Dear Readers:

Let me begin with these simple words: Astrology offers an empowering platform for women. For those women who study, teach, or write about this remarkable subject, it is often a field in which they can shine brightly and independently, and be given the respect they deserve for their contribution.

Growing up and learning astrology in London from the late 1980s, I had access to some of the most remarkable astrological minds of that era (and to qualify, the learning and that era continue!). Liz Greene, Melanie Reinhart, Bernadette Brady, Pamela Crane, Darby Costello, Deborah Houlding, Sue Tompkins, and Lynn Bell were all on my doorstep teaching. Back then, though, I had no idea how fortunate I was to be learning directly from them, and I took for granted that these were remarkable women of astrology. (After all, women also made up 80–90% of astrology students in classes back then. They still do.)

I’ve always been surrounded by inspirational women friends and teachers — I can thank Venus in Aries in the 11th sextile the 1st- and 9th-house cusps for that. And even the male astrologers whose ideas resonate most with me (from Brian Clark, Steven Forrest, Richard Swatton, and Howard Sasportas to Jason Holley, Shawn Nygaard, and Adam Elenbaas) have created a body of work that demonstrates that astrology doesn’t have to stop short as a technique-driven, right/wrong, formulaic “system.” It can embrace the tradition and continue to exist as a mindful, right-brain, “feminine” art for clients and their needs.

And in an era when so much of the “free content” on the web is content-free, and people become astrologers and “influencers” overnight with little client dialogue, we must help to undo what Melanie Reinhart calls “astrological preconditioning,” and try to see beyond a narrow frame of reference. Melanie described this term in a newsletter in March 2010 as “a form of mental indigestion (chronic or acute) brought about by taking in too much astrological junk-food from various sources” — in other words, the sort of notions and prejudices that clients and students have about particular chart placements. Melanie refers to these as “awful, archaic, pre-psychological stuff, condemnatory in tone and totally without subtlety or compassion, having no sense of ‘life process.’ In short, no wisdom and no heart.”

I’ve written numerous times that natal astrology calls for fluid skills and an understanding of human nature. We both borrow and share the moment of time we base our nativity on, but it is not “us.” On our journey, we discover that we and our clients are always greater than the sum of a horoscope’s parts. The horoscope is just one map, albeit a remarkable one, that can help us to move from awareness to consciousness, and enable us to make spiritually intelligent choices that reflect who we want to become at the next moment in time.

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Letter from Editor

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The astrology that has always spoken to me is one that is soul-centred, humanistic, and focused on our inner landscape. You may want to call this approach “lunar” or “feminine” rather than “solar” or “masculine.” In an e-mail to me for this editorial, astrologer Jason Holley wrote that he prefers the terms “day” and “night” because simple, gender-derived terms feel reductive and “don’t seem to encourage complex imaginative thinking.” He reminded me that “night” and “day” are terms “so basic to our art … They are actual conditions of the sky, while gender is not … They give all the gifts of the binary without the baggage. Astrologies apprenticed to ‘night’ are those which embrace multiplicity, non-linearity, and uncertainty. [They bring] a more diffuse gaze to the chart, allow it to potentiate our imaginations and so partake of a complexity of planetary conversations much richer than can be imagined in the harsh light of day and its insistence on technique, resolution, and so-called synthesis.”

Yet we’re taught that each planet and sign of the zodiac has been assigned a gender. In one instance, though — Saturn — there’s growing belief that it was mis-assigned as masculine when it may well be a feminine god and archetype. After all, we have the seven classical planets as pairs/polarities: Sun and Moon, Venus and Mars, and Saturn (with Mercury as the nonspecific crosser of day/night, above/below). And we could consider the Moon and Saturn (and their respective opposite signs of Capricorn and Cancer) as the feminine/night/matriarchal backbone of the horoscope, with the Sun and Uranus (ruling Leo and its opposite, Aquarius, respectively) as the masculine/day/patriarchal spinal column.

Saturn’s current conjunction with Pluto (and the South Node) in feminine Capricorn suggests a reorganisation of authority and hierarchies, and the beginning of the changing of the guard. It’s a planetary combination associated with the aftermath of destruction — the subsequent reconstruction of what has been demolished or annihilated.

