

The status of the concept “Eternal Wisdom” in Titus Burkhardt’s view about Islamic Art

Mohammad Misagh Hasani¹

¹MA in Philosophy of Art, Department of Philosophy of Art, Faculty of Theories and Art Studies, Tehran
University of Art, Iran
mohammadmisagh.hasani2018@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary times, Islamic art defined as art that arises from Islamic culture in regions with predominantly Muslim populations or countries where Islam is the official religion has garnered significant attention from scholars and researchers, especially among proponents of the intellectual school known as Traditionalism. Among them, Titus Burkhardt is a prominent figure due to his years of residence and life experience in Islamic countries, such as Morocco, making him one of the first to approach Islamic art from a spiritual perspective. Although numerous studies have been conducted in Iran regarding his works, these studies have mostly focused on descriptive and quantitative aspects rather than analytical and qualitative ones. This article examines Burkhardt's thoughts through the lens of his unique worldview, shaped by the Traditionalist School and the key concept of "Eternal Wisdom."

Objective: This research seeks a better and deeper understanding of Burkhardt's and other Traditionalists' perspectives on Islamic art, which is recognized as one of the main theories in this field. The primary goal is to achieve this understanding through an approach that avoids unconditional praise or criticism, aiming instead for a balance between the two.

Method: In this study, we will focus on describing and analyzing Titus Burkhardt's views on Islamic art, framed within the thoughts of the Traditionalist school and the concept of Eternal Wisdom. Following this, we will delve deeper into the discussed topics using critiques provided by others as well as by the author, ultimately leading to significant findings.

Findings: This research presents critiques in the areas of ontology, epistemology, history, and art concerning the general theories proposed by Traditionalists in general and Titus Burkhardt in particular. Some of these critiques are presented for the first time and focus on the realm of art, especially Islamic art.

KEYWORDS

Islamic art, Titus Burkhardt, Perennial philosophy, Eternal Wisdom, Traditionalist school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Since the 19th century, Islamic art has attracted global attention as a distinct subject from the art of other predominantly Muslim regions. In this context, two main approaches have emerged among predominantly Western thinkers regarding the study of Islamic art and pre-modern civilizations' art in general: the spiritual approach and the historical approach.

1: Perennial philosophy

In contemporary times, the analysis of Islamic art is often divided into two viewpoints: one that emphasizes individual creativity and interprets artworks from a subjective perspective related to the artist's mindset and society; the other, represented by Traditionalists, offers a different view of Islamic art, seeing it as something that arises from a transcendent perspective beyond individual creativity. Traditionalists examine Islamic art under concepts such as tradition, perennial wisdom, the sacred realm, or Eternal Wisdom, believing that this perspective can uncover the truth and analyze traditional or sacred art. Titus Burkhardt, a prominent representative of this current,

has identified and analyzed Islamic art as an independent and distinct category from other forms of art, significantly influencing research related to Islamic art. The importance of his viewpoints in analyzing Islamic art has increasingly attracted attention, especially in Iran.

As a leading Traditionalist thinker, Titus Burckhardt approaches Islamic art spiritually. He employs terms like "Unity," "Unity of Being," and other mystical expressions to elucidate the concept of spirituality in Islamic art. Relying on the theoretical framework of Traditionalists and the concept of Eternal Wisdom, Burckhardt explored the depths of Islamic art and played a crucial role in introducing this art to the Western world. However, works related to his views in Iran tend to be more descriptive than analytical.

Despite the popularity of Burckhardt's theories, critiques have also been directed at them, including criticisms regarding inconsistencies, ambiguities, and contradictions within his views and those of other Traditionalists. Furthermore, some critiques focus on overlooking secular and modern arts, separating literature from art, and insufficient attention to the arts of Eastern nations within the Islamic world as well as other arts such as music, poetry, and literature.

