Harmony of the Principles of Design
With God’s Perfect Creation

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Abstract

The study determined how the principles of design are revealed in nature. Photos from nature were taken to show the elements and principles of design through God’s creation. Five categories of sample photos from nature were evaluated, i.e., flowers, leaves, stones, faces (people), and insects. The elements of design used were line, shape, color, tone, texture and space while the basic principles considered were unity, balance, and dominance. The result of the study showed that unity, balance, and dominance are seen in the samples being studied. God’s character is reflected on His creation which implies that as nature shows unity, human beings should relate well with their fellowmen: nature displays dominance to show God-like character to others, in contrast with the character of the world, and nature portrays balance so that people will always remember to be fair in dealing with others and to wholistically develop the mental, physical, spiritual, and social aspects of life.

I. INTRODUCTION

God’s book of nature is open for us to study and from it we are to gain more exalted ideas of His greatness and unexcelled love and glory (“White, 1855, para. 5).

The principles of design as seen in nature pave the way to enormous resources. One can draw inspiration, motivation as well as open visions and ideas from nature that will aid students of visual arts and design in their quest for good and better understanding of beauty, love, harmony, and appreciation. The study proposes a visually dynamic way of looking and seeing beyond what is ordinarily seen, just-passing view in nature. It examined the reason of what makes nature i.e., a flower in the field, its design, quiet graces that is attractive to behold (Song of Solomon 2:1 KJV); likewise a stone, that looks insignificant, turns out to be meaningful and symbolic (Job 19:23,24); rightly polished will yield beauty equals the splendor of a palace (White, 2014).

The seemingly useless and disturbing insect if observed closely will reveal a stunning well-thought of stylized design at par with the digitalized design in the modern world; the refreshing visual poetry of leaves that encompass the design elements, can quietly teach that “curved lines” are more numerous in nature (Lantry, 1980), and how significant a line is in the visual world (Cox, 2011). Human beings as family exemplify
best in reality the spiritual application of unity, dominance, balance (principles of design) through their relationship with each other. The study of the Design Principles as revealed in nature can impact an individual, inspiring him more to be keen, observant, sensitive, and aware towards his surroundings; every individual needs his/her fellowmen, the quality also that makes up a good and effective visual creative (Baker, 2015).

Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to evaluate through the chosen and photographed nature, using the design elements of art: line, shape, color, tone, texture and space and the design principles of art: unity, balance, and dominance, as guide to visually prove into revealing further God’s love and His character. Specifically, the study answered the following research questions:

1. How do design elements and principles implicate the character of the designer?
2. Do Solomon’s description and standard of beauty manifest and reflect the design principles?
3. Can the design principles reveal spiritual connection applicable to daily living, and in a way tap into increasing an individual’s sensitivities and keen observance?
4. How potent is the knowledge of the design elements and their principles via nature in awakening and inspiring the love and care for sustainable environment?

Figure 1. Design tools in nature and the visual arts
Taken, for example, amidst nature, a flower to survey, to fully appreciate and see truly its beauty that reflects God’s character, principles of design should be considered alongside. The senses should be awakened to see and behold the following at work:

In repetition with rhythm, there is harmony, in variation with contrast there is variety, in harmony with variety there is dominance, in harmony with variety there is balance, in harmony with variety there is movement, and in dominance with balance with movement, visually produces unity.

II. METHODOLOGY
Five elements from nature were photographed revealing close-up to semi close-up details of each. Then descriptive observations were recorded. The selections of nature to be photographed and documented are randomly done in choosing the ones that are often seen along the ordinary path and setting.

The specific elements from nature used as samples are: flowers, leaves, stones, insects and the human body and face. A DSLR camera Nikon D7000 gadget has been used to capture the details of the chosen subject/elements. A WYSI–WYG or ”what you see is what you get” principle is used as subjects are taken picture by a digital camera. WYSIWIYG refers to the situation in which the display screen portrays an accurate rendition of the printed page (The Oakland Tribune, 1996). ‘WYSIWIYG’ pronounced ‘whizzywig’. A form of the phrase had been used as advertisers in the USA since at least the 1940s to indicate a ‘straight forward’, ‘no fuss’ form of trading. An advert for a film sportster camera in the Charleston Gaz–zette came close to ‘what you see is what you get’ in November 1949: “You just sight, press a button and what you see, is what you get.”[The Phrase Finder. n.d para. 4]

The precise phrase came into print some years later. For instance, this text from an advert for a house sale in the Oakland Tribune, May 1966: “so with the exception of landscaping and deco–rator furnishings, what you see is what you get.”(The Phrase Finder. n.d para.2

For each specific subject used, five types were considered, namely:

**Flowers:** Bud/s, Full bloom flowers, petaled, non-petaled, showing complemen­tary colors

**Leaves:** Lined, curved, shaped, textured, showing negative and positive space

**Insects:** Bees, fly, dragonfly, bug, frog

**Stones:** pebbles, rocks, boulders, precious, semi-precious

**Human beings:** Old lady, man, woman, child, family

For each type under a category of five subjects, a close-up, semi-close up and normal angle shot have been applied.

