

## THE MYSTERY OF CREATION with RICHARD GROSSINGER, Ph.D.

JEFFREY MISHLOVE, Ph.D.: Hello and welcome. Our topic today is "The Mystery of Creation." How is it that we human beings on this planet have precipitated out of the vast emptiness of the cosmos, or perhaps out of the debris of ancient stars and galaxies? And isn't it interesting to notice how we project our deepest dreams, our myths, our archetypal images onto the night sky about us? With me today is Dr. Richard Grossinger, author of *The Night Sky*, and also *Planet Medicine* -- an anthropologist, and publisher of North Atlantic Books in Berkeley, California. Welcome, Richard.

RICHARD GROSSINGER, Ph.D.: Thank you.

MISHLOVE: It's a pleasure to have you here. You know, it's interesting how astronomy as a science has discovered so much about the universe. We can look at galaxies that are millions, even billions, of light years away, using our probes. And yet for all we know about the world around us, there's an essential mystery to it, how it even got there in the first place. It seems as if we live in a kind of paradoxical situation, surrounded both by knowledge and mystery, and perhaps lost between those two poles.

GROSSINGER: Well, I think that's true, and one of the interesting things about tracing, for instance, the universe back to an original explosion, out of which supposedly all differentiation into matter and form comes, is that it doesn't really answer the question of creation, because creation then must have preceded that. When we talk about the big-bang origin of the universe, which is the current astronomical fantasy, we sort of slip out of the notion that we're talking about creation, even though we pretend that we are. Astronomers will say things like, well, maybe the universe contracted into that little spot, and then it exploded, and it keeps doing that cyclically, and so forth.

MISHLOVE: Or I've heard astronomers say it's not meaningful to ask what happened before the big bang, because there was no time before the big bang.

GROSSINGER: Right. But in a certain sense it is meaningful to us, because there's an aspect of us which is timeless, which doesn't need to know about time. You know the old Freudian line, "There's no time in the unconscious." I think we intuitively understand that the beginning of all things has something to do with our own unconscious processes.

MISHLOVE: And there we project all of our unconscious processes out into space itself.

GROSSINGER: Well, it's the biggest kind of tablet on which to do it, and I think that that's why cosmology and the night sky are somewhat synonymous. It's not that we don't concern ourselves with origins locally, but it's mainly in looking out into this big, dark hole with these brilliant, luminescent lights in it, that even long before the advent of science we had a sense that we were looking into cosmology, and before that it was called mythology. And there's no other place to look that suggests the same thing.

MISHLOVE: I'm very intrigued by the sort of popular occult notion of the astral plane -- you know, the realm of dreams and of mental images. And yet the word astral refers to the stars itself, and I think at one time was literally thought to be the realm of the stars and planets.

GROSSINGER: Right. I myself sort of thought differently about that at different times. Probably now I tend to think of astral things as being very internal -- not internal completely, as opposed to external, but I don't anymore think of, for instance, people going and visiting the astral planes of Mars and Jupiter. I feel as though they're talking about something contained within terrestrial tradition. They're talking about the earth and the same kind of archetypal version of the planets that astrology uses. Why does it contain in it the same root as astronomy? Why is the night sky contained in the astrum as well? And I think one very simple thing that we have to think about in relation to this is that there is no dividing point at which the sky lets off and the earth begins. The sky comes down and merges with the earth, even as gravity comes down and becomes the ground of the earth, and everything on the earth is stellar product, refined by the earth's particular climate and chemistry.

MISHLOVE: Virtually all of the molecules and particles in our bodies have originated --

GROSSINGER: So there isn't that division, to begin with. But also there's not a simple division between the infinity -- maybe the best way to say it is the infinity of the universe, and the infinity that presents itself internally as the mind and as the unconscious. So as people begin to go outward inwardly, they think of it in outward terms. And maybe there even is a connection between the two -- maybe there is a connection between the stars of the astrum and the stars of the sky itself.

MISHLOVE: Well, I find it fascinating what we have done, particularly with the planets -- that those dead, lifeless bodies that circle around the sun have become named for the deities of ancient traditions, and a powerful folklore in the form of astrology has been built up around that, which is still very much alive today.