In this research, we will first present Burckhardt's views on Islamic art based on the theoretical framework of Traditionalists and the concept of Eternal Wisdom. Then, through more detailed critique and examination, we will analyze these viewpoints. The main difference between our work and other existing research in this field is the transition from a mere description of Burckhardt's views to an analytical critique of their philosophical foundations.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Titus Burckhardt: Born in 1908 in Florence and a member of the noble family of Basel, Switzerland, Titus Burckhardt was known for the artistic and historical activities of his father and grandfather. After residing in Morocco from 1939 and converting to Islam, he dedicated himself to researching Islamic art and civilization. In the 1950s and 60s, Burckhardt worked as an artistic director in Switzerland and passed away in 1984. His translations of Islamic mystical works and his contributions to the field of sacred Islamic art introduced Islamic art as an independent trend in the Western world. Burckhardt's works, written in various languages and some translated into Persian, hold special significance in the introduction of Islamic art.

Traditionalism: Traditionalists are a group of contemporary thinkers who critique modernity and emphasize the eternal wisdom found within religious traditions and their diversities. René Guénon, the founder of this intellectual movement, critiqued modernity at its peak. His thoughts gained importance through their influence on significant thinkers like Husserl and their impact on postmodernism. Guénon distinguished Traditionalism from Theosophy by its belief in revelation. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, with his artistic research, and Frithjof Schuon, who had a significant influence on Traditionalists, are among the key figures of this school. Martin Lings and Seyyed Hossein Nasr are also influential personalities in this domain. In the 20th and 21st centuries, nearly 50 philosophical and wisdom figures worldwide have served as interpreters of this school. The principles of Traditionalist thought include a critique of modernity from a metaphysical perspective, an emphasis on sacred knowledge, a belief in the unity of religions, and the authenticity of traditional arts as a medium for conveying spiritual truths.

Eternal Wisdom: Eternal Wisdom, which lies at the heart of every religion, is recognized as the highest human perfection throughout the East and West (Nasr, 2011). Traditionalists regard this wisdom referred to in Persian as "Javidan Khird" and discussed in ancient literature such as the "Pandnameh" of Hoshang Pishdadi as universal and timeless knowledge that can be understood through intuitive reason and is only accessible through "Tradition." "Eternal Wisdom" is considered a constant and universal principle across all valid religious traditions that unites them despite temporal and spatial differences.

3. ISLAMIC ART FROM BURCKHARDT'S PERSPECTIVE

In this section, we will examine Burckhardt's views on Islamic art to clarify the place of the concepts of the school of Eternal Wisdom within his thoughts regarding Islamic art.

1. Symbolism in Islamic Art

Titus Burckhardt, known for the depth and breadth of his work in symbolism within Islamic art, was interested in exploring interpretations beyond this realm, including various artistic traditions such as Indian, Taoist, Buddhist, and Japanese art, and even chess. However, his main focus remained on Christian and Islamic art. Seyyed Hossein Nasr praised Burckhardt for his expertise in recognizing symbols and understanding them based on traditional teachings, explaining that Burckhardt was not only familiar with symbolic language but also deeply attuned to its messages. Burckhardt viewed symbolism not merely as a conventional sign but as a manifestation of an archetypal form within ontology. He saw symbolism as a connection between different truths that all return to the primary truth (Nasr, 2011). Indeed, Burckhardt himself discusses his perspective on symbolism and interpretation in an interesting way: "A symbol is not a conventional sign; rather it is a manifestation of its archetypal form according to a law related to knowledge of existence and ontology. As Coomaraswamy points out, a symbol is essentially identical to what it expresses." (Burckhardt, 2013).

2. Islamic Art and the Sacred

"No art deserves to be called [sacred] unless its forms are inherently specific to a particular religion." (Burckhardt, 2011). Burckhardt believes that Islamic art possesses a unique authenticity deeply intertwined with Islam. He provides several reasons for this belief; although Islamic art encompasses diverse styles, no single style can be deemed more Islamic than others. The diversity present in Islamic art relates more to geographical, ethnic, and national differences than to specific

historical periods. For instance, Iranian art has undergone minimal changes over centuries, while Moroccan art shows greater variation. Burckhardt believes that Islamic art possesses a timeless and static quality, indicating that this art originates from a universal and eternal truth, rather than being merely a consequence of transient experiences and phenomena.

