

Call and Response Chant  
from Herstar Invocation One  
1997

The melody of this invocation is an African call and response chant. I send the call, each person responds as they see fit, and *we are all free from editorial control*. I hope my call is a clear and harmonious series of notes that will catalyze creativity, and that each of our responses will guide one another in turn.

We invoke greater professional attention to, and understanding of, the relationship between feminism and astrology. Each of us is asked to respond to the leading question: *How does feminism - depending on how I define it-make a difference in my life as an astrologer?* In so doing, we are invited to offer our own conceptions of what both feminism and astrologer are.

We tend to think that we instinctively know what astrology and feminism are, and to be quite confident that our own point of view, the one we live, is the only one worth holding. So I send out a Moon Plea that we might hear one another into speech, calmly stating our infinite differences.

As initiator of this action, I would like to set a tone about feminism and astrology to which other can tune. I'm opening with a keynote that circles around my overall experience of both.

Since committing to astrology almost two years ago, I've attended 12 major conventions in the US and the UK, as well as many lectures and workshops. I've spent a fortune on tapes, books, magazines and memberships. I've had a marvelous time. Astrologers are the coolest colleagues I've ever had. My only regret is that the years I've spent as a feminist historian theologian seem to be wasted. This training is integrated into my work only in the privacy of my own musings and readings.

Within the public discourse of the professional astrological community - *with the notable exception of a small and brilliant chorus of feminist voices* - the topic of feminism seems to be mysterious, volatile, emotional, unconscious, unknown. It usually draws a blank, or a defensive response.

This climate reminds me of what it felt like 15 years ago to study classics, history and religion in a competitive university setting. Feminist theory was just getting its bearings: professors had not yet been trained to spot and deconstruct the androcentric, patriarchal, monotheistic assumptions that stood as the first principles of virtually all academic disciplines. Sensing the future perhaps, they were uneasy about their ignorance. I also found this atmosphere at pontifical universities in Rome, although the kindly monks were blissfully content with pre-herstory.

Based on experiences since UAC '95, I assert that a similar blind spot about feminism exists within the mainstream international astrological community today. Blind spots are always visionary portals, and this one is enormous. Let me describe it.

Perhaps we can agree, for the moment, upon a working definition of astrology. I will define astrology as the supreme intelligence of codes for cosmic navigation and healing, codes based in the memory of natural laws and cycles of creation, codes that have merged visible and invisible realms for our ancestors in practically all cultures, dating back to at least as long as written records attest. *Astrology is the most direct and unambiguous channel into the history of religion on our planet.*

Now, did you know that *feminist insight has transformed and transmuted the disciplines of history and religion* during the past few decades? No doubt, feminist analysis, research, intuition, journeying, meditation, pilgrimage, ritual is *already engaged* in recasting and regenerating astrology. *How has this been done? Are we fully aware of what we are doing? Are we attentive to one another's work? What are our dreams for the future?*

## **Feminist Genius**

The Touchstone of this Invocation, taken from THE PASSION OF THE WESTERN MIND, describes how feminist inquiry calls into question assumptions that have governed academic field for generations. Disciplines are being restructured at their most fundamental level. As Tarnas writes: *"...the implications, both intellectual and social, of feminist analyses are so fundamental that their significance is only beginning to be realized by the contemporary mind."*

Genius at work! After just a few generations of access to Western higher education and the professions, we are already the leaders of a revolution in consciousness that, in my view, may outflank the Copernican shift.

Feminist scholars have explained the relativity of human historical and religious understanding as follows:

1. Human and divine stories and symbols are keyed to our own point of planetary evolution. Our grids of history, as well as religious revelations and shamanic points of reception, are bound by psychic coordinates flowing from specific cultures.
2. Obviously, sexual structures are distributions of life energy that correspond to patterns of species reproduction, but *they are so much more*. They map to specific cultural orientations to fields of human experience, Nature and the divine. Sex, social order, Earth and our myriad invisible worlds are mutually interpenetrating and co-evolutionary realities. *Sexual imbalance is the core medium, the gut level, of planetary imbalance.*

Feminism deconstructs and regenerates human culture at its heretofore hidden root, the realm of the household, where we live, sleep, mate, raise our young, where we grow and

grow others. The household, historically a largely female matrix of incarnational process, embodies the physics and metaphysics of birth and the consequences of birth, in human culture. Energies and consequences of birth take up lots of room. Birth is spacious, it radiates into the world at large, it is fruitful, it multiplies endlessly in fractal-like recursions and mutations. The household matrix of incarnational process is cellular in nature, but galactic in identity and scope.

*Feminist scholars and mystics investigate the household matrix and the motherlode of codes which human beings have historically tended to follow in order to relate to one another and to the rest of the universe.* Our search is interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and attuned to equinoctial precession.

We ferret out the sexual, reproductive, economic, religious and artistic modes in which the matrix has been socially and symbolically structured, within dominator cultures endemic to the ages of Aries and Pisces, as well as the gynocentric ages of Cancer, Gemini, and Taurus.

## **Feminist Courage**

My guess is that astrologers—especially male astrologers—shy away from studying the genius of the feminist tradition because it is emotionally painful. If one takes the topic personally, it is painful.

