

action between us has occurred. If we know them well, or at least trust their intentions, we may be more comfortable letting them "catch" us unposed than if we are not certain about their purposes or expectations. Regardless, most of us will, perhaps unconsciously, want to compare the picture that was taken with the one we had imagined in our mind. It is human nature to scan dozens of photographs of parties, family gatherings, and the like, unconsciously looking most for our own image, to compare it with how we thought we would or should appear.

We don't usually view photos of ourselves and think "That's my friend's version of how I look." Rather we look at those snapshots and think "That's me! That's what I really look like," forgetting that we are seeing through another person's perceptual filters. Particularly if we are dissatisfied with the image, we will often turn our criticism inward and perceive ourselves as *being* unattractive, clumsy, unlovable, and so forth, instead of recognizing that we are only viewing one split-second of our life's possibilities pulled from the flow of time surrounding it, and in addition, it is someone else's constructed version of us that we are examining. Although some people prefer not to look at photos of themselves, or are quite adamant about not wanting to be photographed at all (both of which might imply deep psychological process about self-perception or self-esteem), most people are interested in seeing how they appear in photographs.

While reading this sentence, ask yourself the following question: if you knew you were having your photograph taken at this very moment by a friend, by a stranger, by someone you trust (or don't), would you still be in exactly the same physical position or frame of mind? It is likely that the idea of a camera pointed at you makes you suddenly self-aware. You are probably more conscious of yourself and your body. To the degree that you are aware of the camera, it is an invasion into the ordinary flow of your life and personal privacy. Taking someone's picture without their permission is always to some degree an act of violation, no matter how well-intended. The intrusion is always there in the form of objectification, no matter how innocent the photographer's desire to possess the image. Even when the subject is willing and the photographer's goal honorable, there is a shift of interpersonal power that puts a relationship out of its natural balance.

"Accidental" metaphoric extensions of us in the form of our personal surroundings, background environment, and other people are simulta-