

Lilith: An Unfruitful Darkness

Eliza Robertson

One of the astrological points that has attracted much speculation and fanfare in recent years is Black Moon Lilith. In her exile, for Lilith's stories often end in exile, she has been interpreted variably as: Inanna's handmaiden; a night demon; a hag; a screech owl; a succubus; a seductress; an abortifacient; a bitch; a witch; a heroine of feminist resistance; an advocate for the oppressed. Many modern astrologers also identify Lilith as Adam's first, less compliant wife. When I first read this story in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, written between 700 and 1000 CE, I began to consider Lilith as "the below," in all this word's implications. Astrologers and Hermeticists will understand the "below" to indicate Earth and earthly bodies — those realms of material, tangible, sensory reality. The "above" points to the celestial sphere: palace of the stars, the luminaries, and those wandering lights we know as planets. Common threads in her stories equate Lilith to uncultivated land: the Earth in her increasingly rare, indeed exiled, wildness. This essay will trace the archetype of Lilith as Earth, and advocate for Earth, through a text-based scan of her early history. Following this overview, I will demonstrate the astrological significance of Black Moon Lilith and this point's prominence in the charts of environmental movements. Over millennia, Lilith has represented a sort of unfruitful darkness: Earth in its uncultivated, uncontrolled forms. Lilith has also been scapegoated as a monster: monstrous, in part, because she fails (or refuses) to perform her function as helpmeet or breeder. Through forces of urbanization, industrialization and deforestation, it is possible we have forsaken our wild parts in much the same way.

Lilith in Texts

The earliest appearance of Lilith in writing comes via the poems of Inanna, written around 2000 BCE in ancient Sumer. The people of ancient Sumer innovated irrigation techniques and other practices that enabled farmers to cultivate their region, which became known as the “fertile crescent,” or the “cradle of civilization.” They grew an abundance of grain; they brewed some of the first beer; they domesticated a range of animals. The age of Taurus was waning, but Earth herself remained central: the supple, Venusian, life-giving qualities of Earth — if also hard work and persistence. Here, on the banks of the Euphrates, “in the first days, in the very first days,” a single *huluppu* tree was planted.¹ Note, the text translated by Samuel Kramer and Diane Wolkstein uses this verb in its passive mood, “was planted,” suggesting the *huluppu* tree was cultivated — not natural, or “wild.” However, a “whirling South Wind” soon arises, uprooting the tree and depositing it into the current of the Euphrates.² Who should pluck the tree from the river, but Inanna, Goddess of Heaven and Earth. Inanna plants the tree in her own garden, and cares for it by hand. She has big plans for this tree: she dreams of building a throne and a marriage bed. But before the wood matures enough to harvest, the wild moves in: a serpent nests in the tree’s roots; an Anzu bird lays eggs in the branches; and “the dark maid Lilith” builds her home in the sturdy trunk.³ The Queen of Heaven and Earth is none too happy about the intruders. She complains to a few of her strong, solar brothers, and finally, the hero Gilgamesh arrives with his considerable axe. Gilgamesh strikes the serpent; the Anzu bird flies away; and Lilith “[smashes] her home and [flees] to the wild, uninhabited places”⁴; that is: the uncultivated, “uncivilized” desert (and other deserted places). Her evicted roommates are significant here too, for Lilith has often been represented as a bird, and in the form, or company, of snakes.

The name Lilith (in Hebrew, לילית) comes from the Akkadian “Lilitu,” which means “of the night.”⁵ In Jewish folklore, she came to be seen as a lusty female night demon, associated with sex, storms, disease, and baby-killing. Pregnant women wore amulets around their necks to protect their fetuses from the night demon, and mothers planted anti-Lilith charms in the rooms of newborn babies.⁶ Though the stories of Lilith both pre-date and coincide with the writing of the Bible, the Bible alludes to her only once or twice. The most direct mention appears in Isaiah 34, which warns of an apocalyptic land devastation, when the streams will turn to pitch, and dust into brimstone. Wild animals will take over: the pelican and porcupine, the owl and raven.

And thorns shall come up in its palaces,
 Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
 It shall be a habitation of jackals,
 A courtyard for ostriches.
 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals,
 And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
 Also the night creature shall rest there,
 And find for herself a place of rest.
 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs
 And hatch, and gather them under her shadow.⁷

The King James Version replaces “night creature” with “screech owl.”⁸ The Revised Standard Version says “night hag.”⁹ The Latin Vulgate version invokes “*lamia*,” Lilith’s Greco-Roman equivalent.¹⁰ Darby’s English Translation states, “the Lilith also shall settle there.”¹¹ The Modern Hebrew says, לילית, or Lilith.¹² Here, the site of apocalypse equals civilization undone. No more shall the beasts work for man, tilling and plowing and lugging, but they shall bleat and loaf about in their brambly courtyards. Like the jackal and the arrow snake, Lilith threatens a degeneration into the uncontrolled, shadowy wild.

The second allusion to Lilith in the Bible is less concrete. In the first book of Genesis, God creates the heavens and the earth; He creates light; He separates the light from the darkness, distinguishing night from day; He creates the vault of the sea, and the vault of the sky; He creates vegetation; He creates the stars; He creates fish, and birds; He creates livestock; He creates wild animals — in that order. Finally, after all this creating, God makes mankind in His own image: “in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.”¹³ In Genesis 2, the text specifies: “the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”¹⁴ The name Adam comes from the Hebrew אָדָמָה (*adamah*), which means earth, especially red fertile earth, or soil. But here we find a discrepancy between the two chapters because after Adam names the livestock, the birds and wild animals, he still lacks a helpmeet. So the Lord God fashions Eve from his rib. This inconsistency has inspired some to ask whether a woman existed before Eve. Since the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* was written in the Middle Ages, scholars and artists have conflated the void of this first woman with Lilith.

