

**PROPRIOCEPTION, REFLECTION, RECOGNITION:  
THE LINEAMENTS OF FORM FROM EXILE TO INDEPENDENCE**

**Gilah Yelin Hirsch**

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My focus on the subject of “Exile and Independence” developed concurrently with the completion of the body of work, which I call “Cosmography: The Writing of the Universe”. These two studies seemed to be inextricably bound, much like branches of the same tree nourished by the same root, equal and opposite. I had spent years investigating the origin of alphabet as based in five patterns, which I found repeatedly in nature. A hunch had precipitated the finding that these five forms mirror the configuration of the neurons and the architecture of neural processes involved in perception and cognition. It became evident that an oscillating process between these mechanisms yields what we call form.

As my own journeys extended in distance, duration, depth, danger and discovery, I began to ponder the point at which an individuating personality loses the demarcation of explorer, and becomes alienated, then exiled from the originating group. I had noticed that the forces of attraction and repulsion, usually exist simultaneously to initiate adventure. Whether the intrepid traveler was Abraham, still Abram then, who moved because Jehovah commanded “Get thee out of thy country and from thy father’s house...”, or Joseph who emigrated by serendipity from Canaan to Egypt, or Moses who fled and led others from Egypt to Canaan, or Columbus who sailed from Spain and found the Americas, or Alexandra David-Neel who left life as an opera diva in France to find magic and mysticism in Tibet, or Emily Carr, who left civilized Victoria, British Columbia, to find and paint the soul of nature in the wilderness of Northwest Canada, or Amelia Earhardt, who left the United States to find fame as an aviator only to be found by the Bermuda Triangle, — or a spouse leaving a marriage,— these two forces have always held sway.

While attraction and repulsion make exodus possible, these are the opposite forces of those that connect. The newly ejected voyager may seem to be free. But unless a certain degree of connectivity is present, the individual is not independent, but is in transition, en route to exile.

Beginning where I left off in “Cosmography”, I continued the investigation intuiting that this process would blaze a practical path. My hunch was that the elusive link between Exile and Independence would be found in the agent of cognition, relational form.

Years of research had confirmed that there are certain forms, shapes, compositions, art and architecture that stir the soul to a state called Beauty in all cultures, ancient and infant, in all times.

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I had come to believe that what we universally identify as Beauty reflects the healthy structure and pattern of physiological elements within ourselves. Recognition of external form familiar on an innate sub-cellular level makes us feel contacted, disarming our defense mechanism, allowing our paranoia and anxiety to evaporate, resulting in feeling complete and comfortable in a psychophysiological sense.

Beauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder. I would have to deepen that and say that beauty is in the actual shapes of the neurons, which capacitate the eyes, as well as the structure of the neural processes of perception and cognition.

I began to look more deeply into the physiology. The activity, stimulated in the eye and other perceiving organisms is taking place within the cells of each organism.

Proprioception, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, is the reception of stimuli produced within the organism, which takes the place of movement or tension within its own tissues. Sensory proprioceptors are located deep in tissues (as in skeletal, heart muscle, tendons gastrointestinal wall or carotid sinus) and function in proprioception – responding to changes of physical tension or chemical conditions within the body proper.

These changes are catalyzed during the process of perception and recognition of form.

Popular acknowledgement of the power of form in contemporary United States is only found in the realm of so-called pornography. It is no secret that form depicting sensuality or sexuality will arouse a concomitant sensation or emotion. A psychophysiological behavioral change is catalyzed in the viewer, since the conscious moment is characterized by INFORMATION, SENSATION, and EMOTION.

Comprehension occurs when there is enough which is familiar in the perceiver for a pattern of recognition to occur.

On a microscopic level, we know that cells must contact and communicate with each other in order to maintain health. Adjacent cells “whisper together” through their cell membranes that vibrate in the electromagnetic field created by the valence of various facilitating hormones, minerals, and neurotransmitters. The presence of calcium is essential for all of these processes to take place. If a cell ceases to be in contact with another, it becomes diseased. The synapse, or “gap junction”, grows wider and unbridgeable. In trying to arrange other neighbors of communion, it begins to proliferate itself, becoming Cancer. Recent experiments at Loma Linda VA Medical Center show that the introduction of enough healthy cells into a cancerous environment may reestablish sufficient communication to propel the organism back to health.

Even at that minute level, it is necessary to have an “other” who mirrors. Of interest as well, is that a third element, a facilitator, midwife, “witness”, - or as in the case of mating whales, the third whale called the “aunt”, - calcium, must be present to promote the

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communication. I see this as another metaphor of consciousness. We cannot mirror ourselves, although we may try as narcissists. If, however, we are physically isolated, we may begin to talk to ourselves. And if severely emotionally isolated, we may generate multiple personalities, to extend one's private family. Our search is for a resonating, not duplicating mirror.

