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Reading the thoughts of traditionalists on the paintings of Sohrab Sepehri from the perspective of Schuon

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ABSTRACT

Frithjof Schuon is a pivotal figure in the traditionalism movement, known for his profound insights into art and spirituality. Schuon's artistic philosophy is rooted in the awareness of the Absolute and the symbolism it encompasses. He posits that beautiful shapes, the external or material realm, while virtue cultivates the internal space of the self. This article aims to explore Schuon's philosophical perspective on art and its implications for interpreting the works of Sohrab Sepehri. Key elements of this discussion include the transition from the sensible to the intelligible realm, the symbolic nature of art, the absence of innovation in traditional forms, the practicality of artistic expression, and the alignment of form, materials, and symbolism with the principles of traditional art. Employing a descriptive-analytical research method, this study synthesizes fundamental theoretical frameworks and conducts an in-depth analysis of selected artworks. The goal is to elucidate Schuon's influence on Sepehri's artistic vision and to analyze the intellectual nuances present in his paintings. A selection of Sepehri's works is analyzed to understand how the lack of representation, the intentional simplicity of materials, and the transformation of nature facilitate access to the intelligible realm an alignment that resonates with Schuon's philosophical tenets. This research is based on comprehensive library data, primary sources, and scholarly articles within the realm of art theory, revealing the connection between nature and intelligibility in Sepehri's artistic expressions. Findings show Schuon proposes a specific approach to art based on the concept of beauty as a spiritual truth, suggesting that beauty can lead to a deeper understanding of truth and existence. Sepehri has repeatedly explored this theme in his poems, using the clarity and simplicity of nature to convey profound human emotions.

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INTRODUCTION

The discussions of traditionalists are mainly theoretical debates in the fields of metaphysics, ethics, humanity, mysticism, religion, and art (Rahmati, 2015). Frithjof Schuon is one of the most prominent traditional philosophers, not only a metaphysician but also an artist, poet, and painter. Beauty in spirituality plays a fundamental role, according to Schuon's description, in that for the thoughtful individual, beauty is not merely a means of indulgence and worldly enjoyment, but a wave to remind them to the world of meaning in the Platonic sense of the word. Beauty is the extension or reflection of the infinite divine, and in this respect, it softens the hardness of the heart and removes the obstacles to the liberation and salvation of the soul (Nasr, 2015).

“Sohrab Sepehri is a poet about whom various views and opinions have been expressed. Some consider him one of the few poets who have a cohesive intellectual system of their own, and to understand his poetry, one must be familiar with the key to that intellectual structure. Others attribute Sepehri's poetry to the delicate functioning and extensive range of imagination, the mental role-playing, and the twists of language belonging to Indian-style poetry” (Hosseini, 1988). Sohrab Sepehri, an Iranian poet and painter, have been influenced by the philosophical and artistic discussions of philosophers such as Frithjof Schuon. Schuon, as one of the most important figures in the tradition of traditionalism, has provided profound and specific theories in the fields of aesthetics and art. Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980) is one of the prominent figures in contemporary Iranian literature and art. Through his works in poetry and painting, he has expressed and manifested the unity of existence and the beauties of nature (Schuon, 1984). Frithjof Schuon, a traditional philosopher and artist, emphasizes the importance of spirituality and deep connection with nature. He believes that art should reflect the spiritual soul and convey the essential experiences of