The Jewish Virtual Library describes the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* as one of the “earliest, most complicated, and most sophisticated Hebrew stories” written in the medieval period.¹⁵ The text was composed in four parts, the first of which offers a biography of Ben Sira from conception until age one. The latter sections include lists of proverbs: 22 in Aramaic and 22 in Hebrew, arranged in alphabetical order with Haggadic commentary. In the third section of the book (presented as the 2nd section in many editions, which omit the initial biography), King Nebuchadnezzar calls Ben Sira to his court to answer some questions. Here, we find the famed story of Lilith as Adam’s first wife. From *Alphabet of Ben Sira* 78:

When God created the first man Adam alone, God said, “It is not good for man to be alone.” [So] God created a woman for him, *from the earth like him*, and called her Lilith. They [Adam and Lilith] promptly began to argue with each other: She said, “*I will not lie below*,” and he said, “*I will not lie below, but above, since you are fit for being below and I for being above*.” She said to him, “*The two of us are equal, since we are both from the earth*.” And they would not listen to each other. Since Lilith saw [how it was], she uttered God’s ineffable name and flew away into the air. Adam stood in prayer before his Maker and said, “Master of the Universe, the woman you gave me fled from me!”¹⁶

Unlike Eve, Lilith emerges from the Earth itself. Her existence is not contingent upon Adam, but on God, as Adam is, and as every other creation. Tension arises when she refuses to lie beneath Adam — for she is of the soil, like him, making them both equal. At the height of her refusal, she pronounces the unutterable name of God (represented by the Tetragrammaton, יהוה) and self-exiles to the Red Sea. There are two main explanations for this addendum to the creation story. One is that the anonymous Rabbi sought to provide a midrash, or interpretive text, to reconcile the contradictions in Genesis 1 and 2. The second, and at this time more probable, explanation is that the anonymous Rabbi was scribbling a bit of indecorous satire. As Nebuchadnezzar’s daughter discharges one thousand farts per hour, Ben Sira answers such knotty questions as: why does a donkey urinate in the urine of his companion? Why does a raven copulate by mouth?¹⁷ Some of the more lewd and heretical sections were omitted from the medieval manuscripts due to censorship laws, which could explain why later scholars

received the text as a serious midrash, rather than a parodic romp. That said, this narrative of Lilith as an angry, self-sovereign alternative to Eve has taken root in the collective consciousness. The relative sincerity or cynicism of the original contribution doesn't change anything. In either case, the story of Lilith as first woman has been absorbed into her archetype, as evidenced by the nineteenth century painting, "Lady Lilith" (1866-1873) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who inscribed an accompanying sonnet on the lower portion of the frame, which begins "Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told / (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve)."¹⁸ Or "Lilith" (1889) by John Collier, featuring a nude woman with buxom hair, a serpent gyrating around her curves. Or the representation of Lilith in Johann Goethe's *Faust* (1808-1832) — "MEPHISTOPHELES: Note that madam! That's Lilith. FAUST: Who? MEPHISTOPHELES: First wife to Adam. Pay attention to her lovely hair, / the only adornment she need wear."¹⁹ Or the poem, "Adam, Lilith and Eve," by Robert Browning (1883). Or in the last hundred years, C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950-1956), which cast the villainous White Witch as Lilith's daughter.

So Below

"I will not lie below, but above, since you are fit for being below and I for being above."

Adam, *Alphabet of Ben Sira* 78

Before we move on, I want to pause on the cultural-linguistic distaste for what lies below, which modern Western thought has inherited, in part, from Neoplatonism, a philosophical school that developed contemporaneously with late Hellenistic astrology from the 3rd to 7th centuries CE. Neoplatonic thinkers strove for a "grand synthesis" of their intellectual lineage, which included Hellenic philosophy, religion, and literature.²⁰ At the same time, they rejected the more materialist schools of Epicureanism and Stoicism. One of the basic tenets of Neoplatonic thinking was that mindful consciousness (or *nous*) ontologically preceded the physical realm. This consciousness would emerge (in an immaterial, non-spatial sense) from the activity of "the One" first principle. As the outer activity of Consciousness, the Soul looked back at its cause, generating the universe. Nature (*physis*) thus constitutes a "lower" aspect of conscious life, the realm where "the activity of Soul informed by Consciousness becomes

phenomenal and perceptible.”²¹ What, then, do we do about evil? How could evil emerge from the perfect first principle?

Plotinus, considered by many the founder of Neoplatonism, solved this problem by proposing that evil arose when humans directed their attention toward the material world below, rather than the intelligible world above.²² “But when something is absolutely deficient – and this is matter – this is essential evil without any share in good. For matter has not even being,” Plotinus writes in *The Enneads*.²³ In Book V, he continues: “before soul it was a dead body, earth and water, or rather the darkness of matter and non-existence, and ‘what the gods hate,’ as a poet says.”²⁴ Throughout *The Enneads*, Plotinus equates matter with what is dark, chaotic, untamed, feminine, and corruptive: “Matter becomes mistress of what is manifested through it: it corrupts and destroys the incomer.”²⁵ Not every Neoplatonist agreed with Plotinus’ theory of evil, but arguably, this denigration of our bodies, and our earth, as influences that contaminate the more divine soul or intellect, leaked into future worldviews.

We see this hierarchy in the English language, through words like “lowly” (in contrast to “lofty”), which suggests something inferior or *subordinate*. Other words or phrases that reflect this framework include: submissive, subservient, subhuman, subjugate, base, cast down, downtrodden, downfallen, shutdown, downswing, put down, depressed, “planets in fall.” The phrases that point up are exceedingly more hopeful: superior, startup, upswing, upwardly mobile, uplifting, prop up, elevate, high-caliber, superhuman, surpassing, paramount, high-class, a cut above, “planets exalted.” As far as the English language is concerned, our metaphors around value are entirely vertical. What is more, the entities pointed down, or pointed in, have traditionally been viewed as feminine (that “mistress” of matter), while those projected up or out have been deemed masculine. We see this in astrology, with the division of “feminine” (or “passive,” “receiving”) signs from the “masculine” (“active”) signs, though this language is quickly obviating itself. In the West, it is common to understand Earth by feminine names — Gaia, Rhea, “Mother Earth.” The cosmology that feeds Western astrology considers the supreme rulers masculine, by contrast, and they reside in the sky: Ouranus (which literally means “sky”); Cronos (a descendant of Ouranus and Gaia, he lived halfway between, on Mount Othrys); Apollo, Poseidon, and Zeus on Mount Olympus.