3. Islamic Art and Sacred Knowledge

Burckhardt views Islamic art as a deeper expression of religious feelings and associates it with "intuitive reason," which is a combination of inspiration and knowledge. He argues that Islamic art is created based on principles that transcend logical knowledge and approach "sacred science" and "eternal realities" (Burckhardt, 2013). Burckhardt considers complete knowledge to be one that takes into account "the integration of multiplicities into a singular matter," and he sees this perspective reflected in elements of Islamic art, such as muqarnas. Additionally, he defines tradition as the method of transmitting sacred knowledge and a unifying factor in art, which conveys the wisdom necessary for artistic work through the relationship between master and disciple (Burckhardt, 2007).

4. Islamic Art and Sacred Art

Burckhardt enumerates characteristics of sacred art, including having religious and spiritual themes and forms (Burckhardt, 2011), and being rooted in tradition (Burckhardt, 2007). He emphasizes that sacred art must be directly inspired by a spiritual truth and supported by tradition. Furthermore, Burckhardt identifies a hierarchy of arts within Islamic art, where floral and abstract decorations are considered sacred art, while animal decorations and images of imaginary plants fall outside this categorization (Burckhardt, 2013).

5. Islamic Art and Naturalism

Burckhardt finds the term "iconoclasm" inappropriate for Islamic art and instead suggests "prohibition of iconography." He believes that the absence of religious imagery in Islam has a positive meaning, allowing individuals to remain centered in their existential core by eliminating human images, especially in religious contexts, thus preventing the transfer of their spirit outward (Burckhardt, 2007). Burckhardt argues that Muslim artists have avoided painting living beings due to fear of accusations of heresy and legal prohibitions. This fear has led them not to fully adhere to nature; hence, three-dimensionality and chiaroscuro are not used in Persian miniatures. This does not reflect a lack of intelligence or knowledge but rather an expression of religious views. Additionally, images of animals in Islamic art are depicted in stylized forms far removed from the reality of living beings (Burckhardt, 1986).

6. Utility and Islamic Art

Burckhardt pays attention to the profound relationship between art and craft, emphasizing the use of the Arabic-rooted term "Craft," which encompasses both art and skill. In the pre-modern era within the Islamic world, there was no modern distinction between art and craft; art was connected with utility, religion, and ethics. Muslim artisans placed great importance on perfection, beauty, and virtue in beautifying their products, which Burckhardt compares to Plato's ultimate human values. Contrary to modern views that separate these values since the time of Kant, in Islamic thought, art and craft have always been beneficial and somewhat worshipful. Burckhardt also highlights the importance of contemplation and reflection in every practical activity, indicating that in Islamic societies, crafts and traditions not only represent a deep connection between art and utility but also signify a strong relationship between craftsmanship and spirituality. Burckhardt considers this connection significant due to its impact on human perfection and emphasizes the close relationship between spiritual ideals, skill, and artistry, all of which underscore the perfection of human nature (Burckhardt, 1986).

7. Creativity and Individual Genius of the Artist in Islamic Art

Burckhardt frequently states in his writings that Muslim artists do not possess individual motivation in creating their work. "Every Islamic work of value directly engages with sacred art and the absence of individual motivation" (Burckhardt, 2007). In Islamic art, like other pre-modern artistic traditions, the name or signature of the artist is often not visible. Burckhardt sees this characteristic as a sign of perfection that separates the artist from their work. For Muslims, beautiful art is viewed as a testimony to God's existence, and its beauty must be impersonal. Burckhardt does not consider the fact that many artworks in the pre-modern era were seen as crafts rather than art, and poets often used pen names in their works. He excludes poetry from the realm of art and places it within literature. Burckhardt believes that works of Islamic art stem from a singular truth, with their beauty being universal and impersonal. The Muslim artist is aware that they do not create beauty but rather reflect it from the cosmic order. Burckhardt believes that the impersonality of traditional arts does not imply a lack of creativity, and this perspective is one of the prejudices of modern times. He responds to the critique of a lack of creativity in Islamic art by stating that this art maintains creative joy despite adhering to impersonal principles, and this joy is primarily spiritual (Burckhardt, 2013).