GROSSINGER: Yes, and the issue is, does that have anything to do with the planets themselves? That's the issue certainly that astronomers are always coming back to. I think anybody who saw Paul Sagan on *Cosmos* realized how much almost perverse pleasure he took in mocking that notion. And probably in some literal sense he was right. Years and years ago I interviewed him, and got totally locked on this dilemma, when I was young enough that I didn't quite know how to get out of it. And he kept saying there's no connection between the god Mars and the planet Mars, absolutely none at all; it's a total fantasy. And I think you have to begin with that premise, that there is no connection; but on the other hand, we don't exactly know. Images that are that old, and that come that close to archetypal notions, really sort of grasp at truths that we have no access to in any other way. So the connection between astrological images and astronomical bodies, whereas I think it's probably best to start from the argument that these are two separate things that happened to come together to make up a mythological system, I don't think we should dismiss the idea that on a deeper level there might be meaningful connections, on a level that transcends science as we know it.

MISHLOVE: And certainly as an anthropologist one would have to say that this is a powerful structure within the human imagination which has a force of its own.

GROSSINGER: Yes, and to say that without diminishing it, without having the only being implied -- that is, that it's only in the mind, it's only within the human system that it has meaning. It is within the human system that it has meaning, but we don't know what the human system is, or what it extends to.

MISHLOVE: Well, there's a sense in which it seems appropriate to me that the physical universe, as known by astronomy, which is a vast and powerful science, should somehow be embedded within a larger mythological system, because it developed that way historically, and there's a sense, if one looks at the mind itself, in which all we know of the cosmos is known inside the mind, is in fact embedded in mythology, in terms of the history of the mind itself.

GROSSINGER: Right. And you don't ever get to extricate one entirely from the other. Astronomers are always trapped within their own history, the history by which they come to speak about the sky. One of the things I've thought about in relation to this a great deal is the fact that descriptions of the sky seem to reflect cultural patterns themselves. They certainly did in ancient times, and to what degree we know of them in non-Western cultures, but they even do now. I'm not convinced that there's not a relationship between the types of cataclysms that are routinely "discovered" in the sky, and the dilemmas that are most serious on the earth. For instance, the discovery that the universe is not only random in its movements, but incredibly destructive, self-destructive -- whole galaxies wiped out, seemingly, by explosions -- that it's expanding, and that time and space are relative within it; that objects have no basis on which their value can be determined, or their concrete reality can be determined -- they're being transformed. All of this reflects the kinds of changes our culture is going through.

MISHLOVE: Kind of a nihilistic view of the universe as being uncaring towards us.

GROSSINGER: Not that it should necessarily have to be softened and made to be caring, but just that in a sense we are only seeing one aspect of a larger reality. And though it would seem as though science has been very fair, and to a large degree it has -- and I should add as an aside it never would have developed in any other way, and we can be grateful for its dogmatism in some sense, because that's what separated it from the occult. I'm sure historically it needed to disentangle itself from

mythological images, and so for that reason we actually are privileged to have representatives of us walk on the moon; we have photographs of the moons of Jupiter and Saturn and Uranus, and all these things have happened because of the dogmatism. So no problem with that; no problem with understanding the limitations of cause and effect within technology. Only a problem arises with the claim to universalism with that, to a claim that says that's the only possible way to look at things, and it's the only possible way to understand who and what we are.

MISHLOVE: And that therefore, because now that science has made its discoveries about the cosmos, that the old myths are just totally to be considered invalid.

GROSSINGER: Right. And thus they're taken away, and the truths that they express, which are as central to an understanding of who we are and how we got here, are devalued in such a way that we aren't able to use them. So we're cut off from a certain aspect of the truth.

MISHLOVE: I think it's a question of confusing categories, in a way, perhaps -- the difference between what is real and what is factual. I recall one of my mentors, Jean Houston, used to like to say about myths, "Myths are things that never are, but are always becoming" -- that they have an existence of their own, independent of space-time, even though they are projected onto space-time.

GROSSINGER: Yes, well, I think that what we see is that science creates myths as lovely as the myths it's destroyed, in some way, only it doesn't think of them as myths. Thus quasars and pulsars and Einstein's view of relativity all are the sources of magnificent mythologies and very powerful images that have been integrated into our language and into our world view. And science is unable to stop creating these myths, because after all -- I don't know how else to say it, but finally it comes down to people using these things.

MISHLOVE: And we have always had, I think, amongst leading-edge scientists, certain myths about the mystery of the universe itself. For example, gravity has never really been adequately explained. It's this mysterious action at a distance. Or the notion of the ethers permeating space.

