Content and Latent Content. Manifest content refers to the images and events that appear directly in a dream, whereas latent content refers to the hidden psychological meanings underlying those images. A similar principle can be observed in painting. Visual forms, figures, and compositions often possess deeper emotional and psychological meanings beyond their apparent appearance.

For example, empty streets, dark skies, melting objects, fragmented spaces, or unstable visual arrangements may symbolize insecurity, fear, loneliness, or existential anxiety. Like dreams, such images are often symbolic, ambiguous, and open to multiple interpretations.

The Surrealist movement was particularly influenced by Freud's theory of dream analysis. Surrealist artists attempted to transcend rationality and conventional representation in order to visualize unconscious experiences. Their works frequently contain dream-like atmospheres, irrational juxtapositions, distorted figures, and mysterious symbols.

The paintings of Salvador Dalí illustrate the blurred boundary between dreams and reality. In *The Persistence of Memory*, the famous melting clocks symbolize the instability of time and psychological uncertainty. Similarly, René Magritte employed unexpected combinations of ordinary objects to reveal realities beyond conscious perception.

The influence of dreams is not confined to Surrealism alone. Expressionist and modern artists also utilized dream-like imagery and symbolic visual language to communicate psychological states. In Indian modern painting, symbolic forms are frequently employed to represent emotional tension, insecurity, memory, and existential concerns. The works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne reveal a compelling fusion of reality and inner psychological



Fig 2 Tyeb Mehta, Mahishasura-Large Art Prints
Source: Artist Archives

experience. Their symbolic imagery, emotionally charged compositions, and expressive visual language provide insights into the complexities of the human psyche.

• *Examples of Dream-Related Symbols Include:*

- ✓ Melting objects → psychological instability or anxiety about time
- ✓ Empty spaces → loneliness and isolation
- ✓ Distorted faces → fear, anxiety, or identity conflict
- ✓ Flying objects → desire for freedom and transcendence
- ✓ Dark environments → depression, grief, or emotional suffering

The relationship between dreams and painting extends beyond visual resemblance. Like dreams, paintings often prioritize emotional and symbolic realities over objective representation. Artistic creation thus becomes a process through which unconscious experiences are transformed into visible forms.

Therefore, Freud's theory of dream analysis provides a powerful framework for understanding symbolism, dream imagery, and the psychological dimensions of artistic expression. The relationship between dreams and painting reveals the profound connections between creativity, emotion, and the unconscious mind.

➤ *Symbolism in Painting*

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, art represents a symbolic visual translation of the artist's inner world (Jung, 1964). From a Freudian perspective, images, colours, forms, objects, and compositional arrangements in paintings are not merely aesthetic elements; rather, they reflect the artist's emotions, psychological tensions, memories, and internal conflicts. Therefore, understanding the meaning of visual elements in a painting requires an examination of their psychological significance.

Freud argued that the human mind often expresses itself more effectively through symbols than through direct language. Just as emotions and psychological experiences appear symbolically in dreams, artists express their unconscious thoughts and feelings through images and visual signs. Consequently, symbolism in painting may be regarded as a visual translation of the artist's psychic world.

Colours, lines, spaces, forms, and objects frequently carry specific psychological meanings. Artists consciously or unconsciously employ visual elements to communicate emotions and experiences. For instance, dark colour palettes may signify depression, fear, or emotional suffering, whereas red may symbolize passion, aggression, or intense emotional energy. Similarly, fragmented or distorted figures often suggest psychological tension, insecurity, or existential conflict.

From a Freudian standpoint, emotions that cannot be directly expressed often emerge indirectly through symbols and imagery. For example, recurring representations of closed doors, dark pathways, or empty rooms may symbolize loneliness, fear, or psychological confinement.

Colour plays a particularly important role in symbolic expression because it serves as a powerful medium for colours communicate emotional and psychological states (Yao et al., 2022). For example:

- Black → fear, depression, or the unknown
- Red → passion, aggression, or intense energy
- Blue → calmness, introspection, or isolation
- Yellow → anxiety or psychological tension
- White → emptiness, detachment, or purity

Thus, colours become symbolic indicators of the artist's emotional world.