While joy is often culturally determined, and predicated on achievement, grief is universally experienced by loss of contact, separation from Beauty, and abandonment.

What then is lost in that separation that creates a biochemical change experienced as grief?

What we lose in separation is a part of ourselves that does not exist fully without reflection. We are separated from the Beauty that lies in congruent completion. When we speak about missing someone or something, the inverse is absent. If we do not have sufficient points of valence reconciled, we lose contact, and like a diseased cell, a lost spacecraft, or detached astronaut, we float. Untethered, we may seem to be free, but at a certain point we are exiled. Conversely, if we attach to another without maintaining enough individuality, we are subsumed. Like the oxygen atom combining with two hydrogen atoms, we become something other than either.

Experiencing this contradiction in emotional form led me to examine the continuum stretched between Independence and Exile. We can only be truly independent when engaged in an emotional/biochemical valence. As soon as we are free, we are susceptible to the gravitational field of another.

There is correlation at the macroscopic level as well. Emmanuel Beau, French mathematician and astronomer wrote me: "No heavenly body can escape from the gravitational field due to all massive objects present in the universe. Even light concurs to the field and is subject to the action of the field. The field emitted by a body extends ad infinitum. Nevertheless it is possible to find some temporarily 'quiet' places where the resulting field of the nearest bodies is negligible. They are called in French 'Points de la Grange'. An artificial satellite (cf SOHO) can stay there thanks to small corrections (push/pull) for years. The Sun, the Earth and the Moon create five places of that kind, where exile procures, perhaps, a sort of independence; but it's still unusual. The Horse Nebula will move and change in form. It could be a clown hat in a few thousand years from now."

The question is: at what increment on the Independence/Exile continuum does independence set adrift, become exile?

If independence, health and Beauty are in recognition, then at what point of waning contact, lessened intentionality, that one is pushed out of one field and pulled into the attracting force of another. Having evolved in nature, humans are born with an instinctive

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love for life in all its forms, suggests Edward O. Wilson's "biophilia hypothesis". In this matter we have no choice.

Comprehension within a new field occurs when there is enough which is familiar in the perceiver for a pattern of recognition to occur.

Cognition is informed and verified by physiology. We "know when it feels right".

Einstein is said to have felt within his body the truth of the relationship  $E=MC^2$ , and had to work backwards to formulate his intuition into mathematical terminology.

A UC Irvine classical piano-playing physicist, Gordon Shaw, noticed that the pattern of the EEGS of very bright people are coincident with the patterns of notation of Mozart's most sublime music. After experimenting with various kinds of music played during exams of graduate students, he found that hearing Mozart stimulated highest grades. This discovery, dubbed the "Mozart Quotient", covered by NBC and Newsweek, has had the skewed but beneficial effect of promoting attendance at classical music concerts.

After several discussions about reflexive mirroring of healthy systems, psychiatrist Andrei Novac, of UCI Medical Center as well, faxed me his newly considered model of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. Both of these are measured in sine waves. When the two systems are working well, the two sine waves overlap and form the image of the DNA helix. When they are obstructed or in "chaos", they lie in parallel, non-communicating fields.

If we call the reflecting process which simultaneously induces harmonious states of wholeness, healing and health, Beauty, then we can deduce that non harmonious reflections, or the removal from or distortion of these positively reflecting elements, will cause negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, rage and grief.

Studies in psychoneuroimmunology, the medical term for the interdependence between mind and body, indicate that there is a significant relationship between healing and beauty on one hand and illness and chaos on the other.

The power of art and architecture lies in its potential to concentrate those ingredients of reflected beauty or life forms at the most innate level of being.

Some contemporary pundits claim that one of the goals of art is to challenge. I prefer to reframe that as reeducating vision. If the end is to stimulate an optimally sustaining environment through thoughtful evocation of the mind and senses, then that is a meaningful challenge.

A journalist friend in NYC told me about a low-cost housing development, which was designed as a harmonious environment. For the first few months of occupancy, the walls were defaced with graffiti. Instead of punitive measures, the walls were repainted with no

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public statement. The defacement and restoration pattern continued only several rounds, until the beautification remained untouched, because the inhabitants were able to see and be positively affected by the sheer beauty without the blind politics of despair obfuscating their vision.

If the nature of Beauty truly resides in the beauty of nature, it is no accident that there is growing scientific evidence of the strength and potency of nature images benefiting the status quo of the human psyche in both the individual and the community.