GROSSINGER: And it's no accident that when Newton discovered gravity, or I should say defined gravity, that he described it as the force of God, because in fact all of its attributes corresponded to the understanding of God of his time -- the action at a distance, the ability to influence every molecule equally. And there's the kind of latter-day fantasy of gravity as the fourth or fifth or however many dimensions you can imagine. But to follow this idea a little more closely of who scientists are, and then maybe we can move away from it, I think that there's an interesting kind of -- well, maybe it's even a mythology of its own that goes on. A person who's involved in science is trained in an academic discipline. Usually they're blindered a bit from other academic disciplines. Let's just use astronomy, then, as the example. They get very involved in the mathematics that both lead to and arise from the instrumentation they use to make discoveries. And more and more, they become bought into the reality of it, because they bought into it professionally. And although one can make light of that and say, "Well, professionally is not the same as personally," people take their jobs seriously.

MISHLOVE: That's right.

GROSSINGER: So they go and they work on this view of the universe, and then part of the going mythology is that that's reality -- to describe the physical universe is reality. So more and more, this notion of the universe made up of -- I think it's generally understood, so we don't have to redescribe it, but the evolution of planets and suns, the way in which galaxies form and then planetary systems -- all of this becomes a statement of reality, of the ultimate reality, the reality of who we are and where we come from. And the answer to that question is we arise from chance interactions of particles, and then chance interactions of primitive living forms, to skip through a bunch of steps.

MISHLOVE: Which really is in some ways a very impoverished view.

GROSSINGER: Well, it becomes an impoverished view. It has its own beauty to it. In fact, at the time that Darwin first suggested it, natural selection was a magnificent thing to consider, because he pointed out that all this could happen and nothing else was necessary. It could evolve of its own internal nature. There was a kind of anti-dogmatic, against the dogma of theology, contained in that. You didn't need some sort of gross intercession in the universe. The universe was involved in genesis moment to moment to moment. It was a much more powerfully spiritual universe than the most common theological one that it displaced. But following this thread again, as to what it is that scientists do, they build up this image; in a sense they buy into it without realizing that they buy into it. And seemingly at the same time that they deplete the night sky of its mythology, the creation of its mythology, and should make us incredibly humble, there's a certain arrogance contained in the knowledge, in the information, because they've reduced it to something that they can describe. They've reduced it to something manageable, and their professional role arises from that form that they've created. A parallel thing often happens with people who are heavily committed to a spiritual view of the universe. They can become as dogmatic --

MISHLOVE: And arrogant.

GROSSINGER: And as arrogant. And I don't think either of those are what necessarily is the most interesting. What's most interesting is the point at which you don't know -- at which the mystery allows you to look into both. I think at heart that the most materialist astronomers, just by the law of denial and the nature of the shadow, the archetype of the shadow, must suppress within them some incredible spiritual vision that just isn't acknowledged in conscious thought, and it may slip in, but it's not there. Likewise, I think that an overspiritualized cosmos, an over-optimistic cosmos, doesn't allow in the kinds of nihilism and cynicism and doubt that we need in the modern world to understand the harsh reality that also exists. And that's why I'm interested in using scientific forms, understanding that they evolved for good reasons and are useful, and yet trying to work through them and not get stuck or stopped on them.

MISHLOVE: It's a delicate issue, I suppose, because it has to do with how much of our selves is it legitimate to project onto the cosmos about us.

GROSSINGER: And even if we should say none, it doesn't stop us from doing it.

MISHLOVE: I'm most intrigued by the UFO reports. It seems that that's one of the most powerful mythologies that we have in contemporary times.

GROSSINGER: And it seems to be getting worse and worse.

MISHLOVE: How so?

GROSSINGER: Well, maybe it's just my fantasy, but I had the sense like twenty years ago certainly, and maybe even as recently as five or ten years ago, that the prejudice was extraterrestrials flying their ships through the earth, to do something or other having to do with examining us, describing us, observing us -- in the idealistic versions, the positive ones, preparing to help us in some way; in the negative versions, preparing to conquer us. And now we've had such a spate of reports over the last ten years in which the so-called aliens behave in absurd and contradictory ways, do things that don't fit any conventional extraterrestrial model, and also are inconsistent with each other.

MISHLOVE: So when you say things are getting worse, you mean it's becoming more bizarre.