life (Sepehri, 1979). One of the common themes between Sepehri and Schuon is the importance of nature in human experiential life. Sepehri has portrayed the beauties of nature in his paintings and has tried to depict a deeper sense of human connection with nature through art (Sepehri, 2010). Schuon believes that true beauty lies in a deep and spiritual understanding of the world. Sepehri has also sought to examine beauty from a spiritual and philosophical perspective and to offer specific interpretations of beauty (Schuon, 1984). Sepehri's works are generally filled with symbols and emblems that can be analyzed in relation to Schuon's thinking. Schuon asserts that art must be able to reveal the hidden dimensions of reality and deeper meanings (Sepehri, 2010). He emphasizes abstraction and independence from material details in art. Sepehri has also employed abstract techniques in his paintings, using them as tools to convey emotions and philosophical experiences (Ibid, 2010). Both Sepehri and Schuon emphasize identity and traditional themes in response to the challenges posed by modernity and the cultural crises of their time. This emphasis on rooted identity has, in turn, influenced Sepehri's artistic works (Schuon, 1984). Schuon stresses the importance of harmony between the form and content of an artwork. Sepehri has also attempted to establish coherence between its apparent shape and its deeper meaning in his works (Sepehri, 2010). In Schuon's philosophy, art should express spirituality and truth rather than merely represent superficial beauty. Sepehri reflects this well in his works, seeking truth and meaning through art (Ibid, 2010). Schuon promotes the concept of the universality of art, and Sepehri, inspired by these thoughts, strives to create works containing global and human themes (Schuon, 1984). Schuon understands beauty not only as a superficial characteristic but also as a spiritual quality. Sepehri interprets beauty in connection with the meaning and spirit of nature (Sepehri, 1979). Both artists are influenced by cultural and natural inspirations. Sepehri, in particular,

draws inspiration from nature, Iranian culture, and mystical philosophies (Sepehri, 2010). Both Schuon and Sepehri emphasize the plurality of human views and experiences. This is evident in Sepehri's art through the diversity of subjects and artistic forms (Schuon, 1984). Schuon believes that art should reflect the lived experiences of the artist. Sepehri also depicts his personal experiences and deep emotions in his works (Sepehri, 1979). Sepehri engages in philosophical reflections in his poetry and paintings that have a direct relationship with Schuon's thoughts. These reflections lead to the creation of a deep and meaningful discourse in his works (Sepehri, 2010). Schuon sees art as a tool for societal change and improvement. Sepehri, too, considers his works as thoughts for enhancing the human and spiritual conditions of society (Schuon, 1984). Schuon emphasizes the importance of integrating art and mysticism, and Sepehri interprets mystical themes in his works, demonstrating Schuon's influence on him (Sepehri, 1979). Schuon advises artists to pursue new and innovative ideas. Sepehri also sought new modes of artistic and philosophical expression in his works (S, 2010). Schuon believes that art should contribute to increasing human awareness. Sepehri, too, aims to create a deep awareness of beauty and meaning in life through his works (Schuon, 1984). Ultimately, the influence of Frithjof Schuon on Sohrab Sepehri is a significant point for better understanding Sepehri's works and for transmitting profound spiritual philosophies into modern Iranian art (Sepehri, 1979).

Methodology

This research is of a fundamental and theoretical nature and is descriptive and analytical in terms of data analysis methods. In fact, this article aims to describe Schuon's views on art, analyze Sepehri's paintings, and randomly select and analyze examples of Sepehri's works. This research is based on library information gathering, using primary sources, scientific articles, and reputable theoretical works. In this study, all paintings

by Sohrab Sepehri have been examined, constituting the statistical population of the research; however, only those paintings have been considered that exemplify the transition from the sensible world to the intellectual realm, which aligns with Frithjof Schuon's theory. By examining the poems of this great nature poet, it can be said that Sepehri's language in some of his poems is simple and unadorned, while in others it is intertwined with mystical and philosophical themes and concepts. Understanding his poetry hinges on familiarity with symbols, myths, and the mysticism of various cultures, as well as knowledge of the nature of existence. Accordingly, this research explores the theme of the transition from the sensible world to the intellectual realm in his paintings, conducted with a focus on Frithjof Schuon's theory.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sohrab Sepehri

Sohrab Sepehri, born on October 6, 1928, and passed away on April 20, 1980, is one of the most significant contemporary poets of Iran, whose poems have been translated into major world languages (English, French, Spanish, and Italian). In 1955, he began translating Japanese poetry. Most of his poems are written in the free verse form. His poetry features unique and creative imagery. With his human-centered perspective and the insights he gained from Zen philosophy, he achieved a new style known as "Green Volume," which is considered an evolved version of his technique.

