

'A lucid and groundbreaking synthesis' — Stanislav Grof



THE ARCHETYPAL COSMOS

Rediscovering the Gods in Myth, Science and Astrology

KEIRON LE GRICE

‘The Archetypal Cosmos is a brilliant, meticulous synthesis of revolutionary advances on three fronts: depth psychology, new paradigm science, and archetypal astrology. Le Grice has a gift, perhaps even a genius, for extremely clear assessments, expositions, and formulations of complex ideas — all grounded in a deeper vision which makes this clarity possible.

— Richard Tarnas, author of *The Passion of the Western Mind* and *Cosmos and Psyche*

‘The radically expanded cosmological perspective that Keiron Le Grice has set out in The Archetypal Cosmos reflects a paradigm shift of enormous relevance for the future of psychology and psychotherapy. Le Grice has performed an invaluable service in carefully thinking through and articulating a spiritually informed view of the cosmos that integrates these developments ... A lucid and groundbreaking synthesis.’

— Stanislav Grof, author of *Psychology of the Future* and *When the Impossible Happens*

‘Keiron Le Grice’s book is a fantastic achievement, combining complex theories from leading figures in psychology and the physical sciences. With both the excellence of the writing and the high-powered nature of the ideas, The Archetypal Cosmos is destined to be an essential element in the contemporary planetary canon.’

— Brian Swimme, Professor of Cosmology, California Institute of Integral Studies

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Keiron Le Grice

Floris Books

To Kathryn

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input to the text. This book is dedicated to her.

KLG

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*The honour of the gods has been
Too long, too long invisible*

Friedrich Hölderlin

Introduction: Parallel Frontiers

The mystery of the night sky, those enigmatic passages of slowly but steadily moving lights among the fixed stars, had delivered the revelation, when charted mathematically, of a cosmic order, and in response, from the depths of the human imagination, a reciprocal recognition had been evoked. A vast concept took form of the universe as a living being in the likeness of a great mother, within whose womb all the worlds, both of life and death, had their existence.

Joseph Campbell

The seat of the soul is there, where the inner and outer worlds meet.

Novalis

Staring into the vastness of space we behold a great and fathomless mystery. The night sky evokes a sense of immeasurable depth and inconceivable expanse, of timelessness and the infinite, of the terror of the dark unknown and the enticing lure of the still-to-be-experienced. Simultaneously, it impresses upon us the enigma of our ultimate origins and the promise of our distant future. The universe, we sense, is both our source and our goal, our beginning and our end. The evolving context of life itself, it is the originating ground of all things.

Throughout history the vision of the starry firmament has captivated the mythic imagination, inspiring feelings of awe and wonder in all those who gaze with open hearts and minds to the vast darkness whence all life came. The night sky has stimulated our deepest spiritual yearnings and, in the great civilizations past, it was revered as the sacred kingdom of the gods, the heavenly domain in which the souls of the dead found their divine resting place. The encompassing background to the unfolding human drama, the sky has ever been a symbol of the transcendent spiritual power that lies above and beyond the personal sphere of human existence.

Thousands of years ago it was, no doubt, a similar experience of the night sky that compelled our ancestors to envisage the universe as the all-embracing womb of the Great Mother goddess within which all life springs forth and to which all individual forms will, finally, return. Even today, for all the ingenious technological developments and great cultural achievements of modern civilization, we retain a sense of this primordial intuition of our deep mystical identity and mythic relationship with the universe. If we can set aside our more limiting rational preconceptions, we can recognize in the mystery of space something of the mystery of our own deepest being.

From the very beginnings of civilization in the third or fourth millennium BCE, the

heavens were the great focal point of mathematics and mythology, of philosophy and the arts, and of science and religion. With the development of celestial mathematics, early astronomy and astrology — then a single discipline — became the catalyzing force behind the birth of human civilization itself in the ancient city states of Mesopotamia, where religion, science, and writing first emerged. Since that time, the celestial realm has been studied and explicated by the scientific mind, its planetary movements tracked and modelled mathematically, its laws of force and motion observed, measured, calculated, and abstracted.

In recent decades, the dawn of the Space Age, heralded by those first astonishing rocket flights out of the Earth's atmosphere into the darkness beyond, stirred the collective imagination, revitalizing humanity's enduring fascination with the heavens. Telescopic space exploration has since bestowed upon us stupendous images of the far reaches of our solar system, of the birth and death of stars, of black holes, and of spiral galaxies — of a universe of inconceivable magnitude, complexity and mystery, that has forced upon us a radical revision of all our previous cosmological assumptions. Closer to home, space exploration has also afforded us a dazzling new vantage point of the Earth, bringing images of a seamless unitary sphere, a luminous living planet glowing in the darkness of boundless space.

This global vision, made possible by the rapid technological advances of our time, is in some sense representative of our new expanded global perspective of life in all its forms on our planet. With access to information about all parts of the world and all times of history, we have at our fingertips a wealth of knowledge far surpassing that of any other period. Surveying the great chronicles of history, we can see our own era, our moment in time, in its rightful perspective as a culmination of all that has gone before, rather than a negation of the past, and a coming together of all cultures, all forms of knowledge and art, all religions, myths, and philosophies. Our vantage point gives us a sweeping view of our evolutionary past. We can see all streams of history flowing together. We can appreciate how every event and every life has contributed in some small way to where we now stand. For all the problems confronting us in the world today, we find ourselves in a uniquely privileged position. Yet with this privilege comes responsibility and challenge, for our time also seems to be one of critical, even epochal, transition heralded by many factors and indicators: ecological, economic, political, technological, psychological, cultural, and spiritual. We are living with the decline and dissolution of the old order, with the tumult and uncertainty of a new birth. The need for an orienting context to guide us through these many changes has become urgent.

As our vision has expanded outwards into the dark infinity of space, so too modern physics has probed deep within the microscopic world of the atom, to the quantum realm, that mysterious underlying reality in which many of our ordinary concepts and categories, such as space and time, cause and effect, subject and object, utterly break down. And at the same time the modern mind has also turned its gaze upon itself in the continuing endeavour to comprehend the inner dimension of human experience. Whether through the trance of the shaman, the spiritual quest and illumination of the mystic, the vision of the philosopher-poet, and, more recently, through the new disciplines of depth and transpersonal psychology, human beings have sought to make sense of the workings of the human soul or psyche. Here we have discovered a world that is just as mysterious as space