GROSSINGER: Yes, I'm joking. I'm saying that even the simple hope of something like Close Encounters is becoming less likely, because for one we have the cattle mutilations, which are identified, anyway, with the UFOs. So then we have to in our own way try and explain why people from other worlds would come to our planet and cut open animals.

MISHLOVE: Perform apparent surgical operations, and mutilate the genitals of sheep and cows.

GROSSINGER: And that's a problem for the so-called benevolent ones, because they're not Buddhist, are they, right? If they're going to behave like that, then they have no shot at that. In fact, they seem like our worst fantasies of science gone amok -- that is, manipulative, uncompassionate, secretive.

MISHLOVE: Well, the range of reports seems to cover the whole spectrum, actually.

GROSSINGER: Right, because then you also have ones that are like almost spiritual. You have to wonder whether what you're hearing is an account of a UFO in a celestial sense, or what you're hearing is something having more to do with a spirit communication from the dead, or --

MISHLOVE: An angel descending from on high -- the vision of Ezekiel. Well, many researchers have gone back to the spiritual literature and to the folk literature --

GROSSINGER: Right, and said, well, these have been here all the time, and the notion of UFOs has really come in with our own space flight.

MISHLOVE: Gods from outer space is a powerful myth.

GROSSINGER: And then most recently you have -- and I don't know whether these reports were epidemic before, but maybe they seem epidemic now -- the reports of UFO abductions, of people taken aboard UFOs, the women who claim their babies were stolen. Whole books have been written about this phenomenon. Those extraterrestrials have nothing seemingly to do with the ones that have been showing up in northern Europe who claim to be from the Pleiades, and who have a much more seemingly benign approach.

MISHLOVE: And that case is also greatly associated with fraud at this point.

GROSSINGER: With fraud, and then also, why do those ones and several others talk about the universe in such simplistic terms -- talk about empires? I mean, it's like Star Trek. It's almost ridiculous.

MISHLOVE: What do you make of this chaotic jumble?

GROSSINGER: Well, I'm taken with it. I'm taken with the fact that things have gotten that confusing. To add one other point to it, which makes it even harder to know what to make out of it, what are so many of them doing being humanoid? And also, why would there be breeding experiments being carried out with us, with humans, given that any creatures that arose on another planet in another solar system, or even in this solar system, would not only not follow our evolutionary lines, but would not even be based on DNA? So how is it possible for them to breed with us? Could they really be aliens from far away and have that capacity? And if they're not, if they share some history with us, what does that mean?

MISHLOVE: Let me try and answer that question for just a moment -- and we're running out of time, so I'll have to be brief. But it seems to me that what we may be experiencing in this chaotic myth that's emerging is in effect a reflection of the chaos within our own society, within our own cultures -- not that these events are truly mythological. They may be actual from my perspective -- parapsychological projections of the unconscious -- and in effect, they're real in some measurable sense, and yet they come from within us, are a mirror of ourselves.

GROSSINGER: So that's a point of view, right. I'm not willing yet to accept that there also aren't forms out there, because once you take that position that you're taking, you kind of beg off the other. You say, well, I'm going to say that they're not really extraterrestrials; there are just too many problems with them being extraterrestrials.

MISHLOVE: Maybe there are four or five different explanations which all account for a piece of the puzzle.

GROSSINGER: Right -- or four or five different puzzles. That wouldn't be surprising. Remember the parapsychologist Jule Eisenbud saying, "Everything is still patent pending." He said, "Until people can explain how certain asserted things have happened" -- you know, the types of things that arise within paranormal experiments -- "you can't put a lock and key on science." This is the opening that we sort of implied earlier in our talk, and that we glanced over when we touched on the astral, and so forth -- that there are apparently energies, or causes and effects, that don't fit into the existing pattern, and that suggest other patterns, other causes. It's hard even to have a language for it, and be fair to the phenomena.

MISHLOVE: Richard Grossinger, we're just about out of time now, so I'll wrap things up. I want to thank you for sharing with me the breadth of your knowledge of this area, and your willingness to attempt to synthesize these diverse points of view, from astrology to ancient mythology and astronomy. In your work you even integrate this with pop music, and I think you're a very courageous and brilliant intellect. It's been a real pleasure. Thank you for being with me.

GROSSINGER: Thank you. It's been a pleasure talking with you.