Environmental psychologists report consistent human preference of natural over synthetic images. Physicians report that nature and water dominated images, act as potent tranquilizers and stress reducers; decrease patient's anxiety in hospital rooms; act as "key medicines for the profoundly ill and dying"; and that the mere sound of moving water lowers blood pressure. The astonishingly current yet ancient Tibetan medical and psychiatric text, Gyu-Zhi, prescribes a place of great beauty as the best therapeutic environment.

The importance of nature to spiritual health has in the past only been recognized in relation to those seekers who have spent long hermetic sojourns to better understand the meaning of life. But now, being rooted in nature is being widely encouraged for the everyday person in Jewish and Christian religious organizations as it has been for thousands of years in the spiritual traditions of the East.

Whether it is the Christian notion of raising consciousness from things eternal, or the Judaic Halakhic concept of bringing the eternal into the temporal through the creative capacities of Mankind, European tradition does recognize form as a vehicle to the sublime.

"It is only through symbols of beauty that our poor spirits can raise themselves from things temporal to things eternal." Abbe Suger said in 12C France.

Symbols are communicated in form.

Form describes space in all its aspects.

Form is a parenthetical aspect of space.

Form is universally consistent in its emotional evocation.

Form evokes feeling.

Feeling conjures metaphor.

Metaphor spawns idea.

Idea demands expression.

Expression in form is creation.

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Creation is the reason for existence, the state of divinity in humanity. Creation is the “streamlining of transcendence into the deficiencies of our rough turbulent world”. The initial step of the creative role is fulfilled by understanding the nature of these deficiencies. The second is filling these gaps with wisdom, so that the real world will conform to the ideal world.

Choice forms the basis of creation, whether it is behavioral or aesthetic. Any creation must be undertaken with a profound understanding of the relation of causality to repercussive events in the long and short run. On a mythic level, most cultures enjoy legends about a priest, shaman or magician who raises a dybbuck, djin, genie, doppelganger, pala or sorcerer’s apprentice. The adept is invariably destroyed by his/her lack of conscientious foresight coupled with the inability to reverse negative repercussion.

Artists share the responsibility of the conjurer. An artist can not only make a rabbit appear out a hat, but hat and all materialize on a flat, two-dimensional white plane.

It is important to remember that our virtues are also our foibles, that our gifts are also our nemeses. Artists have the capacity to refocus the world. Compassionate intelligence can strengthen the vehicles of contact through evocation of images of generosity, extension, and embrace. An emphasis on the senses may counteract virtual reality, which has so gravely infiltrated the world. Affirmation of original thinking may diffuse the general trauma-based, voyeuristic, sitcom mentality. It is in this way that lines of productive and beneficial connectedness can be cast into the future.

I have always been intrigued, amused and delighted that the technical vocabulary of painting is the technical vocabulary of mysticism and philosophy. We begin by framing and /or reframing our reality. The vehicle carrying the pigment is called the medium. It is the medium through which the transmission of the divine aspect of humanity takes place. We conceive images by revelation. We model form in space by suggesting and adjusting values. By varying brushstrokes we invoke allusions to differing properties of existence. We create illusions by grappling with the mighty forces of light and dark. We know that to truly give substance to vapor one must work with shadow. And we learn that to optimally summon a persuasive sense of convincing form in space, all things must be fully reflective, living an “unstill” life. If a form does not reflect color, light and shadow, it will stand alone, not independent in space, but exiled from being a participant in the frame.

With this knowledge and method we gain the capacity to prestidigitate all sorts of imagery, which may have traits of Truth and Beauty. Truth is not always beautiful. Before one paints the picture of Truth with vehicles of permanence, particularly in public places, one must look at the repercussion of the display of Truth. Truth may be a precursor to Beauty, in the process of coming to Beauty. Truth, then does not substitute for Beauty, since the end result is different.

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Intense creativity is penetrating and evokes universally deeply seated patterns of response. By creating a negative image, the negative affect is at least doubled. The power of potent imagery does not lessen in time, for there is both an overt and subliminal effect. Where garbage may be used as a medium for training the eye of the public towards an environmental plague, it is still garbage. While self-mutilation may be symbolic of the alienation of our time, it is still self-mutilation. And while violence may be a direct reflection of the pathological state of the state, it is still violence.

However, ugly truth, portrayed in a transcendent manner, through shifted metaphor and transfigured form, may move and direct the soul toward humane and tender action.

Between two and three million years ago, Australopithecus (Homo Erectus), and Neanderthals (Homo Sapiens), both lived, and were often neighbors, inhabiting similar regions of the world. The difference between the two species was that Homo Erectus (Upright Man) chose the cave near the river where he could fish and nab watering prey. Homo Sapiens (Wise, conscious, sentient, thinking man) chose the cave at the top or side of the mountain. From this perch he could see who and what was coming long before they arrived. With far vision, an eye to the future, Homo Sapiens, Humanity, can reassess the actions of the past and change the direction of the future.