Forms and figures also possess significant symbolic meanings. Distorted faces, fragmented bodies, ambiguous human figures, and unusual shapes frequently represent psychological instability and internal conflict. Expressionist and Surrealist artists extensively employed such visual language to communicate emotional and unconscious experiences.

From a Freudian perspective, spatial organization and compositional structure likewise carry psychological significance. Vast empty spaces may symbolize loneliness and emotional isolation, whereas crowded and chaotic compositions may indicate psychological stress and confusion. Similarly, motifs such as windows, mirrors, staircases, and shadows often symbolize self-reflection, memory, and unconscious experiences.

Symbolism occupies a significant place in modern Indian painting as well. Indian artists have frequently employed symbolic visual language to express social realities, psychological tensions, existential concerns, and emotional experiences. The fragmented and tension-filled human figures in the works of Tyeb Mehta are not merely formal devices but symbolic representations of fear, violence, insecurity, and psychological conflict. The traumatic experiences of Partition, social instability, and existential anxiety are reflected in many of his works. The sharp divisions and dynamic compositions characteristic of his paintings visually communicate the internal struggles of the human psyche. human insecurity and existential tension (Khanna, 2011).



Fig 3 Francis Newton Souza, Expressionist Figure.
Source: DAGS,

Similarly, the works of Francis Newton Souza are characterized by distorted human figures, aggressive lines, and expressive forms. His paintings reveal themes of social repression, religious orthodoxy, human desire, rebellion, and psychological unrest. From a Freudian perspective, these distorted images may be interpreted as manifestations of repressed emotions, unconscious impulses, and personal conflicts.

The paintings of Bikash Bhattacharjee also demonstrate a powerful use of symbolism. Human figures, dolls, masks,

childhood imagery, and representations of women frequently appear in his works. Viewed through a psychoanalytic lens, these images symbolize fear, insecurity, memory, and emotional tension. In particular, the recurring motif of dolls may signify loneliness, emotional repression, and the loss of personal agency. Consequently, Bhattacharjee's works reveal a complex interaction between psychological experiences and social reality. The symbolic use of dolls, masks and psychologically charged figures in the works of Bikash Bhattacharjee has been interpreted as a manifestation of unconscious fears and emotional tensions.



Fig 4 Bikash Bhattacharjee, Doll Series.
Source: Gallery Publication.

Likewise, Jogen Chowdhury employs distorted and tension-filled human figures. The intricate linear patterns, exaggerated proportions, and emotionally charged forms in his drawings symbolize insecurity, social pressure, and inner

conflict. From a Freudian perspective, these figures may be understood as visual manifestations of repressed emotions and psychological instability.



Fig 5 Jogen Chowdhury, Distorted Human Figure.
Source: Exhibition

In a similar manner, the paintings of Ganesh Pyne are distinguished by dark tonalities, themes of death, memory, loneliness, childhood trauma, and dream-like imagery recur throughout his paintings. The spectral figures, skeletal forms, and mysterious spaces frequently found in his works evoke unconscious fears and existential anxieties. From a Freudian perspective, these images may be interpreted as symbolic

manifestations of repressed memories and unresolved psychological experiences. The mysterious atmosphere and symbolic figures found in his works often represent unconscious fears, existential anxieties, and psychological vulnerability. Freudian analysis suggests that Pyne's paintings function as visual expressions of memory, mortality, and deeply buried emotional experiences.