As Shelley Jordan highlights in her article, “The Repression of the Feminine in Astrology,” the gender bias extends to the alchemical symbols for elements, where upward triangles represent the traditionally masculine elements of fire (Δ) and air (▲), while the downward triangles represent the so-called feminine

elements of water (∇), and earth (⚡).²⁶ To some extent, we also see this cosmology reflected in the Hermetic Qabalah, where Malkuth, which represents matter, earth, and “the Kingdom,” occupies the lowest sphere on the tree of life. As astrologer and Qabalist Mychal Bryan said to me once: “Malkuth is the only sphere with dross on it.” Malkuth is also the only sphere represented by four murky hues (citrine, olive, russet, and black), compared to the clean colors of the other sephiroth, and the sheer brilliance of Kether at the top. While the divine image of Kether features a “bearded king seen in profile,” the divine image for Malkuth is “a woman crowned and throned.”

But suppose we like dross, or dirt. Suppose we venerate dirt as much as we praise the sky. And not only that: suppose we value the Earth in her natural states (what remain of them), rather than as a resource for capital gain or dominance. In his controversial essay on “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis” (1967), Lynn White describes Christianity as the most anthropocentric religion in the world.²⁷ He argues that by destroying pagan animism, “Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”²⁸ Christian saints do not live in trees and stones; their “citizenship is in heaven.”²⁹ White himself was Christian, and ultimately, he proposes a Christian saint as a role model for animist and ecologically responsible thinking. Saint Francis of Assisi did not view the ant as lowly, or fire as the upward-thrusting soul, but “Brother Ant and Sister Fire, praising the Creator in their own ways as Brother Man does in his.”³⁰

In a similar rhetorical gesture, I propose Lilith as a tutelary guide and dissident on behalf of the natural world. Though the 7.6 billion people on Earth represent .01% of living things, humanity has destroyed 83% of wild mammals and half of all plants.³¹ Farmed poultry currently make up 70% of all birds on the planet.³² 60% of all mammals are livestock: cattle and pigs.³³ 36% are the humans breeding and eating those livestock.³⁴ Forests used to cover 48% of our planet. We have destroyed half of these. Only 20% of the original forests remain undisturbed.³⁵ By 2050, there will be a higher mass of plastic than fish in our oceans.³⁶ Our seas are in crisis due to human sewage, pollution, and rising temperatures. One hundred years ago, only 15% of the Earth’s surface was used to grow crops or keep livestock. Today, we use 77% of the Earth for those purposes. Excluding Antarctica, only 23% of the planet’s land surface can be considered wild. When you consider how Lilith was banished from the *huluppu* tree so Inanna might build her throne and marriage bed; how the Bible invokes her name alongside the jackals and thorns and other non-producing things; how she was born from dirt, like Adam, and refused to lay under him: we have

banished Lilith like we have banished our wildness. So it should not come as a surprise, perhaps, that the main astrological point associated with Lilith, Black Moon, should figure prominently in the charts of movements to preserve our land and waters.

Black Moon Lilith

The Moon's path around Earth is slightly oval-shaped, rather than a geometrically perfect circle. This creates two focal points within the Moon's orbit: the first filled by the Earth itself, the second, an empty focus. Since the 1930s, astrologers have called Earth's ghostly double, or shadow, Black Moon. Appropriately, given our theme of in/fertility, Black Moon Lilith spends nine months in each sign. The point's location swings wildly due to its retrogrades, with gaps up to thirty degrees between true and mean calculations. While the true calculation pinpoints the precise longitudinal degree at a given moment, the mean calculation produces an average between her direct and retrograde motion. I have found significance in both of these points, and following M. Kelley Hunter, I consider the whole terrain between them a sort of Black Moon portal or corridor.³⁷

Note that this corridor differs from the concept of an orb in an astrological chart. While an orb refers to a planet's sphere of influence — so we might notice the effects of transiting Uranus conjunct our natal Sun within 5, 10, or 15 degrees of exact contact (that is: within a 5, 10 or 15 degree “orb”) — the Black Moon corridor refers to the space between the true and mean calculations of Black Moon Lilith. Just like choosing between true and mean lunar nodes, astrologers often default to just one of these calculations. Similarly, astrologers tend to find significance in whatever calculation they happen to use — even if a difference in true or mean calculation changes the sign and house boundaries. Because Black Moon's movement is so erratic, I find it important to note both points. The mean calculation is more helpful for understanding Black Moon's overall trajectory through the signs (as it tends to move steadily forward), while the true calculation reflects the accurate location on a given day, which tends to shift wildly.

The following case studies will explore the ways Black Moon Lilith has manifested in the charts of movements to save our land and water. Some of these movements coincided with the Uranus-Pluto square that characterized the mid 2010s: Pluto, representing money and power, Uranus, representing the boundary-busting force that rebels in the face of it.

Though they root from different cultural frameworks, Lilith and Pluto share a few qualities in common. Modern astrologers invoke both archetypes when they guide their clients through “shadow work,” which involves metabolizing the unknown “dark side” of the personality. With Lilith named after an empty focus within the moon’s orbit, fleeing to “wild, uninhabited places” in her story, and Pluto as the most remote planet in our solar system, invisible to the naked eye, both points represent that which is unseen or hidden.

Like Lilith, Pluto also relates to concepts of the “below.” Pluto, or Hades, ruled the underworld in the Greco-Roman pantheon. His name stems from the Greek *ploutos*, or wealth, and much of our wealth gets mined underground. In ancient times, and today, the sub-surfaces of our world were opened to extract precious minerals, metals, and since the industrial age — oil. This dimension of Pluto’s archetype also hints at the difference between the ruler of the underworld and Lilith. While Pluto represents the current holders of money and power (as evidenced by the word plutocracy), Lilith is the void that power leaves in its wake: the burn-scarred earth, the littered stumps of old growth trees, the tailings ponds, the sinkholes. Lilith represents the people, plants, creatures, and wild space that power has banished, as well as the rage and refusal of defenders who fight back.