8. Form and Islamic Art

Burckhardt emphasizes that the main characteristic of sacred art is having a form or shape that aligns with tradition and religion. In Islamic art, the shapes used to express sacred art correspond to Islamic teachings, and these shapes are abstract and decorative, aimed at creating a space. The forms utilized in Islamic art are abstract representations of spiritual truths. This abstraction reflects the spirit and mindset of Semitic peoples and embodies the belief in "la ilaha illallah," which negates the depiction of living beings to convey that truth transcends representation (Burckhardt, 2007). Decoration in Islamic art is not merely superficial beauty; it serves as a symbol to create a type of space. The decoration is such that it prevents the viewer's mind from focusing on a specific form that asserts "I," thereby creating a space that replaces it with a system of balance,

tranquility, and peace (Burckhardt, 1386). The purpose of creating space in Islamic architecture is to eliminate worldly distractions and sensual desires, replacing them with a system that represents balance, tranquility, and peace. This space allows the mind to shift from imagination to contemplation of abstract truths such as unity (Burckhardt, 2007).

9. Beauty and Islamic Art

Burckhardt praises a type of beauty in art that stems from truth and exists in traditional arts. This beauty is recognized for its existential clarity and its connection to a spiritual vision of the world. In contrast, another type of beauty exists that is intertwined with human animalistic desires and can lead to illusion and arrogance, as found in classical Greek and Roman art. Burckhardt states that the choice of abstract style in Islamic art seeks to distance itself from animalistic and sensual beauty, positioning beauty as a bridge between the material world and God, capable of conveying truth. He adds that Islamic art is harmonious with human nature, where beauty in this artistic tradition is interpreted as a link to truth and God. Burckhardt introduces unity, justice, and generosity as principles of beauty in the Islamic artistic tradition, which correspond to unity, balance, and richness, respectively. These three fundamental qualities define beauty and demonstrate that in the creation of art, justice means balance, and dignity means richness, while unity is the primary source of perfection. Burckhardt also points out the importance of benevolence in Islamic art, which springs from perfection, beauty, and virtue, representing inner beauty. He states that inner beauty has the power to create outer beauty and transforms every human activity into art and every art into the remembrance of God. Ultimately, Burckhardt describes beauty as a divine attribute and the foundation of art, reflected in every manifestation of beauty on earth. He emphasizes that beauty exists both externally and internally and should not be limited to a moral characteristic (Burckhardt, 2007).

10. The Audience of Islamic Art

The method of worship depends on the divinely established way, and sacred art takes on the form of religious rituals. This form consists of presenting an appropriate framework for rituals and turning toward "the blessing of angels," while blocking the path to temptation. As will be discussed, the effect of art in Islam serves such a purpose, and it is immediately understood that religious architecture and generally architecture (since any dwelling is fundamentally a place for worship) as well as any other art that influences the environment, such as decorations, inscriptions, carpets, and garments, have all emerged for this purpose (Burckhardt, 1986).

11. Nomadism

Burckhardt introduces the founders of Islamic empires as individuals who have emerged from the desert and often possess primitive or nomadic roots. He believes that nomadism has played a significant role in the lifestyle, thought, and artistic tradition of Muslims, aligning well with the spirit of Islamic teachings. Burckhardt states that despite achieving power and constructing magnificent buildings, nomads maintain their nomadic spirit and continue to live in tents and gardens. He also points out that the influence of nomadism in Islamic art is evident, particularly in the arabesques and rhythmic, repetitive patterns that exhibit fluidity, rhythm, and geometry simultaneously. Burckhardt believes that this influence arises from a deep belief in the impermanence of the world and a tendency toward precision, focus, and awareness of rhythm, which are characteristics of desert life. According to Burckhardt, nomads pay great attention to their language and artistic works, as these are the only things they can easily carry with them. He states that nomadic art tends toward a kind of unity due to its simplicity, graphic clichés, decorative symbols, and a tendency toward rhythm and weight, reflecting the presence of the eternal in time. Ultimately, Burckhardt notes that both nomadism and sedentism are essential for understanding Islamic art, complementing each other and representing two aspects or movements that cannot be overlooked.