Frithjof Schuon

Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998), known by his Islamic name Sheikh Isa Nur al-Din Ahmad, was a Swiss thinker of German descent and one of the most prominent figures in the Traditionalist movement. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, as a metaphysician, artist, and poet, he has always paid serious attention to the importance of art and beauty from the very beginning. Therefore, his theories and views regarding art and aesthetics are highly significant. Barbara Perry

states regarding Schuon: “Schuon’s artistic aspect stems from his awareness of the symbolism of the Absolute. She sees Schuon’s paintings as a medium for truth and notes that his works are an expression of superior truths that he has lived through his own soul and represent a metaphysical teaching (Perennial Wisdom) from which all religious systems and spiritual paths originate.” “He saw the archetypal essence of all things and instantly grasped the forms and the culture from which these forms had emerged.” In the nature of every human being, there exists an inclination toward the Divine; thus, human essence tends to seek God. In this respect, Sohrab, who has a new perspective on nature, reminds us of the existence of the Creator in his works. Therefore, Sepehri’s mysticism is related to Buddhism (the thoughts of J. Krishnamurti), and one can also observe the states and interpretations of the Zen school in his works. By utilizing symbolic words and the feelings of these mentioned schools, the audience perceives his innate longing for God. Thus, it can be said that the unique mysticism he has created is an intelligent and creative blend of other aforementioned mysticisms. The realm of imagination or the archetypal world appears to be a level of existence that is abstracted from matter but is not detached from its effects; it is a level that exists between the sensible and the intelligible or the abstract and the material, and for this reason, it possesses certain properties of both domains. In the enchanting order of Sepehri’s poetry and painting, the clarity of the material world is set aside, and behind colors, shapes, and textures, one can observe the supra-human realm—a realm that is imperceptible and non-material.

Transition from the sensible world to the intelligible world

The primary characteristic of traditional art from Schuon’s perspective is that “the work of art is actually an expression of the spiritual realities present in higher realms (either directly or indirectly)” (Schuon, 1959). He has repeatedly mentioned this meaning in his works: “From

his point of view, a traditional work of art is akin to sacred texts, originating from revelation and reflecting ineffable spiritual matters” (Ibid: 109). Some researchers believe that “the reader of Schuon’s works will be misled if he does not realize that what is necessary for assessing and judging his ideas about art is the understanding of the distinction between the Absolute and the relative” (Keeble, 2009). “The Absolute is the intelligible immaterial reality. In other words, it can be said that the foundational background of traditional art is the doctrine of archetypes. Traditional art is an attempt to represent an aspect of the higher world” (Mahdavi, 2012). He believes that not only is the origin of traditional art divine, but the forms of the works are also in accordance with those divine realities. In other words, traditional art can be described as “the representation of sacred meanings and truths through forms corresponding to those meanings” (Hamzadeh Abianeh, 2019). According to Schuon, “all traditional art is based on such correspondence and alignment between the sensible (the form and shape of the work of art) and the intelligible, and fundamentally traditional art is a medium for the manifestation of meaning in this world and the celestial realm that has descended to Earth” (Schuon, 2007a). In traditional art, the (intelligible) is recognized as a concept that transcends the material and observable world. This concept refers to a spiritual and metaphysical truth that lies beyond the physical appearance of the universe. Frithjof Schuon believes that traditional art should strive to depict this truth in a rational way so that the viewer can attain a deeper understanding of reality by observing the work of art. The intellect can unify human perceptions and provide the conditions for their harmony. At the same time, it has the ability to integrate the material world and acquire the capability to comprehend order. “The world of nature is the weakest degree of existence, and the higher realm is the archetypal world, which has a greater intensity of existence and is free of some of the flaws and limitations

of the natural world. In the higher realm, there exists the world of intellects, which is pure actuality. Consequently, the archetypal world and the natural world are two different degrees of existence that have distinctive characteristics due to their varying degrees of intensity and weakness of existence. Therefore, in the arc of descent, man first traverses the world of intellects and archetypes, is born into the natural world, and in the arc of ascent, he begins to grow from the natural world and, according to the capacities and perfections he acquires, passes through the various degrees of archetypal and intellectual existence" (Parsayi and Shahgol, 2020).