Woman-identified creators in innumerable fields of human activity—historians, theologians, poets, mothers, psychologists, linguists, archeologists, artists, healers, sociologists economists, environmentalists, novelists, scientists, musicians—have stubbornly focused for the past few decades on a deeply disturbing grid of inquiry:

1. The immense, incontrovertible and brutal history of male domination;
2. The signs of how this violence is tightly held within the female line, how it circulates within the company of women and passed to children;
3. The habitual way in which violence against women also afflicts beings and entities perceived to be female in essence, so that entire races, cultures, Earth itself have been regarded as essentially female objects, to be romanticized perhaps, but more often considered to be devoid of subjectivity and dignity, scorned, colonized, plundered and destroyed.

This hideous gridlock stretches back in time, saturating so many of the centralized cultures of which we have written evidence. Moreover, it operates with tremendous force today around the world.

Yes, the feminist legacy is demanding. With its ostensibly dispirited, pedantic critique, one that stretches from the most intimate domain of sexual identity to the global reach of corporate capitalism and warfare, feminism might feel like a mean mother, or a scary witch. Well, love your mother, 'tis the season of the witch. Our stomping grounds are painful only from a superficial point of view, that of the ego-bound personality. Feminist phenomena are galactic dances of purification, and the ritual hours are well underway.

*Feminist fusion means that the elemental pain of a profoundly dualistic planet is revolving into a unitized, yet dyadic and ceaseless mutating multidimensionality.* The exploding supernova of feminism, owing to the specificities of its physical, emotional, mental and spiritual fire, is the most comprehensive series of emanations pressing us toward the proper planetary fulfillment of the ethical imperatives of the Piscean age: loving empathy for and symbiosis with, all living creatures and habitats.

Realization of this ideal, however, has little to do with happy platitudes. It takes courage and hard, dirty, unpopular work. Global feminist activism is slowly, yet inexorably, liberating the female sector of the species from slavery in terms of our sexual, procreative, domestic, economic, and emotional energies. Gaining support from governments and organized religions has been a tale of uneven progress; the movement is now provisionally accepted by various religious and political bodies.

Actually, remarkable progress has been made, considering the conservative resistance generated by the cornerstone of all other liberation struggles: the traditional family unit. For all the work that females have done on behalf of their relatives, the family unit has not stood as much of a structural ally for females working to improve the lives of women and girls.

Feminist activism does not restrict itself to the fate of females. Since people inspired by feminist values pay attention to nets of domination—race, class, sexual orientation, age, disability --- they tend to think and act on behalf of everyone and everything, in reverence with all life.

Feminist activism has therefore been central to an enormous spectrum of progressive crusades during the past few centuries, from Susan B. Anthony leading the petition drive on behalf on the anti-slavery 13<sup>th</sup> amendment campaign, to Rachel Carson launching the ecology movement with Silent Spring, the anti-nuclear women's camp of Greenham Common. Examples along these lines are simply endless.

## **Feminist Integrity**

Due to the harshness of struggle, groups of feminists—like groups of astrologers—tend to get stuck in hierarchal fundamentalism. By exploiting memories of oppression, or caring more about belief systems and defending the right answer than about Earth and its creatures, we fall from integrity.

The tonic that quickens and clears these emotions for me is reincarnation, the cyclical passage one makes between female and male forms of being. I cannot prove the existence of reincarnation, but it seems to me, and to a great many others, that this is how things work.

Reincarnation helps me live more lightly as a feminist; it props my third eye open and gives me access to other worlds. I remember one point in my studies long ago, I felt as though I wanted to die from what I learned about the history of women, and from my hopelessness about ever making a difference. What ego!

Cyclical passing between female and male frees me from the burden of tragedy. It makes no sense to blame males, or females, or church and state, or history, or anything, for the staggering enormity of pathology and injustice. I've undoubtedly oppressed women – as well as beings and entities conventionally perceived to be females in essence – like pretty much everyone else. As a wounded species growing a new set of wings, we're all in this together, and in more ways than one. We are responsible, and beginning to respond.

Another remedy for hierarchal fundamentalism and trigger for psychic integrity is the activation of divine Being as female. Centering and grounding within female energy as Source, comfortable in our bodies and with one another, women are bringing a fresh species of deep space, of pure, unbounded knowingness, to Earth.

Feminists, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, womanists, radical feminists, ecofeminists, lesbians, wiccans, and many other kinds of circles—even astrological ones! – are now wired for the superconscious sound, vision, word, and action that embodies female energy as Source. We are openly making supernatural decisions and setting cosmological agendas, taking credit for our work when credit is due, and realizing that the toughest task may be to respect and reward our own authority.

Female energy as Source is profoundly empowering for many of us at this time. It has proven to be politically safe and economically profitable to import Goddess wholesale, as an inspirational commodity, from indigenous and ancient societies.

I would like to close by shining a light on a Goddess manifestation you might not recognize, one blessed with a truly troubling originality, one who is part our own cultural heritage.

You won't find a cozy color picture, elegant altar statue, or tidy archetypal myth for this Creatress. *She rocks*. You must concentrate on Her oceanic and fascinating story. You must encounter those who deny Her wisdom and beauty.

A Eurocentric legacy from the past two centuries of western civilization, this manifestation of Goddess is our own indigenous female energy as Source. *She is the feminist global female fire*. Read her mind in the rising Sun. Invoke her as the rising Daughter.

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