Standing Rock

When construction was approved for the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which would cut across Standing Rock Sioux territory, violate treaties between the U.S. government and Sioux nation, trespass on sacred burial grounds, and compromise the residents’ only source of clean water, members of Standing Rock Reservation and neighboring communities camped at the construction site in protest. Over the spring and summer of 2016, the movement gained attention on social media, and thousands travelled to the camp in support of the Reservation. I will use the start time proposed by Chad Woodward, who studied video tweets of protesters as they arrived to Sacred Stone Camp on April 1, 2016 at approximately 1:04 p.m.³⁸ This chart has 4° Leo rising with the “Lilith corridor” stretching from 24° Libra (mean) to 5° Scorpio (true.) True Black Moon tightly squares the ascendant from the bottom of the chart, while mean Black Moon hovers near the IC at 17° Libra and squares the Moon at 26° Capricorn.

Standing Rock

Event

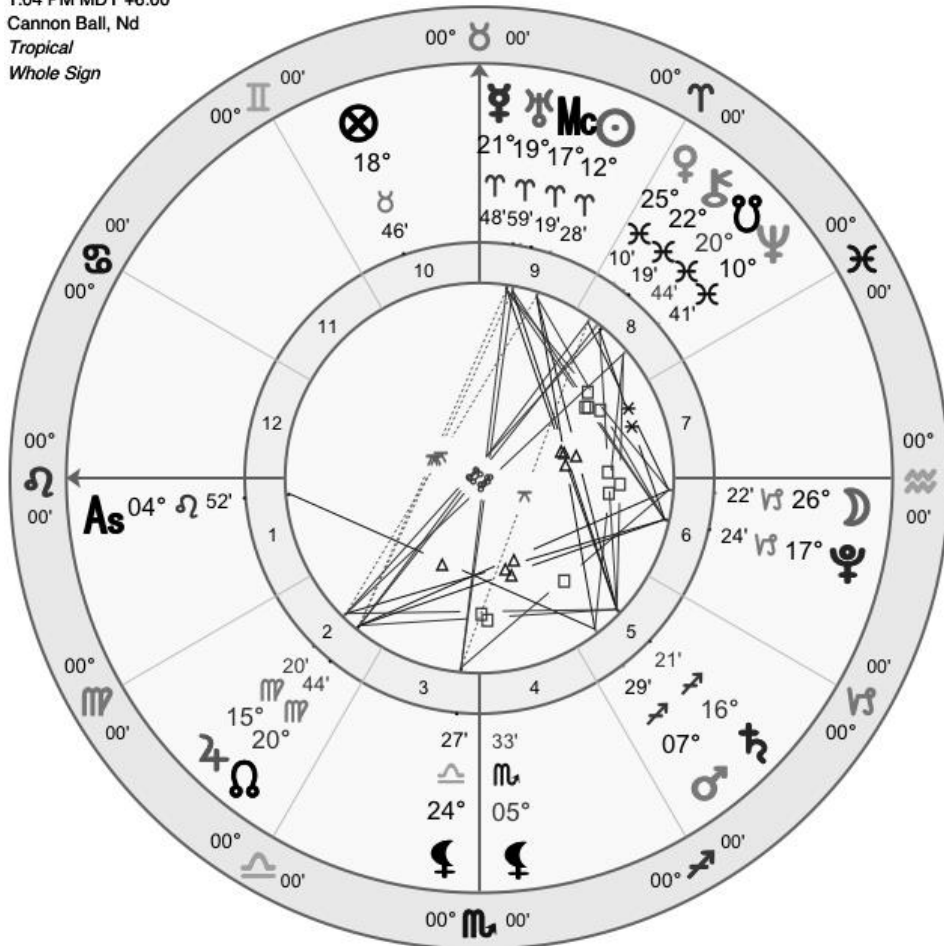
Apr 1 2016, Fri

1:04 PM MDT +6:00

Cannon Ball, Nd

Tropical

Whole Sign



When studying world events, astrologers tend to focus on conjunctions, squares, and oppositions. These are the angles that incite upset and change. While the softer influence of trines and sextiles may pass unnoticed, conjunctions, squares, and oppositions must be worked through, like grit in your eye, or a knot of food caught in your throat. With true Black Moon Lilith in a tight square to the rising degree, something of her archetype stews in the belly of this movement, bucking up dust. Similarly, mean Black Moon's placement on the IC (the point of the chart that tends to indicate roots, lineage, and ancestry), and square to the

Moon, which signifies our baseline instincts, needs, and nurturance, reflects the radical revision of “care” incited by this movement — including how we protect this earth as stewards, even as it feeds us (another lunar concept). Rather than project a foreign cosmology onto the Standing Rock Sioux people by suggesting that Lilith herself played a precipitating force, I wish simply to highlight the archetypal resonance between Lilith as a mythic figure and the protests against DAPL. That is: central Lilith themes, including her identification with the natural world, as well as her dispossession of land and sovereignty, make her archetype mythologically consonant with Standing Rock Reservation’s fight to protect their land and water. Insofar as mythic figures can be said to walk among us, I imagine Lilith would have stood alongside the water and land protectors at Standing Rock.

On March 25, 2020, a federal judge ordered an environmental review of the Dakota Access Pipeline, which has carried oil since June 2017, when both true and mean Black Moon Lilith points entered Capricorn. The U.S. District Judge, James E. Boasberg, found that the federal government had not adequately studied the risks of an oil spill, or appraised the pipe’s leak detection system. In a victory for Standing Rock Reservation, the Judge ordered the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which granted the initial permits, to conduct a more extensive investigation into the pipeline’s environmental impact.³⁹ On the day of the judgment, Black Moon Lilith stood triumphantly with the Sun and Chiron at 5° Aries. The Sun tends to represent rulers and kings. Exalted in Aries, we might interpret the Sun as Judge Boasberg himself. The dwarf planet Chiron meanwhile can indicate a point of rupture or woundedness in the chart, as well as that bruise’s potential for healing and wisdom. With Lilith crowning the chart alongside the Sun and Chiron, we see the Judge siding with the underdog on this occasion, with the potential to stitch up an open wound. In this chart, the whole “Lilith corridor” stretches between 6° and 10° Aries, squaring the lunar nodes at 3° Cancer/Capricorn and applying to a square with Jupiter, Pluto, and Mars in late Capricorn, suggesting a battle won with big business, if not the war just yet.