III. RESULT

**Flowers**

“Art will never be able to exist without nature” (-Pierre Bound)
Designs in nature are a series of thrilling discovery upon closer look and observation, the overlapping position of the flowering bud has been seemingly cut, sliced by a knife and placed contrastingly on top of each other. The colors of green to yellow green combined with pink design and fashion. The industry’s designers upon summer and spring arrival would use these combo colors to represent brightness, fresh, fun, and if designed in the right way, these color combination can actually be gender neutral as well as pleasing to the eye.

Nature can reveal endless designs, ideas, and concepts. There is no limit to the possibilities one can achieve as one awakes in God’s magnificent artistry in designs in nature by creative thought and thrilling observations.

Grace and beauty can sum up to what is called “visually appealing. Take for example this flower in her ethereal garb of green and the purest of white, its petals, including its thin graceful lines that extend beautifully soft in the air. It also reflects the character of its Creator and Designer. To quote a designer who has been immersed for many, many years in the world of codes, algorithms, arduino boards, has these words as he returns to nature as his inspiration.

“Let’s face it, nature will never go out of fashion or boring. There’s always something new to be discovered, even in our back gardens. Now who could fail to be inspired by that?” (St. Clair, 2015, para. 3). Radial balance occurs when all the elements radiate out from a central point and the visual weight is distributed equally. Radial balance creates a strong focal point in the center of the design.

Radial symmetry should remind us of God who is the same yesterday, today and forever. In a world of changing philosophies, what an assurance that God is always there, and always the same.

The radial symmetry design principle is commonly found in flowers. A radial balance occurs when all the elements radiate out from a central point and visual weight is distributed equally. Radial balance creates a strong focal point in the center of the design.

Radial symmetry should remind us of God who is the center of our lives, yesterday, today and forever. In a world of changing philosophies, what an assurance that God is always there, always the same, a dependable foundation (Lantry, 1988). “For I am the Lord I change not;” (Malachi 3:16 KJV).

As you examine the blossoms of hundreds of radial-shaped elements of the flower, treasure God’s many unchanging promises: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” James 1:17 RSV.

“There is unspeakable beauty and potential to be found in nature. It entices...
me and is an invitation I just have to accept” (Jil Ashton-Leigh 2015, para. 4).

Have you been thrilled in your discovery of how God combines lines, curves, figures, and forms in nature?
Sometimes nature’s shapes are so unusual that they cannot be defined.
Yet God arranges them in such a way that they provide pleasing relationships with each other.
As God combined the forms in nature, He arranged everything to give a feeling of rhythm in which spaces and masses alternate in a regular way. All parts are in proportion. Everything God made functions for the purpose for which He made and designed it for.

**Human Beings**

God created the whole universe, everything that we see and last of all He created man. Man is special and is the crown of God’s creation. Gen. 1:26; Psalms 8:5, 6 KJV.

Man’s physical features can be an integral part of learning the design principles at work. It can reveal valuable lessons and inspire students of art aiding and motivating them further to deeper and worthy ideas.

By observing closely the old woman’s face, the artful creases through the varied types of lines can map a visual story that can challenge the imagination of the students of life and art.

It can help open one’s sensitivities, a quality essential to those who would like to increase their creativity.

The genius of Leonardo da Vinci vouched God’s crowning glory of His creation by using the human body as example of perfect balance and proportion.

Here is the master’s clear illustration of his famous “Vitruvian Man” in words: for the human body is so designed that the face, from the chin to the top of the forehead and the lowest roots of the hair, is a 10th part of the whole height, the open hand form the waist to the tip of the middle finger is just the same; the head from the chin to the crown is an eighth and with the neck and shoulder from the top of the breast to the lowest roots of the hair is the sixth from the middle of the breast to the summit of the crown is a fourth. If we take the height of the face itself, the distance from the bottom of the chin to the underside of the nostril is onethird of it; the nose from the underside of the nostrils to a line between the eyebrows is the same; from the lowest roots of the hair is also a third, comprising the forehead. The length of the foot is one sixth of the height of the body; to the forearm, one fourth, and the breadth of the breast is also one fourth. The other members, too, have their own symmetrical proportions, and it was by employing them that the famous painters and sculptors of antiquity attained to great and endless renown.

