

EXCERPT FROM INTIMATIONS

Both artifacts and the natural world have served as subject matter, or rather, object matter for my camera. But the mystery of the human psyche has never been far from my ambitions. I have been absorbed by the challenge of capturing a fleeting glimpse of the elusive realms of the mind, the source of both our fears and our miraculous creative capacities. Over the years, my reflections have gravitated to three sources of inspiration and insight into The Great Mystery: the collective unconscious, mysticism, and the order/chaos synergy.

Early on, I found that certain natural forms and even tonal transitions could elicit strong but evanescent emotional responses. In trying to fathom this peculiar phenomenon, I was led to Carl Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, a well-worn source of inspiration for modernist painters. Ironically, post-modern art has trended away from the metaphysical towards the mundane during the very period in which biological research has actually provided support for Jung's conjecture. There is now ample evidence, though some may dispute it, that complex behavior, instincts for example, can be coded in genomes. Also, indications are that current genomes embody the story of their whole evolutionary experience, although we cannot as yet "read" this history with any degree of assurance. It seems plausible, then, that our responses to visual stimuli are conditioned by our evolutionary experience without our conscious awareness. It is entirely possible, therefore, that my inexplicably strong emotional response to apparently abstract images is an unconscious perception that bypasses normal consciousness and resonates with images or forms in the collective unconscious. There may be other dimensions to the Mystery as well.

Mystical experience has become rather unfashionable in our professedly rational world. It is often linked to religious experience, and this is certainly one of its manifestations. A more encompassing meaning is simply the perception or poignant intuition of the deep connectedness of all things. Physics has always sought to find the underlying connectedness of the natural world so my attraction to these ideas may be quite natural. The field of ecology has shown the ultimate connectedness of organisms, large and small, living on this planet. Biological research has discovered the connectedness of our very genome with that of "lowly" bacteria and viruses. Mysticism also happens to be the basis of a very old approach to artistic expression. The richness of human experience can defy direct approaches. Literature and poetry often seek to express the ineffable through allegory and metaphor. Music touches us in a way that defies verbal explanation. Art has its own unique idioms of meaning that can both depend on and be beyond literal subject. Many of my images strive to embrace and celebrate mysticism in this sense but also seek to express meaning on yet another level as well.

Throughout history, civilization has viewed chaos as something to be reviled and feared. Yet, biological science now recognizes the vital relationship between order and chaos. Order is necessary for stability; chaos is necessary as a source of new modes of being—the very enabler of evolution. Since the survival of organisms is continually being threatened by changes in environment, order without the creative influence of chaos is a prescription for stasis and death. Thus, life survives only by the symbiosis between order and chaos. I believe that an equivalent symbiosis exists between order and chaos in the human psyche and is manifested by the interplay of rationality and irrationality. Chaotic thinking, or irrationality, is the creative source which must be balanced by rationality to produce both psychological stability and growth. One cannot listen to a Bach fugue and fail to sense this vital relationship. I often see my artwork as a celebration of this dance between rationality and irrationality, between order and chaos.