SR Court

Natal

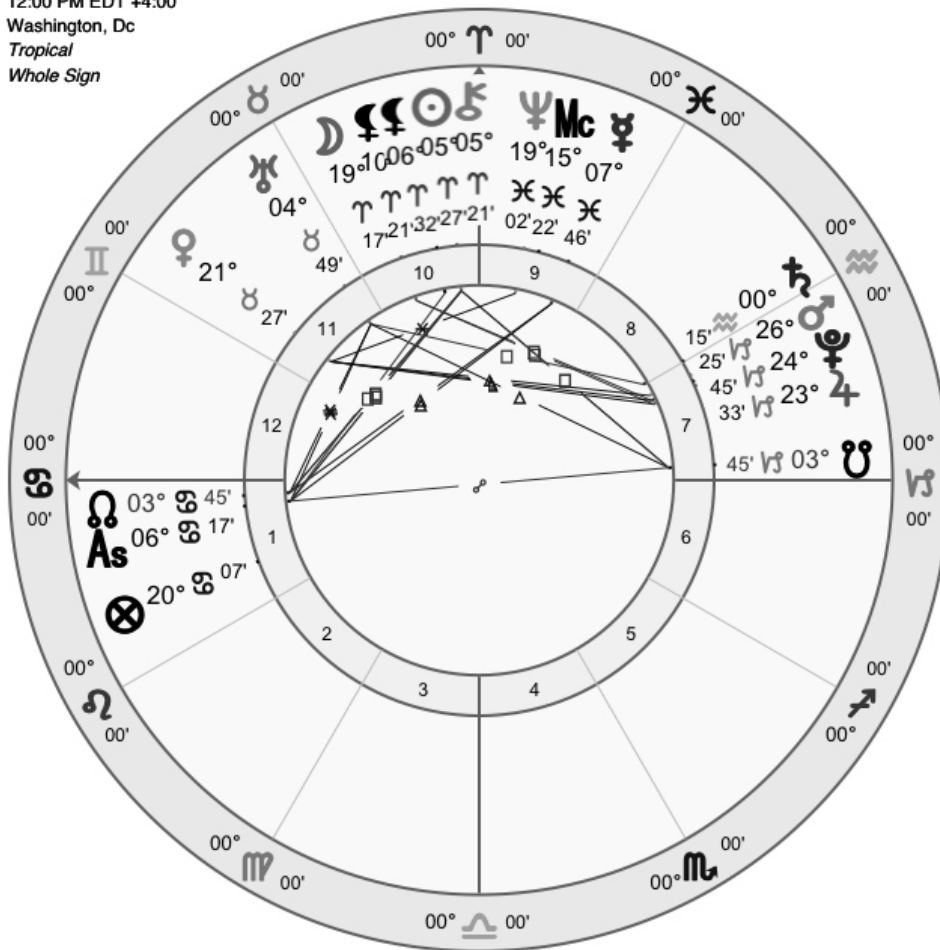
Mar 25 2020, Wed

12:00 PM EDT +4:00

Washington, Dc

Tropical

Whole Sign



Extinction Rebellion

As Uranus entered Taurus in May 2018, one hundred academics signed a call to support action that October against climate change. The formal launch of Extinction Rebellion (XR) occurred on October 31, 2018, when over a thousand protesters gathered at London's Parliament Square to hear the "Declaration of

Rebellion” read by the campaign organizers. The 10 a.m. start time produces an ascendant of 10° Sagittarius, which sextiles Black Moon Lilith at 9° Aquarius. This day coincides with a rare closing of the gap between the true and mean points. The next day, true Black Moon would separate from the mean point by two degrees: opening the corridor between them. As in the previous example, Black Moon bucks up dust from the belly of the chart. Though in a harmonious aspect to the Ascendant, she is engaged in a T-Square with the Sun at 7° Scorpio and the Moon at 4° Leo. Again, this crossbar of hard aspects suggests a sticking point: a knot that must be worked free or cut through. With Lilith completing a T-Square between the chart’s luminaries, something of her archetype wedges between the movement’s solar and lunar drives, which include XR’s mission, to spread viral awareness about climate crisis, as well as their basic instincts for self- and world-preservation. As Extinction Rebellion gains momentum, we might expect archetypal Lilith themes (identification with the natural world, resistance, rage, refusal) to continue to unfold.

XR’s second major UK action occurred on November 17, 2018, “Rebellion Day,” when six thousand people blocked five bridges over the Thames. The Rebellion Day chart shows true Black Moon at 8° Aquarius and mean Black Moon at 11° Aquarius, both still in a wide square with Uranus, the planet astrologers most often associate with rebellions. “Rebellion Day 2” occurred on November 24, 2018, with a memorial service at Parliament Square to mourn environmental degradation and species loss. This demonstration followed three days of XR “swarming protests,” which gridlocked central London and caused significant economic disruption.⁴⁰ At this point in late November, true Black Moon had retrograded back into Capricorn, exactly conjunct the South Node at 29°, and squaring Uranus at 29° Aries. As the eclipsing places, the nodes of the moon have been interpreted by sky watchers the world over as highly ominous. The South Node, traditionally symbolized by a dragon’s tail, signifies a point of loss and surrender, which feels apt given the demonstrations were mourning the loss of species and biodiversity. Squaring Uranus, XR aimed to mobilize this grief toward direct action. On the day of the memorial service, true Black Moon formed an exact conjunction with Pluto, ruler of the underworld, at 19° Capricorn. Astrologers may recognize this degree for its proximity to the January 12, 2020 Saturn-Pluto conjunction at 22-23° Capricorn.