12. Language and Arabic Talent

Burckhardt examines the connection between Arabic art and Islamic art and insists that, despite claims that the first Islamic buildings were constructed by non-Arab architects, Islamic art is fundamentally based on Arabic art. He believes that Arabic talent and the Arabic language are the main factors in the formation of Islamic art, which expanded alongside the spread of Islam (Burckhardt, 2007). Burckhardt emphasizes that the Arabic language not only helped preserve Arab heritage but also facilitated its expansion into distant regions. Furthermore, he believes that Islamic art spiritually and psychologically aligns with the nomadic spirit of the Arabs, and this influence is significant in shaping the characteristics of Islamic art, especially in visual fields (Burckhardt, 1989). He states that the Arabic language and its dynamism, influenced by a nomadic lifestyle, contrast with urban and sedentary living. However, Burckhardt sees significant differences between Islamic art and the Quran, noting that the only direct influence of the Quran on Islamic art is seen in certain forms of calligraphy, which he does not consider sacred. He argues that abstract forms in Islamic art do not directly originate from the Quran. Nevertheless, within a traditionalist framework, some connections can be made between certain Qur'anic aspects and Islamic arts, although Burckhardt does not address this topic.

13. Shi'ism in Islamic Art

Burckhardt considers the characteristics of Shi'a art to stem from the fundamental differences between Shi'ism and Sunni Islam, such as the idea of a specific spiritual order and the concept of Imamate as expressed in art (Burckhardt, 1986). He regards Persian-Shi'a art, particularly during the Safavid era, as a prominent example of this artistic tradition, showcasing features such as crystalline structures and heavenly effects in its architecture and coloring. Persian miniature painting is also presented as an art form with specific characteristics influenced by Shi'a perspectives, displaying objects with thoughtful and emotional insights while being shaped by the social environment of Shi'ism. Although Burckhardt has addressed Shi'a art in his studies, he has not provided deeper analyses in this area.

4. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

1. General Critiques of Traditionalism

Mohammad Langhausen critiques the ambiguity of the term "tradition" and its definition from a religious perspective in an article titled "Why I Am Not a Traditionalist." He points out that the concept of "tradition" gains significance in contrast to "modern" and is primarily defined within the context of European history. According to traditionalists' definitions, "tradition" refers to the transmission of principles with a transcendent origin (Langhausen, 2007). These differing definitions indicate that there is still no consensus on the precise meaning of "tradition." This disagreement over the definition of "tradition" can complicate distinguishing between traditional and non-traditional art. Additionally, the issue of differentiating between tradition and religion and their respective totalities is among the discussed topics. Therefore, the lack of clarity in defining "tradition" is one of the main challenges traditionalist critiques face. These critiques address topics such as the centrality of mysticism in religious thought, opposition to modernity, and epistemological issues related to the concept of "perennial wisdom," indicating that traditionalists overlook some economic, social, and cultural factors in their analysis of Islamic art.

2. Critiques Directed at Traditionalists Regarding Art

Traditionalists reject a historicist approach to studying art due to its neglect of universal and eternal truths, believing these truths can manifest in artistic works. Burckhardt has also followed this perspective and criticizes historicists. In contrast, historicists and contextualists criticize traditionalists for their neglect of historical, social, and cultural factors, stating that in the traditionalist view, there is no significant difference between artistic works created in different historical periods. Burckhardt and traditionalists overlook the individual motivations of artists in Islamic art, believing that artistic values are dependent on tradition. This viewpoint, which refers to the role of individuals as conduits for the manifestation of the whole spirit in history, reminds one of Hegel, with the distinction that traditionalists emphasize "tradition" instead of "spirit." Traditionalists distinguish those capable of deciphering traditional artworks from others, asserting that this ability requires enduring many hardships, yet they do not explicitly explain the reasons for these difficulties. This perspective leads to ambiguity in understanding their overall works. They also categorize some pre-modern artworks as sacred art without providing clear explanations, while excluding others from this classification, such as placing the Taj Mahal in sacred art but excluding the miniature painting of the Prophet's ascension. This approach, without offering a specific rationale, results in ambiguity and challenges in audience comprehension. Traditionalists primarily engage in praising and admiring traditional and sacred artworks, claiming to discover mysteries that they have reached from their own viewpoint, without explaining how they achieved such discoveries. In critiquing modern art, the main point they raise is that the focus has shifted from God to man. In some cases, they issue judgments about artworks without detailing how they arrived at these conclusions. They believe that the ability to uncover these mysteries is achieved through actualizing intuitive reason, yet they fail to clearly outline the details of this process.

