

THAT WHICH IS BETWEEN

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American Psychological Association Convention

Anaheim, CA, August 1983

ABSTRACT

The perceived connection between two entities of a photographic composition is of a different order than that among the elements of a single entity. Three original laser art color prints, each depicting an important reoccurring theme in psychology and art, are presented to illustrate the contention.

Even though much has been and is being written on the relationship of human beings to other objects, persons and the environment, the photograph should not be overlooked as a rich source for hypothesizing the possible connections which describe a relationship. Whether used for research, therapy or recreation, the photograph that captures that which is between two entities becomes a catalyst for thought and discussion. This implicit characteristic of the photograph is an emergent quality of its composition. Photographs differ widely on their degree of success in having this quality.

When the photograph is a portrait or it records a single object, the perceiver reaps meaning from studying internal composition. The boundaries are circumscribed by form. In such cases, the perceiver must infer from dress, expression and posture the culture, habits and relationships of the person photographed. Yet include another object or individual in some action and the quality of the print can move to a different order. To formulate such inferences, not only are the above mentioned sources of information still available to the perceiver, but the action frozen in the print also can provide a basis for much conjecture and discussion.

Although invisible on paper, that which is between usually has multiple meanings in the mind of the perceiver. To the extent that the photograph successfully captures connections, the more likely it will serve as an impetus for discovery, discussion, and pleasure of the perceiver. A photograph that captures well that which is between yields fresh connections of meaning upon the perceiver's return for

further viewing. Interplay and interdependence between entities become increasingly clearer, the more the perceiver studies and thinks about the photograph. Such clarity is not readily, perhaps rarely, obtained from the photograph of a single object.

Three original prints, selected from the author's work, will illustrate nicely the reflections outlined above. Each piece presented is a laser art enlargement of the original 35 mm color slide. Each color photograph involves a common recurring theme in psychology and art: Person to object, person to person, and person to nature. A description of each photograph and questions bearing on its psychological significance follow.

Photograph A: Person to Object.

My two month old daughter is lying in her crib facing her Pooh bear. She looks at the bear; the bear looks at her. Who is examining whom? This photograph was taken in Chesapeake, Ohio. The 9 X 13 inch enlargement became a grand prize winner of the Kodak International Newspaper Snapshot Awards of 1972. Consequently, the following year it was part of a traveling exhibit which stopped in all major cities of the nation.

This photograph represents the important relationship between a human being and an object. In this case, Pooh is a play product of our culture and exists for the child. What does the bear's smile convey to her? What is the child's response? What could the child attribute to the bear? Could Pooh be pleased with her?

Photograph B: Person to Person.

During a hard fought victory two 8 year old baseball players amuse themselves with bubble gum. Adjacent to each other, each blows a bubble. While in jest, each is closely monitoring the actions of the other. They both attempt to blow as large a bubble as they can and at the same time.

This 11 X 14 inch enlargement was taken in 1982 at Walnut Creek, California. It represents the important relationship between two human beings. Their actions are directed toward each other and their behavior reveals the bond between them. Sharing their activities as teammates, they become joined in common experiences, which foster shared understandings. These in turn provide a foundation for present and future actions. In this photograph, who directs whom?

Photograph C: Person to Nature.

A hiker is poised with bent knees at the edge of a thousand foot cliff. She is taking a picture of a waterfall two hundred feet ahead. In just as vulnerable a position, behind the photographer on the left, is a young pine tree struggling to subsist in a crack in the granite. The waterfall, as viewed through the lens of the hiker's camera, is shown to the right. The perceiver sees the hiker and the tree, as well as that aspect of Nature the hiker sees. Who is capturing whom?

This photograph was taken in 1982 atop Nevada Falls, Yosemite National Park, California. It is actually two enlargements (11 X 14 inch and 8 X 10 inch) matted and framed to depict the hiker in relation to the subject of interest.

This photograph represents the important relationship between a human being and Nature. Is the hiker an intruder? Does the hiker come to take, to be, to give? Does Nature provide, yield, tolerate?