XR Declaration

Natal

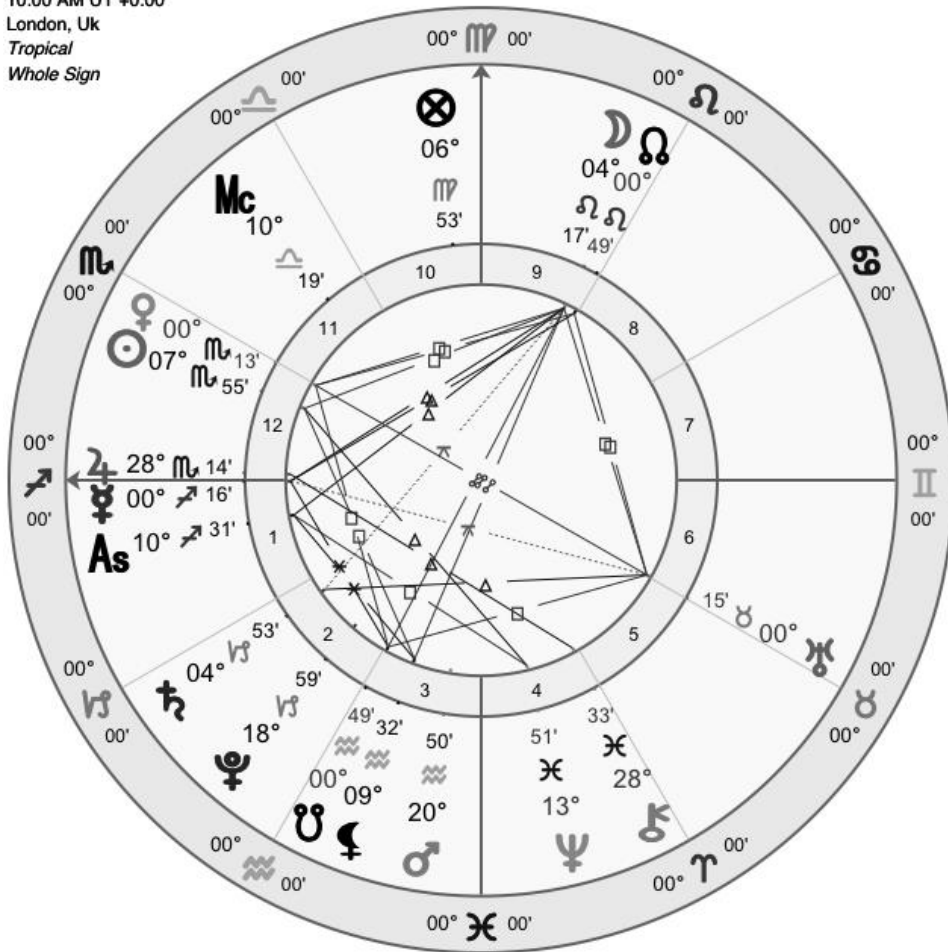
Oct 31 2018, Wed

10:00 AM UT +0:00

London, UK

Tropical

Whole Sign



At the time of this writing, Extinction Rebellion has spread around the world through marches and direct action, including tactics of mass arrest. It is not uncommon to see their hourglass sigil spray-painted onto the surfaces of cities: a reminder that time is running out. Extinction Rebellion has, however, received criticism for highlighting action that could endanger some activists more than others, especially those who are Indigenous, working class, Black, Brown, queer, trans, or disabled.⁴¹ Many of these criticisms were expressed in an open letter from a collective called the “Wretched of the Earth,” an allusion to the 1961 book by Frantz Fanon on the dehumanizing effects of colonization. The letter was

published online on May 3, 2019, when the Lilith corridor spread from 21° Aquarius (true) to 29° Aquarius (mean), sextiling the Moon-Mercury conjunction at 23° Aries, which itself squared Pluto (23°), the South Node (21°) and Saturn (20°) in Capricorn. Here we find Mercury, the messenger, representing the plural voices speaking their truths to power in the form of an open letter. The planet of power (Pluto) conjunct the planet of traditional structures and systems (Saturn) on the South Node of the moon, that point of release, reflects the drive to dismantle oppressive systems, even from within progressive movements. Given her own history of dispossession and scapegoating, Lilith's archetype aligns with those most at-risk from environmental degradation and those most vulnerable in the action against it, an archetypal coherence that is echoed in Black Moon Lilith's supportive sextile to Mercury and the Moon in the chart of the open letter.

Wet'suwet'en

In a decision that would incite another battle to protect unceded land and water, the British Columbia Supreme Court granted Coastal GasLink an injunction on December 31, 2019 to remove any cabins or gates obstructing the path of their planned pipeline through Wet'suwet'en territory.⁴² The next day, the Wet'suwet'en First Nation served Coastal GasLink with an eviction notice, informing company workers that they had trespassed onto their land. Members of the Nation and neighboring communities protested on site, while an Indigenous youth-led protest unfolded at the provincial legislature in Victoria. So began two months of direct action that forced the entire country to a halt. After talks in late January failed between the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs and provincial government, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) moved into the area to enforce the injunction. On February 7, the only commuter train service in Canada, Via Rail, had to cancel all travel on their busiest routes between Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, due to rail blockades. Within four days, activists managed to halt over 150 freight trains, shutting down Canadian National Railway operations in Eastern Canada. Tensions between (largely Indigenous) protestors and police were high, with arrests made across the country.