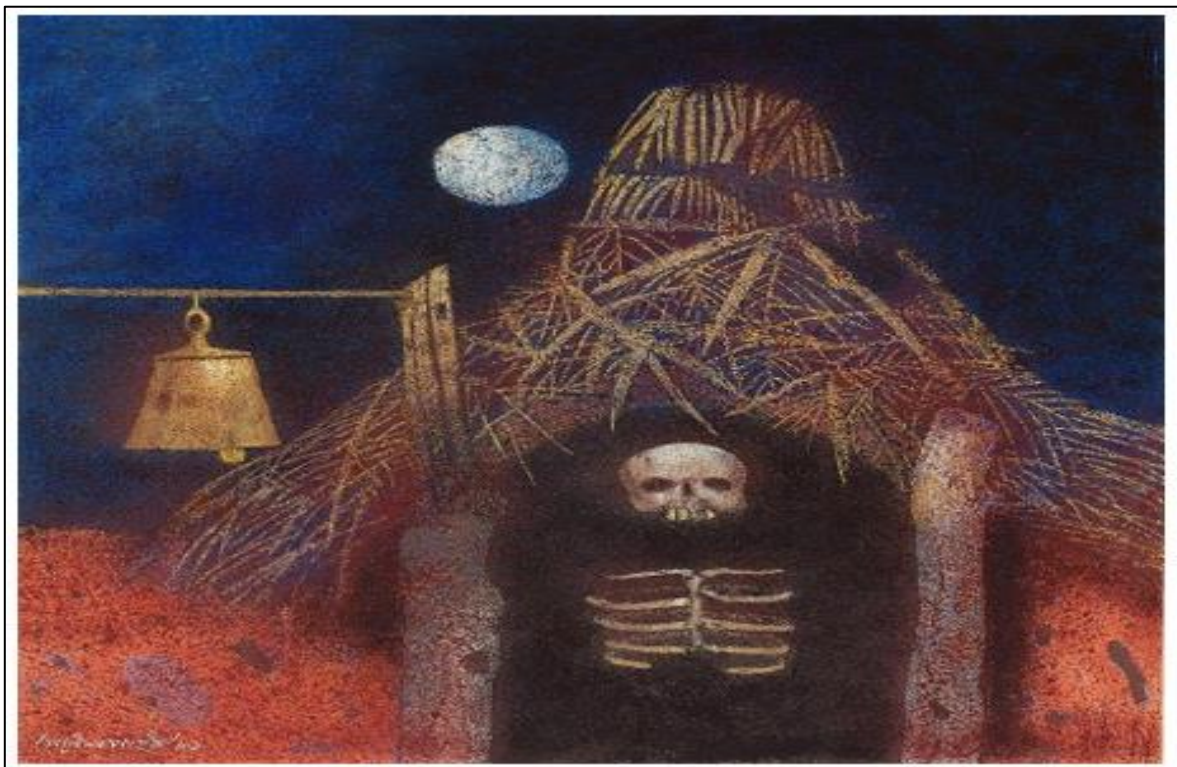


Fig 6 Ganesh Pyne, Skeleton

Several peer-reviewed studies have also emphasized that the symbolic imagery employed by modern Indian artists extends beyond formal aesthetics and serves as a medium for expressing psychological tensions, social anxieties, and unconscious experiences. Such interpretations reinforce the relevance of psychoanalytic approaches in understanding modern Indian painting and its symbolic language.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, symbolism in modern Indian painting is not merely an expression of individual emotions but is also connected with social realities, cultural memories, and collective psychological experiences. Consequently, the works of these artists function as powerful visual dialogues between personal and collective dimensions of the unconscious.

Thus, the symbolic visual language found in the works of Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne highlights the importance of psychological expression in modern Indian painting. A Freudian interpretation of these artworks facilitates a deeper understanding of the artist's emotional world, internal conflicts, and unconscious processes.

According to Freud, symbols constitute the language of the unconscious mind. Artists often communicate psychological experiences through their artworks without being fully aware of their meanings. Therefore, the interpretation of paintings requires attention not only to visual elements but also to their psychological contexts.

However, symbolic meanings are neither fixed nor universal. The same image may generate different interpretations among different viewers. For this reason, Freudian symbolism remains a multidimensional and interpretative approach rather than a framework that produces definitive conclusions.

In conclusion, symbolism in painting represents the visual manifestation of the artist's emotions, psychological experiences, and internal conflicts. Through colours, forms, lines, and compositional structures, artists transform unconscious experiences into artistic expression. Therefore, painting should be understood not merely as an aesthetic practice but also as a profound medium for exploring the complexities of human psychology.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE FREUDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Although the Freudian psychoanalytic approach has significantly contributed to understanding the relationship between art and psychology, it has also been subjected to various criticisms and limitations. Several scholars argue that Freudian analysis tends to interpret artworks primarily through a psychological framework, which may restrict broader interpretations of artistic expression within an excessively psychological framework (Crews, 1975).

