

How Can the Image Be Interpreted, Version 2?

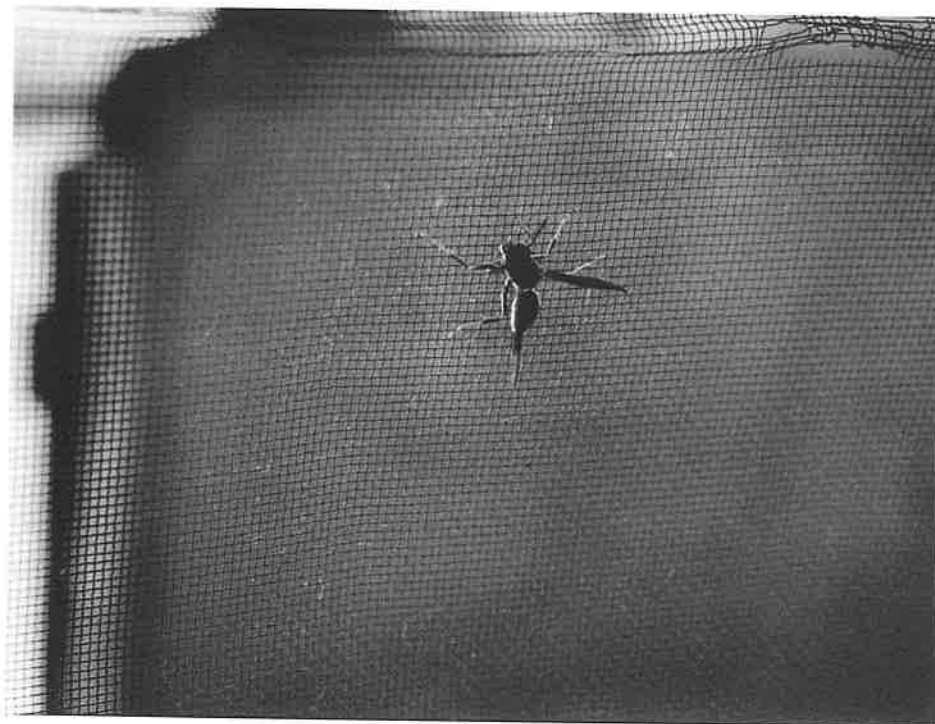
Image order Two, One, and Three: the insect, the angel, and the thousand-mile stare.

The angelic quality in the wasp: this can be considered as such because the angel is trapped by the two in-focus images, immediately following the wasp. Now we are back to empathy—the dying insect. We may be reminded of the Jains, who brush the ground so as to not crush another living being, the Indian sect that sweeps a path of non-destruction. At their end, they offer themselves in a sky burial to carrion

eating birds. So closes the circle of sustenance among those that lived and those that are still living.

The thousand-mile stare now is a meditation on the worth of a life, any life. The insignificant insect and icon of another religion are suddenly conflated into an unseen bird. A raptor, a relative of something so much more ancient than us, it is a dinosaur that will take the meat from a corpse. An arguable salute to the meteor that wiped them out and which we are not likely in need of, for we are doing this job for ourselves. I don't know enough about the Jain religion and assume that if I did, there would be some Jain humor in that.

FIGURE 34.2
Two.
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How Can the Image Be Interpreted, Version 3?

Image order Three, One, and Two: the thousand-mile stare, the angel, and insect.

Again, the in and out-of focus experience is divided. We start with contemplation rather than conclusion. We now realize the two are not only interchangeable but, in fact, we may have confused them from the start. Does contemplation result in conclusion or is it the other way around? Does conclusion result in contemplation?

The first seems to linearly make more sense, yet it is our conclusions and associated decisions that often lead to

genuine contemplation, particularly if we determine that we have made a mistake. I don't mean Monday morning quarterbacking or all that rearview mirror stuff. Rather, what if the wasp is the angel? The inventor of the polio vaccine, Jonas Salk, has often been referenced for saying, "If all insects on Earth disappeared, within fifty years all life on Earth would end. If all human beings disappeared from the Earth, within fifty years all forms of life would flourish." Who is the angel now?

Edwards, I now suspect, threw us all a challenge. "Do what you want." What a gift and what a burden. To me it also represents artistic courage.

FIGURE 34.3
Three.
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