

## Critical Study of the Place of Intellect in Creating and Understanding Traditional Art from the Perspective of Traditionalists

Javad Amin Khandaqi <sup>1</sup> Seyed Marzieh Hendesi <sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract:** Traditionalism is one of the currents that stands in direct opposition to modernist beliefs. Throughout the history of thought, the view of traditionalists has become a coherent system of thought. One of the fields that has a special place in this idea is the theory of art and beauty. One of the concepts that are very important in understanding the traditionalist theory of the perception of art and beauty is the understanding of the place of "intellect" in creating and understanding traditional art by the artist and the audience. Explanation and examination of traditionalists' definition of intellect and its function in creating and understanding traditional art is essential for understanding the mechanism of transmitting tradition. In this study, using the method of document collection and qualitative analysis, after examining the main concepts such as tradition, traditional art, and intellect as a theoretical framework, the place of intellect in creating and understanding traditional art in traditionalists' view is examined and criticized. This study shows that the traditionalists' views are problematic on issues such as the insufficient definition of intellect, uncertainty of the function and perceived matter of intellect, unacceptable assumptions for all, getting into esoteric pluralism, explanation of exaggerated mystical personality for artist and audience, improper generalization, and bias in some cases. It also has the advantage of presenting a theory of art with other cultural contexts and paving the way for a different mystical interpretation of art.

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**Homepage:** [phm.znu.ac.ir](http://phm.znu.ac.ir)

1. Assistant Professor of Dramatic Literature, Ferdows Higher Education Institute, Mashhad, Iran (**Corresponding author**). [j.amin@ferdowsmashhad.ac.ir](mailto:j.amin@ferdowsmashhad.ac.ir).
2. M.A. in Wisdom of Islamic Art, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran. [s.m.hendesi@gmail.com](mailto:s.m.hendesi@gmail.com).

**Introduction:** In contrast to modernism, there are different currents of thought. Traditionalism is one of the currents that directly opposes modernist beliefs. The first generation of thinkers and the most important founders of this movement include René Guénon (1886-1951), Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), and Titus Burckhardt (1908-1984). This trend continued with Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1933- ), Martin Lings (1909-2005), Marco Pallis (1895-1989), Whitall Perry (1920-2005), Huston Smith (1919-2016), Wolfgang Smith (1930- ), and others. This view is present in various subjects and, in the contemporary period, is one of the most important currents of thought about East and West (not in its geographical sense).

One of the issues that has a special place in this idea is the theory of art and beauty. Traditionalists express their views on art and beauty in line

with their metaphysical philosophy. One of the essential concepts in understanding the traditionalist theory of the perception of art and beauty is understanding the position of "intellect" versus "reason." This concept is vital in the creation and understanding of traditional art by the artist and the audience. In this research, after examining the main concepts such as tradition, traditional art, and intuitive reason as a theoretical framework, I look at the place of intellect in creating and understanding traditional art in traditionalists' view.

**Methodology:** In this inquiry, I use the library method for data collection and the qualitative method for analysis. Based on this, I will first describe the principal concepts. Then I try to explain the place of intellect in the creation and understanding of traditional art in a process based on traditionalists' philosophical bases. Finally, I

critique their view based on spots within traditionalist thought or external matters.

**Findings:** Traditionalists insist that "tradition" in their literal sense is not synonymous with "custom" or "use" (Guénon, 2004: 211). Tradition is not historical; therefore, it is repeatable (Nasr, 1388: 46). A complete tradition requires four things:

1. The source of revelation.
2. The flow of influence or grace from which the source originates.
3. The path of realization leads the human agent to successive positions if followed with complete faith.
4. The formal embodiment of tradition in the teachings, arts, sciences, and other elements all play a role in determining the character of a normal civilization (Pallis, 2008: xxvii-xxviii).

According to traditionalists, the main features of traditional art are:

1. Traditional art is a mixture of benefit and beauty (Coomaraswamy, 1386: 49).
2. The philosophy of traditional art deals with the meaning of forms (Nasr, 1385: 340).
3. Traditional art is anti-naturalist (Coomaraswamy, 1384: 16-17).
4. The origin of traditional art is transcendent and sacred matters (Burckhardt, 1388: 48).
5. In creating traditional art, the artist pays attention to materials and their cosmological aspect (Schuon, 1372: 116).
6. Traditional art is the place of symbolism (Burkhart, 1369: 199).
7. The action of a traditional artist is the product of intuition (Nasr, 1383: 170) and creates a kind of rational intuition for the audience (Nasr, 1380: 448).

Also, in traditionalists' view, intellect is personal powers, unconditional, objective, and receptive to intuition are of the above level (Oldmeadow,

1389: 205). This power both receives and transmits. The process of the activity of the intellect is a truth beyond mere emotion. It is a force wider than reason and thought and is related to the intuition of eternal truths (Burkhart, 1386: 90).

### **D**iscussion and Conclusion:

The metaphysical bases of the traditionalists show that intellect has a great place in the creation and understanding of traditional art. Intellectual intuition, in this thought, is the intuition of general and all-encompassing truths directly from mental concepts. Intellect is involved in various fields of creating and understanding traditional art. The essential function of intellect in creating and understanding traditional art is focusing on the cognitive aspects of art. Cognition is necessary before creation, in the process of creation, before understanding, and in the process of understanding. Analysis of the traditionalist

view shows that this view is flawed in the following issues: insufficient definition of intellect, the uncertainty of the function and belonging of intellect, unacceptable assumptions, esoteric pluralism, explanation of exaggerated mystical personality for the artist and the audience, generalization of False, and discriminatory in some cases. But the traditionalist view of art and the use of intellect also has advantages that make it essential.

The traditionalists' view is an integrated system of thought, and there are traces of intellect in all its fields. This makes their art theory vital because it makes sense concerning other religious-cultural contexts. Also, traditionalists' view in this field is remarkable if there is a tendency to a mystical interpretation of art. Considering the place for intellect, it offers a different mystical understanding of traditional art. Attention to this type of interpretation has

become especially important in recent years.

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