Far vision brings me back to Independence and Exile. While our antecedents moved around in tribes, I am certain that one or more among them went off on his/her own. He voluntarily left the "human embrace" and communed with the "universal embrace". She was the first "outsider, l'etranger". He experienced the conflict of the artist, mystic, seeker, contemplative, visionary. He or she had to detach from the river of humanity, walked independently into the forest or the mountains and thought – and later wrote. One cannot solve a problem at the level of the problem; one must find objectivity in a farther/higher location, almost always deeper in nature. One must evoke another dimension of vision. Geometry of thoughtfulness was thus evolved.

Never leave home without your labyrinth. You will be lost without it!

Our first journeyer questioned, perhaps lamented his/her fate: was birth propulsion into independence or was it expulsion into exile? Surely this is what Adam and Eve discussed as they left the Garden.

So the hermit, saint, and scholar, often associated with spiritual or heavenly pursuits, soared into history. But as I learned from the astronomer, no heavenly body can escape the gravitational field of others, even though it is possible to find some temporarily quiet places...where exile procures...a sort of independence... it is still unusual.

And soon others – apostles, disciples, devotees, land developers, politicians followed the hermit and s/he was no longer independent but now exiled from the universal embrace. It was not long before hermitages, cloisters, monasteries, artist colonies, space stations,

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grew up around that temporarily quiet person, and in no time at all, historically speaking, these became cities.

If the independent does not return to the community, the community forms around the independent and a new constellation is born, mirroring electrons hovering around the atom at the heart of it all – a self-reflecting homeostatic universe.

Not so in politics where to be exiled is worse than death. How often one reads in history or presently about people or nations in exile - like Napoleon or Salman Rushdie, the Jews or the Tibetans. To die in exile is one of the most poignant deaths. To be cut off from all that is familiar, all tradition, food, language, friends, is much like that cell that I began with, unable to communicate with the neighboring cell, becoming diseased and causing death. The most excruciating part of exotic travel for me is not having any language in common – verbal nor written – for months at time. This exile of inarticulation has taught me greater empathy for the blind, mute, deaf, and illiterate. Gestures, “pidgin”, work reasonably well for a while. But for an extended period, this is certainly a form of exile.

I am interested in countries that are now being reintegrated into the “free” world after having been “exiled” for many years. Russia, for example, is experiencing what is called “transition depression”, a technical term not from the lexicon of psychology, but from economics. A perilous political and economic environment has become the fertile territory for the stable Mafia. A reign of decadence and street terror follows the Cold War and Perestroika. New countries, like Uzbekistan, randomly carved out of the former USSR, are experiencing a similar plight.

I see nations corresponding to human bodies: individuals are the cells, while political structures and social institutions are the vital organs and body functions. Architecture and art, body and soul, remains as evidence of politics.

A nation in “transition depression,” is much like an individual in transition: one who may be depressed because the form is negatively affected, out of congruence, incoherent, “at a loss”, so that the neurotransmitters and hormones are not functioning optimally. If there is too much of a hierarchy in a nation, the individuals, or cells cannot communicate, the “gap junction” is too wide. Classes of those who possess everything and those who are entirely dispossessed are formed. There is no middle. In India, the first question is “Madam, what is your class and what are your other distinctions?”

To continue with the Russian analogy: an underground, multi-level, world fashion, Beverly Hills-like, super scale, capitalist shopping mall has just been completed directly beneath Red Square and The Kremlin. While the extremely wealthy shop below, above ground there are almost continuous parades and screaming rallies of the old guard Communist party, clamoring for the lost equality of old regimes. In this picture, as above is definitely not as below. These polar opposites are too close. This kind of tension creates an explosive situation. No cultural trust can be engendered because the political and social organs are far too disparate within the same locale.

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Like the ubiquitous nesting Russian dolls, reality may be seen as a nesting system of icons that change significance as belief in each gains or loses support.

Once that is understood, it is important to rally action and support in the direction of the greater good for the longest duration.

Where there is no vision, the people perish, says the Book of Proverbs.

Vision is radical common sense in action.

As surviving creatures of nature, we already have the blueprint for compassionate high efficiency, hard-wired and available, literally at hand. If we can use our awareness to model and remodel our relationships, environments, architecture, social and political institutions based on the lineaments of natural form, we will more deftly accomplish our goals. Divinity in humanity implies spirituality in behavior. With this course of action directing mind and heart, we have an optimal opportunity to consciously link the eternal with the temporal, and provide an arena in which the human and the universal can embrace.