Traditionalists have a negative view of modern phenomena and do not consider modern arts such as photography, film, or comics as part of their thought. They also place some pre-modern arts outside the realm of traditional or sacred art; for example, Burckhardt accepts calligraphy and architecture as sacred art within Islamic art but does not include miniature painting. While categorizing artworks may be faultless, traditionalists regard those outside these classifications as less valuable or worthless, a perspective discernible from their works. Traditionalists focus more on discovering and expressing artistic mysteries and pay less attention to various artistic styles. They also deem modern and secular arts as worthless, praising only those works they consider to possess spiritual or traditional value. Literature and poetry, despite their importance in various traditions, are often overlooked by traditionalists or deemed entirely outside the independent artistic domain, creating a gap in their analysis of these artistic fields.

3. Critiques Directed at Traditionalists Regarding Islamic Art

Oliver Lehmann's critiques of traditionalist views on Islamic art are based on coherent and non-ideological analysis. Lehmann questions the fixed and unified definition of Islam, arguing that Muslims from different sects and backgrounds have varying perceptions of Islam and view it from their unique perspectives. Therefore, he believes that Islamic art cannot be shaped solely under the influence of a "fixed essence" of Islam. This criticism is presented from an ontological perspective. Lehmann challenges the essence of Islamic art and argues that just as he stated about Islam, he does not recognize a specific and fixed essence for Islamic art either. Thus, it is natural that if a phenomenon like Islam and Islamic art lacks essence, it will also lack nature. Lehmann raises criticisms regarding traditionalist interpretations of Islamic art, particularly calligraphy. He believes that the aesthetics of Islamic calligraphy are often considered based on their visual beauty rather than their sacred meaning. This difference in viewpoints between traditionalists and their critics may arise from their differing angles on Islamic art, which itself stems from the ambiguity and dispersion in traditionalists' writings and critics' tendency to misinterpret their views. Lehmann believes that caution should be exercised in artistic and religious interpretations and that extreme generalizations should be avoided, especially concerning symbolism. He emphasizes that a specific religious or artistic interpretation should not be broadly generalized to encompass an entire artistic tradition. Furthermore, Lehmann questions the notion of a fixed essence for Islamic art and criticizes traditionalists for often defining all aspects of life under religion, while many changes in tools and structures have occurred for practical reasons rather than religious ones. These critiques highlight the differences in individuals' perspectives and demonstrate that differing viewpoints become problematic when one perspective is accepted as the only correct one, a tendency observed in the works of many historical thinkers.

4. Critiques of Burckhardt's Theories on Islamic Art

The author presents critiques of Burckhardt's work, which include three main criticisms: First, a critique of Burckhardt's neglect of arts such as Sufi dances, sama, poetry, and music, especially the music of the Quran and religious texts, as well as Sufi music. Second, criticism of Burckhardt's lack of awareness regarding the artistic traditions of the Islamic East and the Middle East, particularly Iran, compared to his understanding of the artistic heritage of the Islamic West and North Africa, including Morocco and Spain. Third, there is a mention of the lack of coherence in Burckhardt's theories, which stems from the absence of a unified intellectual theory with clear principles and explanations for his specific concepts.

In his works addressing Islamic art, Burckhardt primarily focuses on architecture and calligraphy. While he asserts the superiority of calligraphy, most of his attention is directed toward architecture. Despite the significance of architecture in Islamic art, many other Islamic arts, including poetry, storytelling, music, and dance, have been overlooked by Burckhardt. Although he is considered a traditionalist, Burckhardt separates poetry from the arts and categorizes it under literature, an approach more commonly seen in modern classifications of art. Historically, poetry held a very high status among the arts, and poets were highly valued due to their connection with spiritual and religious concepts. This perspective disregards the prominent presence of poetry in the philosophy and wisdom of Iran after Islam and overlooks great poets like Hafez and Rumi. On the other hand, a significant portion of the Quran is dedicated to storytelling, which itself indicates the greater importance that should be given to poetry and storytelling in Islamic art.