The symbolic nature of the work of art

A traditional work of art is a symbolic expression of transcendent truths. He states, "Symbolic art is inherently connected to intuitive reason" (Schuon, 1959), and "there is a metaphorical (symbolic) relationship between intelligible intuitions and sensible forms, and such a relationship can well explain the connection between the people of the inner truth and crafts (especially architecture)" (Schuon, 2005). "The only gateway that can lead us to the realm of understanding sacred art is the understanding of symbols and signs" (Mahdavi, 2012). It should be noted that symbols are not arbitrary matters. Schuon states, "Symbols are different from metaphors and metonyms (quasi-symbols). An image that has no relation to the essence of what it is trying to express is not a symbol but a metaphor" (Schuon, 2007b). Therefore, symbolism is the most suitable language for expressing the mystical experience, which involves conditional union with the Absolute and the limited with the unlimited, and generally expresses any form of spirituality and metaphysics and the transcendent realm; it is impossible for the expression of a religious experience to be independent and free from symbolic language. Furthermore, the expression of the mystical experience not only necessitates the use of symbols but also implies the use of myth, which has a symbolic language. In fact, from the perspective of the sage, meta-

physical matters are identical to realities (or myths in the sense of true stories), yet these are realities that are inherently incomprehensible and inaccessible to human beings, and symbols and myths serve as approximate reproductions and translations that report, to a greater or lesser extent, those supernatural realities or the higher knowledge (Nasr, 2004).

"The visual value of art lies not in presenting an image of observable realities or interpreting them, but in being able to provide a mirror for humans so that by looking into it, they can see who they have been and who they will become, and through that, find out with the help of creative imagination that they are a part of nature and may even glimpse God within themselves" (Ibid: 18). Schuon states, "Architecture, painting, and sculpting are substantial and enduring arts. These arts primarily represent forms, and their universality lies in the tangible symbolism of these forms. Poetry, music, and dance are mental and dynamic arts. These arts, above all, represent essences, and their universality lies in the subjective reality of these essences" (Schuon, 1998). "There is a connection between symbolism and spoken or written language, as if symbolism can only be found in the realm of literature. It goes without saying that such a perception is erroneous" (Nasr, 2004). "For this reason, symbolism is the most suitable language for expressing the mystical experience, meaning the conditional union with the Absolute and the limited with the unlimited, and generally expressing any form of spirituality and the image of metaphysics and the transcendent realm; it is impossible for the expression of a religious experience to be independent of symbolic language. Moreover, the expression of the mystical experience not only necessitates the use of symbols but also implies the use of myth, which has a symbolic language. In reality, metaphysical matters, in the sage's view, are identical to realities (or myths in the sense of true stories), yet they are realities that are inherently incomprehensible and inaccessible to human beings, and symbols and

myths are considered as approximate reproductions and translations of those supernatural realities or higher knowledge” (*Ibid*: 57).

Lack of innovation (discovery of beauty, not creation of beauty)

A traditional work of art is not the product of the individual mind of the artist, and therefore, innovation has no meaning in it. In a traditional society, the artist is merely a tool of genius, working under inspiration, and the individual taste of the artist plays a secondary role in the artistic creation (Schuon, 2005). He explicitly states that “no art is a human creation in itself” (Schuon, 1981). Schuon does not view this lack of innovation as a negative point and believes that “the authenticity of a work of art does not mean the uniqueness of the art, and traditional art, which is ostensibly imitation, can be considered more authentic than modern art” (Tahmasbi, 2009). As Fitz Gerald quotes Michael Polak, it is essential to understand that “Schuon, as a painter, has no interest in innovation or initiative but is simply enamored with the inner vision of spiritual truths” (Fitzgerald, 2010). Schuon gives an interesting example in this regard: “Just as a child does not want his mother to change his face every day, the demand for innovation and initiative in art is also a tedious illusion” (Schuon, 2007). “Beauty, as a dual-faceted concept, relies both on the intrinsic characteristics of an object and on the reaction of the perceiving subject. Thus, cultural and value categories, both individual and collective, can influence the way one looks at it and the mental interpretation of it. Accordingly, beauty is influenced by culture and the values derived from it, and it also impacts the formation of cultural manifestations.” (Mirshahzadeh, 2011). In defining innovation, it should also be noted that: “Innovation is one of the fundamental principles in the formation of a work of art that gives it value beyond time and place” (Shadghavzini, 2007). “Achieving innovation and discovering the hidden symbol in a work of art is difficult but not impossible” (*Ibid*: 70).

