

EVERYTHING IS SEEING

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Still a recovering election-holic here. While I do watch movies, I never watch commercial TV (you know, with advertisements), EXCEPT at the very end of major elections like this one. My finger is sore from muting the ads over the last couple of weeks, and I now have to wean myself from constantly checking to see what is happening in politics.

It is over, and I just have to return to my quiet office, the one with no flickering TV to keep me warm and distracted. I am working on it.

In the meantime, I don't seem to have much to say just now, and my mind, oddly enough, has been mostly preoccupied with close-up photography and lenses. I am reminded of the that part in the Clint Eastwood movie "The Outlaw Josey Wales," where Chief Dan George pulls a piece of hard-rock candy from his pocket and peers through it, while remarking "It's not for eating; it's just for looking through."

That's the way I feel about fine lenses; they are just for "looking through." Of course, in the process, I take photos, but it is the looking through that I like. Go figure. I used to explain it to myself that it is because I am a naturalist and I like to peer into these pristine small worlds of flowers and nature. But that is not the whole truth.

Of course that much is true, but it is possible for one truth to be hiding another, and perhaps deeper truth. This appears to be the case with me.

It is true that I am amazed and fascinated by the micro worlds of Mother Nature around me. No doubt. But it has taken me longer to realize that in my visions through the looking glass, I am seeing something more than just natural wonders. Somehow, and I wrote two books about this, I am seeing the nature of my own mind.

I should, using President Clinton's style of parsing of words, be more precise. I am not so much seeing something through the lens, as that the "seeing" itself is a resting of the mind. The very process of seeing somehow shapes what and how I see, and the resulting photograph is a product of the seeing. Does this make sense? I hope so.

In other words, it is the "seeing," the letting go in the midst of the process of looking, rather than what is out there to be seen, that is what is happening here. And a byproduct of that "seeing" are photos that reflect, not so much the outer subject as the seeing of that subject.

There is an old saying "If you lack the faculty, you can't see the phenomenon." The reverse is also true; if you can see the phenomenon you, by definition, have the faculty. And this involves

you reading here, as well. The correlate is that if you can appreciate the photos I post here (or any beauty), you are not just appreciating natural beauty, but also realizing your own faculty of seeing.

Do you understand? It is all about the "seeing," and photography is just one way I remind myself of this great gift we all share.