While Burckhardt addresses Islamic art in his works, he has paid little attention to music, despite its considerable artistic value and its connection to the spiritual realm from the perspectives of philosophers and mystics. Burckhardt, who identifies as a Sufi, may have overlooked music due to a Sharia-oriented view of Islam. This is noteworthy considering that the Quran, as the central text of Islam, possesses miraculous aspects that partly relate to its special melody (tajwid). Additionally, music plays an important role in Sufi ceremonies and lodges, making its neglect in the study of Islamic art questionable. Dance, particularly sama dance known in Sufism, has deep connections with themes that traditionalists describe as "sacred art" and "tradition." Some Sharia-oriented interpretations of Islam, even among Sufis, may have influenced Burckhardt's thinking and led to the neglect of these artistic aspects. This raises the question: Are Islamic rituals themselves not a form of artistic expression or dance, and are these dances not related to "tradition"? Surprisingly, prominent figures in traditionalism concerning Islamic art have overlooked this dimension, which may reinforce existing stereotypes about Islamic art.

Burckhardt, who initially became acquainted with Islam in North Africa and converted to Islam while engaging in cultural and spiritual activities in Morocco and Spain, was more influenced by the culture of the Islamic West than its East. When discussing Islamic art, a significant responsibility lies on the researcher to pay attention to all details. Burckhardt and other traditionalists have generally overlooked some details. Despite Burckhardt's comprehensive information and deep analyses, his view of art in Islamic lands is more focused on Andalusia and Morocco, suggesting that his interest in Arabic talent and Sunni traditions has played a role in this focus. Meanwhile, more than half of the physical artworks of Islamic art in various museums around the world pertain to Iranian art. The unequal attention given to the artistic traditions of the East and West within the Islamic world and referring to Islamic art as Arab art by Burckhardt and some Orientalists is a noteworthy issue that warrants further examination. This critique refers to the entire thought of traditionalists, particularly Burckhardt's theories on Islamic art. Burckhardt's main book on Islamic art, "Islamic Art: Language and Expression," lacks a clear organization and logical framework, with his theories and characteristics of Islamic art presented in a scattered and unsystematic manner. The belief that attaining eternal wisdom allows for commentary on a wide range of subjects has led traditionalists to express opinions on numerous topics. Despite the depth and creativity of Burckhardt's thoughts and those of other traditionalists, which are commendable, this approach has resulted in their ideas and theories becoming misunderstood by audiences due to their scattered nature and difficulty in systematization, marking a significant flaw in this type of thinking.

5. CONCLUSION

In Burckhardt's theories on Islamic art, symbolism is presented as a combination of two thoughts: transcendental and analogical, resulting in the emergence of abstract motifs instead of figurative images. These motifs symbolize the code of "unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity," stemming from the centrality of monotheism in Islamic teachings. Other factors, such as the Arabic language and the nomadic lifestyle of the Arabs, also play a role in shaping the symbols of Islamic art. Symbolism in Islamic art signifies the relationship between various levels of a single truth, with geometric shapes, architectural elements, and light each having their specific symbols. Moreover, Islamic art has a close connection with sacred and transcendent concepts, demonstrating an internal unity across all its styles without fundamental changes over time.

Islamic art, which shows internal unity in its various works, can only be understood through rational intuition, which is a combination of knowledge and ambiguity. This intuition, known as sacred knowledge, encompasses spiritual and moral understanding as well as the applications of the artwork and is passed down solely through tradition. Sacred art, including Islamic art, must not only have spiritual or religious content but also possess a spiritual form and be rooted in the prevailing spirit of Islam. In this specific tradition, calligraphy, architecture, and arabesques with sterilized plant images are recognized as sacred art, whereas other Islamic arts like painting, even with religious themes, are not considered sacred art.