Practicality and usefulness of artistic form

According to Schuon, “traditional art has a specific mission and application. Its primary mission is to remove the shells to reveal the cores, and it has a magical and spiritual application” (Schuon, 2015). He also believes that “the goal of sacred art is to establish a connection with spiritual truths and the divine presence. Such art, in its principles, has a sacred application” (Schuon, 1981). He emphasizes that “artistic forms, in addition to their intrinsic qualities, must definitely serve a beneficial purpose” (Schuon, 2007). This perspective clearly contrasts with the “art for art’s sake” theory, and Schuon has repeatedly criticized this theory in his works, even calling it the most foolish and deviating idea (Sorati, 1997). He believes that “accepting the ‘art for art’s sake’ theory is a mistake, and this mistake causes us to replace the spirit with instinct and taste.” Susan Langer believes that forms are manifestations and symbols of emotion because they express emotional life in a concise and structured manner without having a precise meaning like the words of a language. One could say that one of the ways to establish a connection with the viewer through a design is to stimulate their emotions (Perry, 1981). Every work of art has two distinguishable aspects: the objective aspect and the subjective aspect. Beauty and the understanding of form also relate to the objective and subjective characteristics. In the objective aspect of art, formal qualities are evident. The subjective aspect of the work comprises its content, which is the impact of art on the human mind. The subjective aspect of a work is derived from its objective aspects, and one can determine the trajectory of its subjective content.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Correspondence of form, raw materials, and symbolism with the rules of traditional art

Schuon says that “a naturalistic work of art can be fully pleasing due to the beauty of what it imitates; however, the more accurate this imita-

tion of nature is (for example, to the extent that the work departs from its flat surface and seeks a three-dimensional space), the more incorrect and baseless this work becomes” (Schuon, 1981). In painting, this transgression from the flat surface occurs in the sense that through shadows and spatial techniques, the painting is rendered in a three-dimensional form (Schuon, 2005). “Schuon believes that the most complete form is one in which the truth is embodied in the most precise manner” (Schuon, 2007). Some of Sepehri’s works convey depth and are naturalistic. The raw materials in art and meaning and significance have always been a topic of discussion among artists and enthusiasts. The components of a work of art, such as a painting or a sculpture, include the materials that constitute the art. The raw materials are not always consistent with the form of a work of art (defined as a three-dimensional composition or an object in a three-dimensional space) and may utilize various combinations. Raw materials in art include the substance used in the creation of the artwork (whether in painting, sculpture, or other visual arts). When considering an artwork, we must also take into account its materiality (raw materials). There are thousands of artworks for which the materials and substances are essential to their concept, composition, and meaning. In fact, many artists pay special attention to the tools they choose to achieve form, ensuring that they reach not only shape but also the context

and purpose of their art. For example, to present a traditional art form, raw materials are needed that can convey the intended meaning as a credible medium.

Analysis of Sohrab Sepehri’s Paintings from the Perspective of Frithjof Schuon’s Traditionalism

Poem “Che Guevara”

The poem “Che Guevara” (meaning “question”) is an example of Sepehri’s thoughts on the relationship between humans, nature, and existence. In this work, Sepehri seeks to elucidate the deep and spiritual connection between humans and nature. He uses the beauties of nature to describe his sense of dependency and solidarity with the universe. Considering the concept of the unity of existence in Schuon’s thoughts, this poem reflects a profound feeling of connection between humans and nature. In this poem, Sepehri uses natural elements such as trees, sky, and earth as symbols of the overarching reality of life and existence, all pointing to a singular truth (Schuon, 1984).

Painting “Tree”

The painting “Tree” is one of Sepehri’s prominent works, where he employs abstract and symbolic forms. In this work, the tree is not merely a physical entity but a symbol of life, growth, and connection to the entirety of the universe. Schuon believes that art should showcase spiritual dimensions and deeper realities beyond materialism (Schuon, 1984). Sepehri