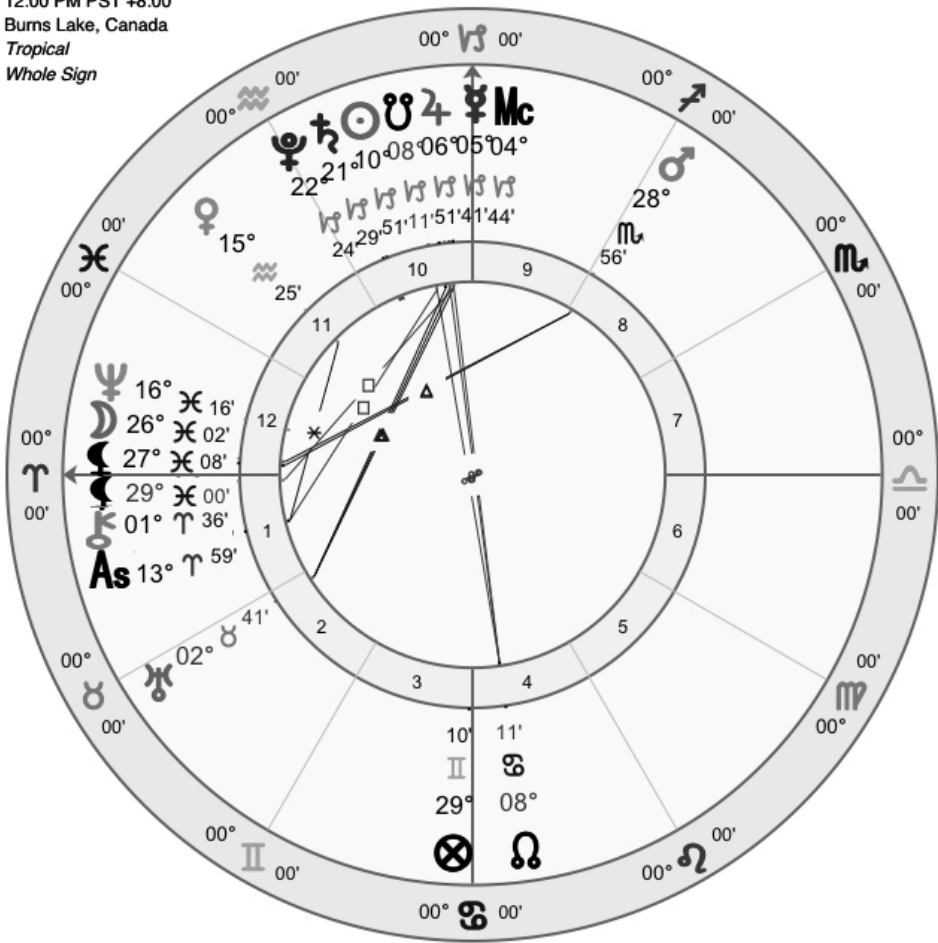
For the "seed" moment of this movement, I will use January 1, 2020, when the Wet'suwet'en First Nation served Coastal GasLink with an eviction notice. On the noon chart for this day, Black Moon Lilith is tightly conjunct the Moon at 26° Pisces, with mean Black Moon at 27° and true Black Moon at 29° Pisces, both trined by Mars at 28° Scorpio. As the fastest moving planet, traditional

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astrologers viewed the moon as a reflector, communicator, and amplifier. With Black Moon Lilith conjunct the moon, Lilith’s story is archetypally imprinted over this moment like a watermark. In a soft trine aspect to Mars, the planet of war, we see Lilith in cahoots with the warriors of this movement — the land defenders and activists.

Wet'suwet'en

Natal
Jan 1 2020, Wed
12:00 PM PST +8:00
Burns Lake, Canada
Tropical
Whole Sign



As direct action spreads across the country in February, 2020, mean Black Moon remains relatively stationary in the first few degrees of Aries, conjunct Chiron (that dwarf planet that can highlight our wounds as well openings for healing) and squaring the lunar nodes. Again: Lilith points to some grit in the

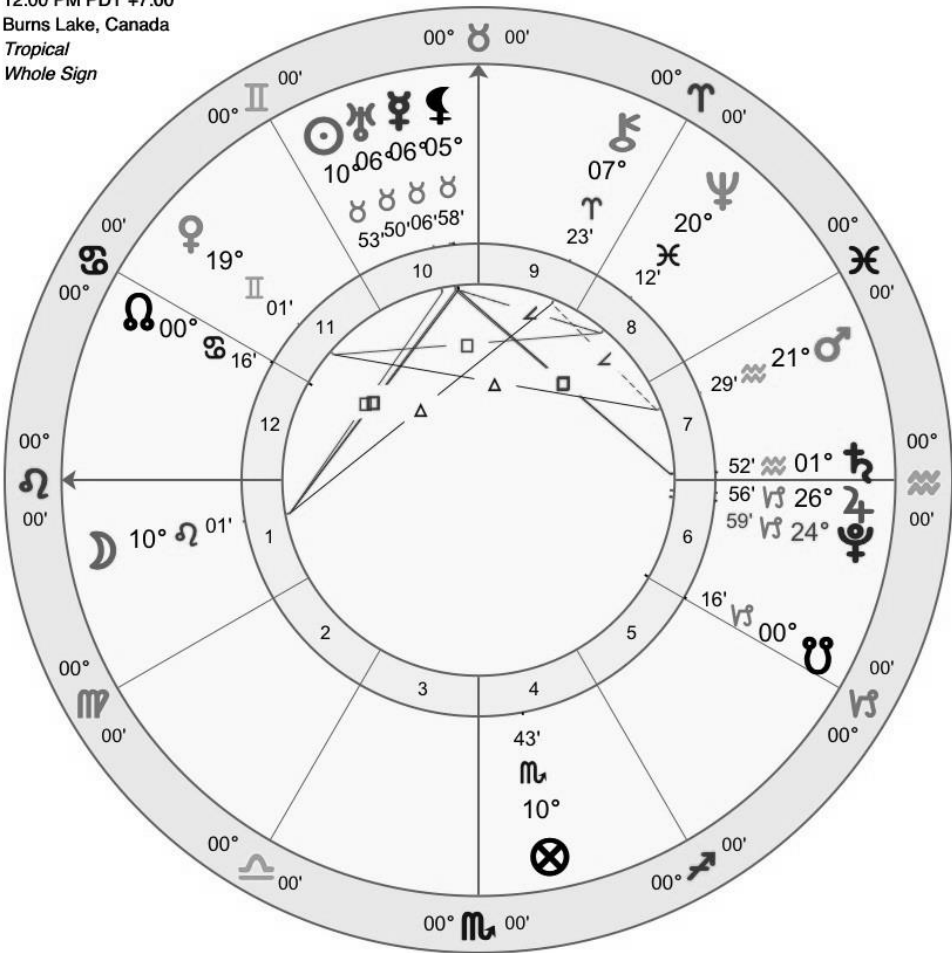
collective eye — wherein the “grit” is a legacy of colonial violence and the direct action to overcome it.