Islam opposes naturalism and iconography because it believes that prophets and their images must be protected from any defilement, and preventing the worship of these images by ignorant individuals is essential. Miniature painting is an exception but is not regarded as sacred art. Additionally, creating images of living beings in Islamic art is acceptable as long as it does not convey a sense of liveliness. In Islamic art, there is no distinction between art and craft; both are connected to spirituality and nobility. Individual creativity is absent in Islamic art, which reflects the beauty arising from submission to divine law and showcases true beauty. With an abstract appearance and abundant decorations, Islamic art provides a context for

contemplating and understanding abstract concepts such as monotheism. In this art, beauty acts as a mediator between the tangible world and God and is placed alongside concepts such as truth and nature. In Islam, art and religious worship are not separated; Islamic art has become a ceremonial expression of religion, reflected in architecture, clothing, and handwoven carpets. Islamic art can penetrate deeply into the audience's inner being and enrich them with spiritual truths, which is why Burckhardt emphasizes the revival of traditional arts.

Nomadism and Arab culture are two influential factors in Islamic art. Nomadism, characterized by precision, focus, and rhythm, manifests not only in verbal arts prevalent among nomads but also in urban arts such as architecture. This dynamic lifestyle, independent of worldly appearances, favors abstract art over figurative art. On the other hand, Arab culture and language, which expanded after the death of the Prophet Muhammad and the Arab conquests, link the manifestations of Islamic art to Arab culture. This culture serves as a mode of expressing universal truths and has a profound impact on Islamic art. Shi'ism, as a branch of Islam, has a specific spiritual order based on belief in leadership (Imamate) and the existence of an Imam as an intermediary of grace in every era. This belief has fostered popular art among Shi'ites, evident in works such as the mosques from the Safavid era in Iran and Iranian miniature paintings. However, critiques have also been directed at Burckhardt's views and those of other traditionalists, including ambiguity in defining the concept of "tradition" and its relationship to religion, an excessive focus on Sufism in Islamic thought and art, and a confrontation with modernity that has led to neglect of modern arts.

Criticisms of Burckhardt's and traditionalists' ideas regarding Islamic art include generalizations, overlooking the individual creativity of artists, unqualified praise for traditional and sacred art, and insufficient attention to various artistic styles. Oliver Leaman has coherently and non-ideologically critiqued these ideas, including critiques of essentialist views of Islam, the Sufi perspective on Islamic art, and the limitation of Islamic artistic forms. The author has also raised critiques, including an epistemological critique of the concept of eternal wisdom, critiques of historiography and ontology concerning the concept of tradition, neglect of secular art, separation of literature and poetry from art, insufficient attention to a wide range of Islamic arts such as poetry, music, and dance, lack of adequate awareness of the artistic tradition of the Islamic East, particularly Iran, and ultimately the lack of coherence in Burckhardt's theories within a unified intellectual framework.

Burckhardt, as a contemporary thinker and a member of the traditionalist school, which primarily emphasizes the concept of "eternal wisdom," has examined and interpreted Islamic art through his spiritual and transcendent perspective. However, criticisms have also been raised regarding Burckhardt's works and thoughts in the field of art. These criticisms mainly encompass generalizations and insufficient attention to historical, social, and cultural details, overlooking the individual creativity of artists, differentiating between audiences of traditional and sacred art without defining specific characteristics, unqualified praise for traditional and sacred art, limiting art to traditional and sacred types, and insufficient attention to various artistic styles. Additionally, specific criticisms have been made regarding Burckhardt's approach to Islamic art, which have been briefly examined and explained.

As one of the followers of the traditionalist school, Burckhardt holds a strong belief in the concept of "eternal wisdom." He believes that eternal wisdom, which confronts knowledge directly and immediately, can provide infallible and universal knowledge to humanity. Burckhardt and traditionalists regard eternal wisdom as an essential tool for correctly understanding religion, art, literature, science, and philosophy. He emphasizes that to attain eternal wisdom, one must first believe in its possibility and necessity. Burckhardt's interpretations of Islamic art, including his decodings of artistic works, are based on this central teaching of traditionalism.

However, understanding the writings and works of traditionalists outside the framework of eternal wisdom is difficult and often leads to misunderstandings. Burckhardt and other traditionalists recommend that practical efforts and self-purification should be considered as the first step in understanding their works correctly. To create effective communication with general audiences and prevent misunderstandings, it is emphasized that traditionalists should focus more on explaining and elucidating the concept of eternal wisdom and its role in their intellectual school. Otherwise, their works may be overlooked or misunderstood in modern and postmodern society.

6. REFERENCES

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