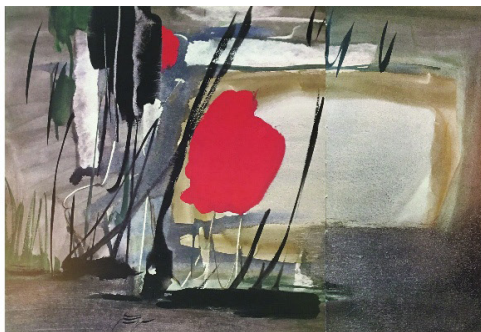
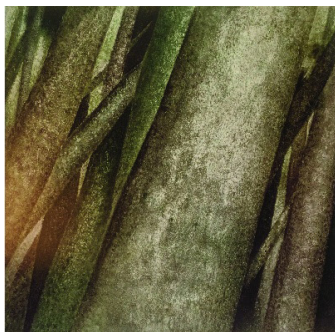


Figure (1) Left: Untitled, 1968, oil on canvas, 130 x 75 centimeters.

Figure (2) Center: Pulsating Red, c. 1963, 34 x 49 centimeters, from the collection of Ms. Leila Golestan.

Figure (3) Right: Pebbles, mid-1950s, oil on canvas, 200 x 200 centimeters, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran.

conveys a sense of tranquility and silence in this work through the use of soft colors and gentle lines. Thus, "Tree" not only represents natural beauty but also serves as a medium for conveying deep emotions and messages about existence and life.

Poem "Bidil"

In the poem "Bidil," Sepehri addresses human themes and deep emotions, utilizing simplicity and natural beauty to express these feelings. In this poem, Sepehri introduces nature as a source of inspiration for exploring the deeper meanings of life and human suffering (Sepehri, 1979). Schuon emphasizes the importance of art as a tool for serving truth and spirituality, and Sepehri effectively embodies this idea by intertwining human emotions and feelings with natural beauty (Sepehri, 2010).

Poem "Water"

The poem "Water" is another work by Sepehri that is influenced by Schuon's thoughts. In this poem, Sepehri examines the concept of water as a symbol of life, purity, and change. Water is frequently mentioned in Schuon's thoughts as a symbol of the flow of life and spiritual truth. In this poem, Sepehri presents water as a life-giving force and a symbol of the manifestation of spirituality in everyday life. He reflects on his experiences with water as a natural and spiritual element that signifies the profound connection between humans and truth and existence (Schuon, 1984).

Painting "Dream"

The painting "Dream" is another work where Sepehri explores abstract and imaginative phenomena, using vibrant colors to express his deep emotions and spiritual experiences. This work can be seen as a visual display of Schuon's reflections on the spiritual dimension of art. Schuon believes that art should transcend material realities and delve into the spiritual manifestations of life (Schuon, 1984). In "Dream," Sepehri creates a weightless and fluid atmosphere, attempting to illustrate inner transformations and

spiritual beings that examine life in its non-material aspects.

The practicality and usefulness of artistic form, the alignment of form with content

In traditional art, form and content must be in complete harmony with each other, and the form should serve the spiritual content of the work. In this piece (Fig. 1), Sohrab Sepehri uses abstract forms and simple lines to convey his content and spiritual message in a way that aligns form with content perfectly. The form of this painting is abstract and minimalist, yet in its simplicity, it effectively conveys deep spiritual concepts. The vertical lines and patches of color are arranged in such a way that they guide the viewer towards contemplation and understanding of a deeper meaning. This simplicity of form does not render the artwork superficial; instead, it serves as a tool for expressing spiritual and mystical complexities. The content of this work clearly refers to nature and the relationship of humans with the natural and spiritual world. Trees act as symbols of growth, stability, and connection to the earth and sky, and their simple, abstract forms are designed to convey this message completely. The artistic form of this painting not only matches its content but is also designed to communicate the spiritual message of the work in the best possible way. In traditional art, the artistic form must have meaning and purpose and create a meaningful and useful experience for the viewer. In this piece by Sepehri, the simple forms and patches of color are used in a way that conveys a sense of connection to nature and the surrounding world to the viewer. These forms are not merely for decoration and beauty; they create a sense of connection and reflection on the natural beauties for the viewer. Free forms and irregular lines evoke a sense of movement and dynamism, inviting the viewer to think and reflect on the surrounding world and the hidden beauties within it. This practical aspect of Sepehri's art means that his painting is not only visually appealing but also serves as a means to establish a spiritual connection with