Such a conjunction may sound the death knell of the grip of patriarchy on various societies. And in Capricorn, it’s the wiping-out kind of institutional change that will generate new seeds for an era that will reflect the empowerment of the feminine. It’s the kind of destruction we’ve witnessed with the literal burning of Notre Dame (“Our Lady”), the demonisation yet emergence of (a new generation of) women in power, and the enormity of the recent U.S. legislature attempting to take away a woman’s right to her own body. It’s seen in the attempts to repress and to backtrack on progress made so far. But as a result, this era will likely culminate in a nonnegotiable movement (Pluto) towards embracing a more “night”/feminine leadership in the world (hopefully, in both men and women). In fact, it appears that it has to get so bad, so extreme, that everything must change at the top (Capricorn).

Back in 2016, I watched a YouTube video from psychic Danielle Egnew, who predicted that President Trump would never be elected that November because it was time for the feminine to rise and take centre stage. I was skeptical, though, because the times appeared so conservative, and she was lambasted by online trolls for her erroneous prediction. Perhaps in part as a response to the election, as Jupiter entered Scorpio a year later, the #MeToo movement dominated social media and captured the zeitgeist.

We can see the seeds of this change in the current issue of The Mountain Astrologer, with various pieces on women of consequence. There’s Kathy Rose’s article on political activist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (“AOC”), who had her first Saturn return last year, and Rae Sapp’s interview with visionary activist and astrologer Caroline Casey. Both subjects are Librans born at Saturn–Neptune conjunctions.

In the profile, Rose writes that AOC “projected her vibrant persona wearing bright red lipstick, radiating raw courage, advocating highly progressive policies, and being unabashedly outspoken and even impulsive in her idealism.” Rose understands that AOC is a leader of a “new generation of souls whose life purposes are linked with shaking up the establishment …” Kathy Rose signposts the 2020 election as a turning point, and it’s easy to anticipate a powerful chapter of AOC’s career beginning when Saturn and Neptune unite at 0° Aries (near her Moon) in February 2026.

In Rae Sapp’s interview with Caroline Casey, we read that Casey believes the Saturn–Pluto conjunction will “definitely bring a strong incentive for public discourse about what desirable leadership really is, especially as the old structures are falling and failing on every level, from bridges to cathedrals to leaders.” Casey also reflects on the earliest image for Capricorn: “a council of wise women dedicated to the next seven generations.”

Those of you who have read my compilations on individual planets in these pages will know that I often quote Caroline Casey and her book, Making the Gods Work for You (Piatkus, 1998). In her interview, Casey offers simple and profound advice to navigate these tumultuous times: “We avert ‘disaster’ (against the stars) by gathering to ‘consider’ (with the stars).”

Frank
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: Star Power
by Kathy Rose
“AOC,” the youngest woman ever elected to Congress, is blazing new trails in the early months of her career. What do her angular planets close to the Aries Point portend for her future?

Our Dangerous, Beautiful Assignment:
Trickster Tales with Caroline Casey
an interview by Rae Sapp
In an age of anxiety, Caroline Casey reminds us to find hope in humor and good company. Liberating Trickster Magic helps us to love against all odds when times are at their most dangerous — and beautiful.

Reflections on Music, Magic,
and Astrology
by Ray Grasse
What does music have in common with astrology? The planetary cycles, like the beat of a tune, play out in time. And our chart, with its harmonies and dissonances, is a symphony that we write and conduct.

All Roads Lead to This Place
by Lindsay River
This evocative allegory, extracted from the book The Knot of Time, speaks with the voices of the twelve zodiacal signs to relate how they make their unique and rich contributions to humanity.

And the Band Played On:
The Time and Life of Freddie Mercury
by Kathy Allan
The success of the movie Bohemian Rhapsody has brought Freddie Mercury, front man of the band Queen, to the forefront again. This author uses events in his all-too-short life to rectify his unknown birth time.

Women of Consequence
by Frank C. Clifford
Our Theme Section Editor introduces this issue’s theme of outstanding women by profiling ten prominent examples — women from diverse backgrounds, fields, and even eras, who have made their distinctive mark on the world.
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Mara Berendt Friedman has been creating paintings honoring the Sacred Feminine for three decades. Her imagery in inspired by the beauty of women, universal patterns and the cycles of nature. She lives with her husband on the Northern California coast. View Mara’s online gallery and her many artgift offerings at: newmoonvisions.com.