

Control 'zone system'

Current trends in photography seem to be toward more automation in cameras, lenses, strobes, etc. We no longer think.

What a "lift" it is when an area of photography comes along that enables us to put our minds in gear and fully control the situation. After all, creativity is what photography is all about.

Such an area in black and white photography is called the zone system. It was developed by Ansel Adams in the early 1940s. I don't believe an area in photography exists where more control, flexibility and creativity are at the disposal of the photographer than the zone system.

BASICALLY, the zone system is a way of seeing the world of color around us in values of black, white and gray and then placing these values during exposure and development, in the most effective way. We then obtain the best possible negative and subsequently the optimum final print.

The zone system enables us to utilize one of the most important concepts in photography today... previsualization. This means planning the final print in the "mind's eye" before the shutter is released.

To understand the zone system, imagine a scale of 10 zones ranging from jet black through the gray values, and ending with pure white. Adams calls jet black (no detail whatsoever) zone 1 and pure white (again no detail) zone 9. All other zones would fit between these extremes. Graphically, the zones would appear as follows:

- Zone 0 — Blackest black that can be produced.
- Zone 1 — Almost black.
- Zone 2 — Very slight tonality.
- Zone 3 — First zone with noticeable detail.



photography
Monte Nagler

- Zone 4 — Very good detail.
- Zone 5 — Middle gray (all camera meters read this zone).
- Zone 6 — Very good detail.
- Zone 7 — Last zone with full texture.
- Zone 8 — Last trace of detail.
- Zone 9 — Whitest white that can be produced.

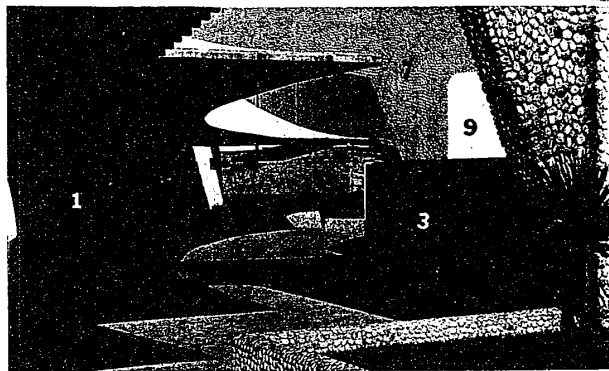
ZONES ARE directly related to F-stops. That is, any zone requires exactly twice as much exposure as the next lowest zone, anywhere in the zone scale. Each zone equals one F-stop.

All meters, either through-the-lens or hand-held, are calibrated to read resulting print of middle gray when printed normally. All other values will "fall" into their respective zones.

Of course, the zone system is much more than taking one meter reading (zone 5) and letting all other values end up where they will. There are many areas of creative refinements.

For example, average Caucasian skin falls into zone 6. So to produce an ideal negative and resulting portrait, take the meter reading off the skin (remember, always zone 5) and then increase exposure by one F-stop. This can be accomplished either by the aperture control or the shutter speed control.

What has happened is that you have just "placed"



A wide range of zones, from almost pure black (1) to almost pure white (9) is visible in Monte Nagler's

photo of the art museum in Matamoros, Mexico, just across the border from Brownsville, Tex.

the skin in zone 6 and a perfect negative is yours.

SUPPOSE YOU want to photograph your white cat.

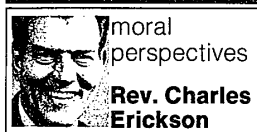
If you did what the meter says, you would end up with a negative of a gray cat (always zone 5) and would find it difficult to produce a rich looking print highlighting the white tones of your cat.

Solution: Take the meter reading, keeping in mind it is always zone 5, and then "open-up" two F-stops to zone 7. Now snap the shutter and you'll have

an ideal negative to make a print of which you'll be proud.

Dark subjects work just the opposite. Your neighbor's black cat should be metered as usual (zone 5) and then the camera "stopped down" to zone 3 in order to faithfully reproduce the cat's dark tones.

Are you beginning to understand the zone system? Can you see its creative potential? Cut out this column and save it. In two weeks, on Dec. 4, I'll discuss refinements of the zone system and how you can further use it to your advantage.



moral
perspectives
Rev. Charles Erickson

'Will power' — want to fight or solve problems?

"Can't died 12 years ago," grandmother would retort when I resisted doing a chore. The number of "years ago" shifted with the years of my age.

She was called a "strong-willed person." I realize I haven't heard anyone called that for a long time.

Americans traditionally have assumed any problem can be solved by sheer grit, the energy of will power. Along with that, we have pointed moralistic fingers at anyone in trouble and denounced him for being weak-willed.

That has changed, rather gradually, with the birth and growth of academic psychology. By now it has filtered down to most of us that our actions are caused by a variety of energy sources in and around us. We do not accomplish everything we think we will do, and sometimes very little of it.

THESE DAYS we have a wiser view of ourselves and others. We try to look at the whole person. We respect feelings as much as thoughts. We honor attitude as much as conviction. The old division of a person into body, mind, and heart has been pulled together. Many view the spirit as the crucial power in the whole person.

With our enthusiasm about wholeness, we need to be careful not to slight any part. Will, which used to be our only concern in morality, is being given too little regard.

A negative illustration clarifies. When we have the will to fight, sooner or later we pick a scrap and somebody calls our bluff. This

is frightening when applied to nations. One retired general has gone so far as to say "a nuclear war would only carry us back to the level of living of the 1920s, and that is not so bad." Any school child knows the aftermath of nuclear war will not be that simple.

UNFORTUNATELY, MUCH political rhetoric is a huffing and puffing about our national will to fight, and to win. Defense spending doesn't sound like peace keeping when it is touted as demonstrating the will to be superior. Some politicians sound like bullies at school recess.

Measuring defense by "spending" is part of the naive notion that problems are solved by throwing money at them. Yes, money is needed, but the measure is how people and nations are involved with each other.

We need a will to do problem-solving together. We need a will to have a security based on mutual interests. We need a bond of fighting problems instead of each other.

A study of wars between major powers from 1861 to 1965 is astounding. It reveals that "dispute preceded by an arms race escalated to war 23 out of 28 times, while disputes not preceded by an arms race resulted in war only three out of 71 times."

The magnitude of proposed defense spending has a clear result: it builds a will for war.

THE PROBLEM of terrorism is similar. Our acceptance of horror is revealed in news, saying a group "claims responsibility for the bombing" instead of "accepts blame for the destruction."

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