the viewer and contemplate the surrounding world. This feature is one of the principles of traditional art that is well represented in Sepehri's works. In traditional art, the artistic form must have meaning and purpose and create a meaningful and useful experience for the viewer. In this work (Fig. 3), Sepehri's use of forms of stones and rocks evokes a sense of connection with nature and its essential elements for the viewer. These forms metaphorically represent the simplicity and permanence of nature, inviting the viewer to think and reflect on the simple, raw beauties of the world. The stones in this painting not only serve as a visually beautiful element but also symbolize stability and permanence. These symbols remind the viewer that true beauty lies in simplicity and authenticity, without the need for complexity and artificial details. This practical aspect of Sepehri's art ensures that his painting is not only visually attractive but also provides a meaningful and thought-provoking experience for the viewer.

The importance of form and raw materials

The raw materials and techniques used in Sohrab Sepehri's works are always in harmony with the spiritual and philosophical message of the piece. In this painting, Sepehri has utilized earthy and natural textures and colors that resonate well with the natural and earthly concepts of the work. This use of raw materials inspired by nature reflects Sepehri's attention to the principles of traditional art. Schuon mentions in his perspective that traditional art consistently employs raw materials that are in direct connection with nature and the physical world. In this work, earthy colors and natural textures are used in a way that guides the viewer toward the world of nature and the relationship between humans and it. This focus on raw materials not only adds greater spiritual depth to the piece but also indicates the artist's close relationship with the natural and physical world. From this perspective, Sepehri not only uses raw materials that align with the spiritual message of the work but also adheres to the fundamental

principles of traditional art. The use of natural materials and earthy textures gives the work an organic and natural quality that corresponds with its deep spiritual concepts. In this piece (Fig. 2), Sohrab Sepehri also demonstrates a kind of respect for raw materials and their intrinsic qualities through the use of simple and natural colors and forms. The use of earthy and natural colors, along with free forms, indicates Sepehri's inclination to maintain the authenticity of materials and to use them in a natural and genuine way. This approach to raw materials showcases the artist's deep connection to nature and his desire to utilize natural beauties in a manner that preserves their essence. The use of natural colors and free forms reflects the artist's relationship with nature and his effort to preserve the authenticity of raw materials. This respect for raw materials and their usage in a way that maintains their authenticity and naturalness is one of the prominent features of traditional art, clearly visible in this piece by Sepehri. One of the principles of traditional art is the respectful use of raw materials while considering their intrinsic characteristics. In this work, Sohrab Sepehri shows a kind of respect for raw materials and their natural features through the use of simple colors and forms. The earthy and natural colors used in this painting represent the artist's desire to maintain the authenticity and naturalness of the raw materials. This use of natural colors and raw forms reflects the artist's connection to nature and his effort to use materials in a way that preserves their authenticity and natural essence. This respect for raw materials, used in a way that conveys a sense of authenticity and naturalness to the viewer, is one of the salient features of traditional art that Sepehri richly displays in this work.

Encryption with the rules of traditional art

In traditional art, the use of codes and symbols is one of the main tools for conveying spiritual and mystical concepts. Sohrab Sepehri has also employed specific codes in this work that are consistent with the principles of traditional

art. Trees and branches, represented in an abstract manner, are not only considered natural elements but also serve as symbols of spiritual growth and dynamism. These symbols are connected to Iranian culture and mysticism, representing the link between humanity and the natural and spiritual worlds. In Iranian culture, the tree is recognized as a symbol of life, growth, and sustainability, and Sepehri has utilized this symbol in a way that simultaneously refers to spiritual and mystical meanings. In this work (Fig. 2), Sohrab Sepehri, utilizing simple and abstract forms and colors, adheres to the rules of traditional art in such a way that, rather than presenting a completely realistic image, he strives to create codes and symbols that must be interpreted by the viewer. These forms and colors have been employed in a manner that allows the viewer to have a deep and spiritual experience of the work. The use of red as the focal point of the painting imparts a sense of life and dynamism, while the black forms and free lines add an element of mystery and the unknown. This combination of colors and shapes, in a way, represents the artist's attempt to create a balance between the contradictions and connections present in the world. This coding, instead of offering ready-made answers, invites the viewer to think and reflect on the world and its hidden meanings. This analysis shows how Sohrab Sepehri, through the use of simple and abstract forms and colors, has managed to establish a connection between the natural and spiritual worlds. By using free forms and earthy and red colors, he somehow conveys a sense of life, movement, and contemplation to the viewer, inviting them to reflect on the natural beauties and their deeper meanings. This work, like other works by Sepehri, aligns well with the principles of traditional art and allows the viewer to achieve a deep and spiritual experience. In this work (Fig. 3), Sepehri adheres to the rules of traditional art by using simple and natural forms. The forms of stones and rocks are depicted in such a way that the viewer must interpret and uncover the meanings behind them. These