Similarly, in the members of a temple these ought to be the greatest harmony in the symmetrical relations of the different parts to the general magnitude of the whole.
They again, in the human body the central point are naturally the navel. For if a man be placed flat on his back, with his hands and feet extended, and a pair of compasses centered at his navel, the fingers and toes of his two hands and feet will touch the circumference of a circle describe these form. Just as the human body yields a circular outline, so too a square figure may be found from it. For if we measure the distance from the soles of the feet to the top of the head, and then apply that measure to the outstretched arms, the breadth will be found to be the same as the height, as in the case of plane surfaces which are perfectly square.—Morgan (n.d)

A young woman's face, coupled with King Solomon's poetic description of beauty, would be the best example for the principles of design combined.

"Your neck is like an ivory tower
Your eyes like the pools in Hesbon
By the gate of Bath Ribbin.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.
Your head crown you loke Mount Carmel,
Which looks toward Damascus.
Your head crown you loke Mount Carmel,
And the hair of your head is like purple;
A king is held captive by your tresses.
How fair and how pleasant you are,
O love, with your delight!
This stature of yours is like a palm tree,
And your breasts like its clusters.
I said, "I will go up the palm tree,
I will take hold of the branches,"
...the fragrance of your breath like apples
and the roof of your mouth like the best wine,"

Song of Solomon 7: the Maiden's Beauty, 4-5; 6-9

By analogy and spiritual application, the great delight of the beloved over his maiden help us to understand that this shows us how much God loves us. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you, —Isaiah 62:5

"And above all these put on love. which binds everything together in perfect harmony,"—Colossians 3:14.

Unity occurs when all of the elements of a piece combine to make a balanced, harmonious, complete whole.

Unity is another of those hard-to-describe art terms but, when it is present, your eye and brain are pleased to see it.

Nothing matches the beauty of the crowning glory of God's creation exemplified in perfect unity/harmony of a family. An innocent face of a child can exude and exemplify ideals that visual designers/artists are always looking for: freshness, newness, full of potentials...

As we are in our spiritual journey, we can only be reminded of Christ's words:

"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 18:2-4 ESV

It is by our childlike character, that we be humble and teachable having the full of potential to do greater works for the Master
and be of service to our fellowmen.

**Rocks and Stones**

Nature is full of many aweinspiring things, from majestic mountains to carpets of flowers. There is much creativity inspired by nature, but it is often of valley and streams. Rarely do we see the smaller pieces that make up such grand pictures. There are few people who appreciate the beauty of a single leaf, or a single drop of water. It is even rare to find a person who finds beauty in rock, diamond on the rough. For most people, rocks are only beautiful if polished up and set in gold or silver. It takes an appreciative, a humble spirit to be able to see the beauty and usefulness of each rock. The varying shapes and forms compose an interesting overall view, seen together in a setting, from an almost insignificant size to the biggest one produce a wonderful visual effect.

In our daily journeys, we often pass by the humblest of rocks, those that decorate our gardens, or the ones that are simply buried in the dirt at the park. Although most of us see rocks, if we see it all though humble and quiet they seem to be, they do not lack their own impressiveness. Useless many times as we see and pass by them, but, overtime, they serve as shelter and home, a protection to the smallest creatures of the earth.

Some of the most striking and beautiful imagery of the Bible is based upon the rocks. They are a symbol of God: “Yahweh is my rock and my fortress (2 Samuel 22:2; Ps. 18:2, 71:3); to Christ as the source of living water for spiritual refreshment (1 Cor. 10:4). The rock is also a symbol of hardiness. Therefore, the breaking of the rock exemplifies the power of God (Jer. 23:29).

The rock is also a symbol of that which endures, “Oh that they...were graven in herock forever!” (Job 19:23, 24)

Rocks, stones, come in all shapes and sizes, from large and smooth, to small with jagged edges. They come in different colors and patterns, swirled, grays and pale creams, deep browns and smooth reds. Like fingerprints, or people themselves, no rock is like any other. Simple, lowly or ‘humble’ rocks are like the simple people who do their job and live their lives and sometimes struggle to do it. These rocks do not sparkle, they are not movers and shakers, yet they play a part in the world, even if it is just as a child’s toy (“Diamonds in the Rough”, 2015).

Let the natural beauty of the world that is seen in these semi-precious stones teach and inspire us to seek deeper into the vast resources that the natural world could offer. Divine guidance will lead us to find the God of nature from all the rich resources of the good and the beautiful stones from His love and wisdom.

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hid my commandments with thee; thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understand.” Yea, if thou criest after
Insects

The and the balance.

afic way of the

signin an insect eye, exactly resem-bles tbe digitalized way of presenting images illmatrix form and dot per inch.

The wave has taken the

analogue in the annals of history. But

if we look closely with inhibited observ­ance, with awe and wonder ment we can indeed exclaim the words of the wisest man geometric figures, giving beauty to form

the character of His created masterpiece.

