



## Original Article

# The relationship between religious form and matter and artistic works in Schuon's viewpoint

Seyed Rahman Mortazavi\*<sup>1</sup>  Mehdi mohammadkhani<sup>2</sup>

,



<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor in philosophy of art , faculty of architecture, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Isfahan, Iran. [Sr.mortazavi@khuisf.ac.ir](mailto:Sr.mortazavi@khuisf.ac.ir)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant professor in Islamic theology , faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, Najafababd Branch, Najafababd, Iran. [m.mohammadkhani@phu.iaun.ac.ir](mailto:m.mohammadkhani@phu.iaun.ac.ir)



10.22080/JRE.2021.20694.1122

**Received:**

January 9, 2021

**Accepted:**

February 21, 2021

**Available online:**

August 20, 2022

**Keywords:**

Schuon, form, matter, religion.

## Abstract

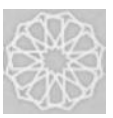
Frithjof Schuon, as one of most distinguished representatives of traditionalism, proposes a different approach in philosophies of religion and art. This approach includes a new insight in old religio-metaphysical concept. In this era, form and matter, as two of the oldest and most important religio-metaphysical concepts, has an important role in Schuon's understanding of religion and art. This two connect religion to art and vice versa. For Schuon, the contribution of the form and matter are representatives of unity in diversity and diversity in unity in religions and their authenticity. This dialectical procedure first and foremost can be seen in the light of the form, steaming from content. However, it cannot be reduced to the content while emphasizing a pre-established harmony. It is so that in sacred art, the form is transcended with matter and content and refers the addressed to divinity. We try in this paper to show some aspects of the relationship of religious form and matter in Schuon's viewpoint and its implications for the study of sacred art.

\*Corresponding Author: Seyed Rahman Mortazavi

Address: Islamic Azad University, Isfahan branch

Email: [seyedrahman@gmail.com](mailto:seyedrahman@gmail.com)

Tel: 03132307738



## Extended abstract

### 1. Introduction

Frithjof Schuon, as one of most distinguished representatives of traditionalism proposes a different approach in philosophies of religion and art. This approach includes a new insight in old religio-metaphysical concept. In this era, form and matter, as two of the oldest and most important religio- metaphysical concepts, have important role in Schuon's understanding of art. This two connect religion to art and vice versa. Form and matter are representative of unity in diversity and diversity in unity in religions. According to Nasr,

“The Islamic cosmos is based on the emphasis upon God as the Unique Origin of all beings, on the hierarchy of existence which relies upon the One and is ordered by His Command, on the levels of existence which relate matter to the subtle world, the subtle world to the angelic, the angelic to the archangelic, the archangelic to the Spirit or al-Ruh and the Spirit to God's primordial creative act. This cosmos is based on order and harmony which is more than the result of the direct manifestation of the One in the many. It displays a peace and tranquility which dominate its obviously dynamic character because the patterns of change within nature reflect nevertheless the immutable archetypes which belong to the higher states of universal existence and are ultimately possibilities in the Divine Nature. These and many other features of Islamic cosmology are reflected in Islamic architecture, especially in the sacred architecture of the mosque which is based on a science that cannot but issue from the inner dimension of the Islamic revelation and other forms

of wisdom which Islamic esotericism integrated into its world-view in accordance with its own nature and the integrating power of Islam” (Nasr, 1987, 41).

### 2. Research Methodology

This desk research is based on the critical reading of Schuon's writings to gain an insight in other thinkers of traditionalism.

### 3. Research Findings

Art in Schuon's insight has been seen as an inseparable part of a tradition which is shaped around a divine revelation. Since all things in revelation itself have not been announced explicitly, the art which is rooted in it also should be in the same way. Furthermore, art is a suitable tool for religion to popularize those items of Sharia which are not comprehensible for most of believers; art can say unsayable with its potentials and can maintain those hidden thinking in its symbolic dimensions.

### 4. Conclusions

True traditions and their related arts have the same foundations in Schuon's thinking. Hence, it can be said that the existing differences are only caused by their way of presentation. Thus, if the seemingly differences be ignored, what remains is a common meaning/message/ matter. Sacred art has its specific forms.

### Funding

There is no funding support.

### Authors' Contribution

Authors contributed equally to the conceptualization and writing of the article. All of the authors approved the content of the manuscript and agreed on all aspects of the work

### Conflict of Interest

Authors declared no conflict of interest.

## References



Nasr, S H. (2000). *Marefat va Manviat* (Knowledge and the Sacred). Translated by Enshaalah Rahmati. Tehran: Sohrewardi Office of research. [In Persian].

Schuon, F. (2007). *Art from the sacred to the profane: east and west*. U. S. A.: World Wisdom.

Schuon, F. (2008). *Christianity Islam Perspectives on Esoteric Ecumenism*. U. S. A.: World Wisdom.

Schuon, F. (2002). *Form and Substance in the Religions by World Wisdom*. U. S. A.: World Wisdom.

Schuon, F (2007). *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*. U. S. A.:World Wisdom

Schuon, F. (1984). *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*. U.S.A: Quest Book

Fitzgerald, M. & Frithjof, S. (2010). *Messenger of the Perennial Philosophy*. U. S. A.: World Wisdom.