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The Precarious Position of Astrology in a Pandemic

Featured in The New York Times (May 9, 2020), “Will Coronavirus Kill Astrology?” by Hayley Phelan considers that some astrologers may have been off the mark when it comes to predicting a pandemic. This piece explores some of the projections speculated by popular astrologers like Susan Miller and Chani Nicholas, both extremely popular in print, online, and also through their apps.

Phelan notes that Miller’s appearance on CBS New York television in January 2020 was upbeat and positive about the year ahead. “People listened when she said Capricorn would be the year’s celestial favorite,” and she goes on to include several complaints on YouTube and Instagram. Phelan also quotes Nicholas, who said, “Astrology should be in service to the moment. This pandemic is bigger than we could have foreseen, even though we did know this year was going to be challenging.”

Yet, Phelan writes, research and data analysis show a notable increase in online traffic for “astrology” and “horoscopes” during April and May 2020. “It seems followers are forgiving! Astrology for us is a consistently high-performing category across all our sites,” said Emma Rosenblum from Bustle Digital Group.

Regarding the negative reviews about Miller, Phelan notes that her readers were clamoring for more insight and information shortly afterward. Miller issued a special coronavirus report in March, where she featured information about Pluto’s influence in the time of the pandemic. Phelan wraps up her piece with these remarks: “As for the fate of the United States … Ms. Miller predicted that the virus will be raging in March, April, and May and then become weak in the summer months, only to crop back in the fall, and possibly extend as far as mid December … It’s not real. But it’s real popular.”

Netflix Releases Documentary about Walter Mercado

Prior to his death in November 2019, Puerto Rican astrologer, TV personality, and fashion icon Walter Mercado agreed to work with co-directors and producers, Cristina Costantini and Kareem Tabsch, on a Netflix documentary that examines his extraordinary life and legacy. Mucho Mucho Amor: The Legend of Walter Mercado was released on Netflix in July 2020.

A feature story about the film in Variety (July 9, 2020) acknowledged Mercado’s amazing career as a television icon for more than five decades while emphasizing the personal challenges that resulted from his fame. Perhaps the best-known struggle began in 2006 and involved a seven-year legal battle with his business partner, Bill Bakula, over who owned the rights to Mercado’s name.

At the time of the documentary’s release, the directors sat down for an interview with National Public Radio (NPR) on July 12, 2020. You can find the transcript on the NPR website at www.npr.org.

Update on the ISAR Conference

As Mercury left its retrograde, ISAR released details about the fate of its 2020 conference, “Reimagining the Future.” Given the status of COVID-19, an in-person conference with over 700 people is simply not possible, and so this year’s event is becoming two events. This decision was made in concert with ISAR members, 500 of which responded to a survey about their preferences. The September event will consist of two days of virtual webinars during the weekend of Saturday–Sunday, September 12–13, 2020. The main conference is now slated for Summer 2021. As yet, the venue and dates are not finalized, although the conference planners hope to host the event at the Westin Westminster hotel in Colorado.

Astrology’s Gift During a Time of Uncertainty

Stephanie Bouchard writes in The Lily, “Our brains are wired to reject uncertainty. It explains why astrology is taking off in the pandemic,” (July 13, 2020 at https://www.thelily.com/). Her featured piece takes a clear look at the increasing interest in astrology since the escalation of COVID-19 last winter. Several astrologers cited by Bouchard indicated that their client practices and online classes have been on the rise.

Maurice Fernandez was quoted: “It is interesting that on the one hand there is a climate of insecurity that is quite pal-
pable, but at the same time people are ready to take risks and aim for change.” British astrologer Penny Thornton shared her thoughts about how working with an astrologer might be especially helpful now. For example, in a consultation, clients are “at a point where they’re not so torn apart by the issue ... They feel more comfortable and empowered by making their own decisions.”

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Gloria Star is a professional astrologer, author, and teacher. You can learn more about her and her services at http://www.GloriaStar.com

SoftStar Muse

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Weblog News

The latest articles in my online blog at https://www.soulhealing.com/softstar.htm include “Over 100 new minor planets beyond Neptune discovered,” my extended shelter-in-place astrology software sale, a video of the Sun’s changes over a decade, tips for astrology software owners, Astrobackup for Solar Fire, a new version of the great free astrology program Astrolog 7.0, and the Solar System and Beyond poster set.

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