Firstly, the Freudian perspective often associates artistic creation with repressed desires, unconscious conflicts, and

sexuality. As a result, other dimensions of art, such as social, cultural, political, and spiritual meanings, may receive comparatively less attention. This tendency can lead to an overly reductionist interpretation of artworks.

Secondly, Freudian analysis frequently overlooks the historical, social, and cultural contexts within which an artwork is produced. Artistic styles, political conditions, cultural traditions, and collective experiences play a crucial role in shaping visual expression. However, psychoanalytic interpretations generally focus on individual psychological processes rather than external influences.

Thirdly, this approach tends to place considerable emphasis on the artist's personal life and psychological condition. Consequently, the aesthetic, formal, and social significance of the artwork itself may become secondary to interpretations centered on the artist's unconscious motivations.

Furthermore, symbolic interpretation within the Freudian framework is often subjective in nature. Since symbols do not possess fixed meanings, different scholars may interpret the same visual image in different ways. Therefore, psychoanalytic readings frequently generate multiple possible interpretations rather than definitive conclusions.

Another limitation is that Freudian theories were largely developed within a Western cultural context during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Applying these concepts universally to artworks from diverse cultural traditions, including Indian visual art, may not always provide a complete understanding of their meanings and contexts.

Despite these limitations, the Freudian perspective remains an influential methodological framework in art criticism and visual culture studies. It offers valuable insights into the artist's unconscious mind, emotional experiences, dreams, symbolic language, and creative processes. Therefore, while it should not be used as the sole interpretative approach, it continues to be a significant tool for exploring the psychological dimensions of artistic expression.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory provides a significant framework for understanding the psychological dimensions of artistic creation. From a Freudian perspective, painting is not merely a visual or aesthetic activity but a symbolic manifestation of the artist's unconscious mind. The creative process enables artists to transform hidden emotions, repressed desires, memories, anxieties, and internal conflicts into visual forms through colour's, symbols, lines, and compositional structures.

The study reveals that the concepts of the unconscious mind, sublimation, dream symbolism, and psychological expression play a crucial role in understanding artistic

creativity. Paintings often function as visual representations of emotional experiences that cannot be directly articulated through language. Consequently, artistic images become symbolic expressions of the artist's inner psychological reality.

An analysis of selected Indian modern painters—Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, and Ganesh Pyne—indicates that their artworks contain significant psychological and symbolic elements. Themes such as fear, isolation, existential anxiety, social conflict, memory, death consciousness, rebellion, and emotional tension are frequently expressed through distorted figures, symbolic imagery, dramatic colour schemes, and expressive visual language. Through a Freudian lens, these artistic elements may be interpreted as manifestations of unconscious psychological processes and emotional experiences.

The findings further suggest that symbolism in Indian modern painting extends beyond individual psychological expression and often reflects broader social realities, collective memories, and cultural anxieties. Thus, the visual language employed by these artists serves as a bridge between personal experience and collective consciousness.

Although Freudian theory has been criticized for its emphasis on sexuality and its relative neglect of socio-cultural and historical contexts, it remains a valuable methodological tool for examining the psychological foundations of artistic production. The study highlights the continued relevance of psychoanalytic interpretation in contemporary art discourse, particularly in understanding the relationship between creativity, emotional experience, and visual representation.

In conclusion, this research establishes that Indian modern painting can be meaningfully interpreted through a Freudian psychoanalytic framework. Such an approach deepens our understanding of the artist's unconscious mind, symbolic expression, and creative process while contributing to interdisciplinary dialogue between art history, visual culture, and psychology. The study therefore reaffirms that painting is not only an aesthetic object but also a profound psychological document reflecting the complexities of human consciousness and emotional life. Freudian psychoanalysis remains a valuable framework for understanding artistic creativity and psychological expression (Freud, 1923; Freud, 2010; Jung, 1964).

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