forms are represented in a non-realistic manner, encouraging the viewer to contemplate their significance and their relationship to the natural world. The use of earthy colors and raw forms suggests a connection between art and nature. Rather than directly referencing a specific subject, these colors and forms instill in the viewer a sense of closeness to nature and its fundamental elements. This symbolism, employing simple and natural forms, adheres to the principles of traditional art, which always strives to use simplicity and originality to express profound meanings. This analysis reveals how Sohrab Sepehri, through simple and natural forms and earthy colors, has been able to establish a deep connection between the natural and spiritual realms. By choosing stones as a symbol, he evokes in the viewer a sense of stability, authenticity, and invites them to contemplate the hidden and simple beauties of nature. This work, like other works by Sepehri, resonates with the principles of traditional art, allowing the viewer to engage in a profound and spiritual experience of the world, and directly connect with concepts such as simplicity, authenticity, and a bond with nature.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Sohrab Sepehri is profoundly influenced by Schuon 's philosophies in his works, and this influence is clearly visible in his paintings and poems. One of the key concepts in Schuon 's thought is the unity of existence. Schuon believed that all objects and beings are interconnected and point to a single truth. This idea is prominently reflected in Sepehri's works; for example, in his famous poem "Che Guevara," which addresses the beauty of nature and humanity's connection to it, Sepehri presents images of trees, the sky, and the earth that are all interconnected and harmonious. These images relate clearly to the concept of the unity of existence in Schuon 's philosophy and demonstrate how Sepehri seeks to find deep connections between humanity and nature. Another layer of Schuon 's influence on Sepehri is the concept

of abstraction and symbolism. Schuon believed that art should transcend material realities and depict spiritual dimensions. Sepehri has similarly employed abstract and symbolic techniques in his paintings. For instance, in his work "Tree," he uses simple, abstract forms of trees that signify a transformation in his perception of nature. Here, the tree is not only presented as a physical entity but also as a symbol of life, growth, and connection to the entire world; this aligns completely with Schuon's view of art. Furthermore, Schuon proposes a specific approach to art based on the concept of beauty as a spiritual truth, suggesting that beauty can lead to a deeper understanding of truth and existence. Sepehri has repeatedly explored this theme in his poems, using the clarity and simplicity of nature to convey profound human emotions. For example, in the poem "Beadle," Sepehri employs simplicity and immaterial beauty to express human connections and genuine emotions. This perspective on beauty and its use as a means of conveying emotions reflects Schuon's thoughts on aesthetics. Finally, Schuon's philosophy, which considers art a tool for spiritual transformation and flourishing, is evident in all of Sepehri's works. By emphasizing the importance of art in human life, Sepehri aims to establish a deeper connection with his audience; his goal is not merely to represent reality but also to portray the deeper meanings of life and connections with human nature. This approach significantly impacts the dynamic and emotional nature of his works, highlighting the emphasis on spiritual and human aspects in his art. Sepehri's painting is somehow related to the philosophy of unity within traditional art. Each square or geometric shape has a distinct meaning, yet together they form a whole that points to a single truth. This approach aligns with Schuon's philosophical views, which assert that the material world is a reflection of a higher truth and should be represented in art. For this reason, the expression of rational concepts in Sepehri's works is conveyed through simplicity and stable geometry. In Sepehri's works, elements drawn

from nature allow for the achievement of the rational world through a lack of representation and an effort to limit the use of raw materials, transforming nature instead. When analyzing Sepehri's works, considering the transition from the tangible world to the rational realm through metaphysics, ontology, anthropology, and the beauties of existence, it is clear that Sepehri's works significantly embody the rational world.

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