“Everything in nature is colored.” —Paul Cezanne.

Color is an attribute of things that result from light; they reflect, transmit or emit in so far as the light causes a visual sensation that depends on its wavelengths.

The beauty of complimentary colors is seen in nature. Just one of the many beauties of complementing (com- plimentary) colors is nature portrayed on leaves.

See them everywhere, perhaps on our daily walks, by our neighbors’ garden, but may have overlooked their beauty and message. Let our daily encounter with nature make us more observant and sensitive as “Nature testifies of God,” (White, n.d para.1) Also the renowned poet William Wordsworth ex­pressed, “Come forth into the light of things let nature be your teacher.”

Strength and beauty are in the sanctuary.”

Psalms 96:6

Strength + Beauty = Character

In nature, if we only learn to be obser vant and learn to look closely, we can see and enjoy God’s design ideas. He combines the various plane knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for under-

standing:

If thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord giveth wis­dom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:1-6)

Leaves

A line is a basic el­ement of art referring to a continuous mark, made on a surface, by a moving point.

A line is long relative to its width. It can define a space, create any outline or pattern, unply movement or texture, and allude to mass or volume. Line is absolutely essential in creating art.

Curved lines are more graceful and more numerous in nature. The soft curved lines are not only more beautiful to the eye but more relaxing. In this exciting stressful world, God placed the restful curved line everywhere as a reminder to “come part” and enjoy the quiet calm and peace of knowing Him.

“Strength and beauty are in the sanctuary.”

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In nature, if we only learn to be obser vant and learn to look closely, we can see and enjoy God’s design ideas. He combines the various plane
on earth: “There is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new?” It has been already, in the ages before us.” Eccl. 1:9, 10 RSV

Stunning indeed how the principles of symmetry in balance work perfectly in the insect’s eye that can match the modern world concept of design. The science artist said: “Some insects may seem repulsive first, but close observation reveals their expressive power” (Whaley, 2014, para.5).

John Hallmen (2010), a Swedish photographer who has been fascinated by insects his whole life has these words that can open a nature enthusiast’s/student’s eyes further: how they react,” “looking at a fly portrait.

“[Its a pleasure to show people who are not interested in bugs something they haven’t seen before and watch some people will find even more disgusting than they’d ever imagined while others will be surprised to find them quite beautiful. Sometimes you’ll find them covered in dew that forms in small spherical droplets; this can turn a tiny gray unsuspicious fly into a shimmering jewel!” The Daily Mail Reporter 2010(para. 7)

Almost any subject can look interesting if you look closely enough.

“Life is not so much a matter of discovering something new as it is a matter of rediscovering what has always been present” (W. Ralph Ward, n.d.)

IV. DISCUSSION

“Always remember the importance of detail”, the researcher can still clearly hear these words that were repeatedly said by his college lecturer. Whilst they seemed unimportant and irrelevant to him at the time, they have over the years taken on a much greater significance and have become ingrained in his philosophy and nature photography.

This attention to detail undoubtedly brings wonder and is certainly worth taking a little time for a closer look. Indeed, when this attention is applied to even the most commonplace of nature subjects there is clearly an extraordinary display of beauty and orderliness to be found. These combine to create patterns in nature that require only an observant and discerning eye to behold. This vision instills a lasting appreciation of the simplicity and beauty of the natural world and with this understanding and harmony there is everlasting enjoyment.

The natural world in all its glory has a myriad of examples for us to photograph but we can start with the common things that we tend to overlook. Simply because of their familiarity they offer the very best opportunity for observation. Here we can find patterns in nature that can be circular, linear and random or indeed a combination of all three. Sometimes they are obvious and sometimes they require a little effort and imagination to search out. Nature is full of patterns that interact and play off of each other that are well worth seeing. They offer a different view on our world that if we are honest, with our ever-increasing hectic lifestyle we often take for granted. With a discerning eye for detail, pattern and color we can look at any natural object as simply a series of shapes composed of lines, curves and circles. Then consider ways in which these shapes and patterns relate with one another. Often it is this interaction that provides such
a rich and diverse array of patterns that can satisfy even the most inquisitive amongst us and provide the opportunity for unique photo subjects (McDermott, 2015).

V. CONCLUSION
Upon observance of each chosen element from nature, each photographed elements reflected the visible design principles of design embibed on seeing and observing; God’s character is revealed.

In nature and design principles, unity points to the character of God, in unity there is love that produces harmony. Harmony coupled with variety using repetition, rhythm, contrast, and variation will visually yield balance, dominance, and movement, that causes a unifying sense that ultimately reflects unity, which is the goodness and character of God.

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