On March 1, 2020, the provincial and federal government ministers drafted a Memo of Understanding with the hereditary chiefs, to be presented to the Wet’suwet’en Nation for ratification. On this day, the Black Moon Corridor spread from 3° Aries (mean), exactly conjunct Chiron, to 13° Aries (true), squaring the Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Pluto, South Node stellium in Capricorn. The stories of both Chiron and Lilith include currents of marginalization — Chiron, after he was rejected by his mother at birth, Lilith, in each of her mythic exiles. They also represent the potential for resistance (via Lilith, who refused Adam in that later iteration of the story) and healing (via Chiron, who made medicine and taught Asclepius how to heal.) For these reasons, their archetypes align with the Indigenous nations, communities, and activists, whom government continues to oust from the land. While Saturn represents the government institutions, including police, who enforced the initial injunction, Pluto connotes wealth and big business, a role played here by Coastal GasLink. Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, lends growth potential, signified by the pipeline expansion in the first place, as well as the viral activist response to it. Meanwhile, Mars wants to light the whole dumpster bin on fire. All on the South Node, a point that indicates release, this configuration mirrors the power dynamic of an Indigenous-led movement subverting the decisions of law, government and big business.

On March 17, 2020, after true Black Moon had retrograded to 16° Pisces, now encompassing Neptune, a planet we associate with disorientation and confusion (18° Pisces), the Sun, which could represent the movement’s central mission (27° Pisces), and Chiron (4° Aries) within the Lilith corridor, the scheduled Wet’suwet’en all-clans meeting had to be postponed due to COVID-19. Despite the traction gained by Indigenous activists, and the government’s willingness to draft a Memo of Understanding, the potential for resolution stalled as every party preoccupied themselves with surviving a global pandemic.

Memo of Understanding

Natal
Apr 30 2020, Thu
12:00 PM PDT +7:00
Burns Lake, Canada
Tropical
Whole Sign



Finally on April 30, the hereditary chiefs released a joint statement with the provincial and federal governments, stating that all five clans had agreed to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding. By this time, true Black Moon had overtaken the mean point, arriving at 5° Taurus: within one degree of the Mercury-Uranus conjunction at 6° Taurus, and five degrees from the Sun at 10°. Here, Lilith presides over the Memo of Understanding itself, represented by the conjunction of Mercury, the planet of communication and exchange, with Uranus, whose rebellious and unpredictable nature reflects how this agreement

was seeded in collective resistance, as well as the overall plot-swerve created by the global pandemic. Meanwhile, the Lilith corridor (from 10° Aries to 5° Taurus) continued to challenge Pluto and Jupiter in late Capricorn, as well as Saturn in early Aquarius (all representing the money and power invested in the status quo). However, Mars, the planet of war, had moved just out of orb to 21° Aquarius. Thus, media attention pivoted toward the pandemic and conflict (signified by Mars) desisted — at least for the time being.

Conclusion

From the poems of Inanna, written in 2000 BCE, to her appearances as “night hag” in the Bible and contemporaneous Hebrew stories, to her famed, if parodic, casting as Adam’s first wife in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, the first three thousand years of Lilith’s textual history correspond her archetype to themes of wildness; banishing; dispossession; rage; refusal; resistance; that which we repress; those whom we oppress; the Earth uncultivated. In the *Ben Sira* story, Lilith births hundreds of babies, whom God kills every day to punish her disobedience: though fertile, her fertility cannot be resourced. Similarly, our slivers of wild earth produce incredible life, but these ecosystems are unaccommodating to humans unless we plunder (or “cultivate”) them. Lilith splits the notion of fertility from productivity — that is part of her magic.

The astronomy of Black Moon Lilith reflects this parallel by representing Earth’s shadow twin, or ghostly mirror, within the lunar orbit. While we must take care with our interpretations, and avoid spraying distinct nations and cultures with a foreign cosmology, the prominence of Black Moon Lilith in the event charts above suggests an archetypal resonance between her stories and those battling to protect their land and water. Something of her archetype, with its themes of banishment, vilification, and nature in its pre-capitalist, pre-imperial, pre-agricultural wildness, hums in tune with the Indigenous-led (and other) movements to preserve our planet. This deepening of the Lilith archetype beyond bitch, witch, or seductress could facilitate our work as astrologers to pick the seams of archetypes that have been limited by imperial or patriarchal worldviews and revision them in our practices and discussions for social change.

NOTES

¹ Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 3-4.

² Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, 3.

³ Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, 5.

⁴ Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*, 8.

⁵ *New World Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Lilith," accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Lilith>.

⁶ Janet Howe Gaines, "Lilith: Seductress Heroine or Murderer?" *Biblical Archaeology Society*, October 31, 2019. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/lilith/>

⁷ Isaiah 34: 11-15, New King James Version.

⁸ "The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: Chapter 34," *Parallel Hebrew Old Testament*, accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.hebrewoldtestament.com/B23C034.htm>.

⁹ *Parallel Hebrew Old Testament*.

¹⁰ *Parallel Hebrew Old Testament*.

¹¹ *Parallel Hebrew Old Testament*.

¹² *Parallel Hebrew Old Testament*.

¹³ Genesis 1:27, NKJV.

¹⁴ Genesis 2:7, NKJV.

¹⁵ Joseph Dan, "Ben Sira, Alphabet of," *Jewish Virtual Library*, accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/alphabet-of-ben-sira>.

¹⁶ "Alphabet of Ben Sira 78: Lilith", *Jewish Women's Archive*, accessed August 24, 2020, <https://jwa.org/media/alphabet-of-ben-sira-78-lilith>. Emphases my own.

¹⁷ Jillian Stinchcomb, "Ben Sira as a Baby: The *Alphabet of Ben Sira* and Authorial Personae," *Ancient Jew Review*, January 16, 2018, <https://www.ancientjewreview.com/articles/2018/1/12/ben-sira-as-a-baby-the-alphabet-of-ben-sira-and-authorial-personae>.

¹⁸ "Lady Lilith," *Rossetti Archive*, accessed August 26, 2020, <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/docs/s205.rap.html>.

¹⁹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Parts I & II*, trans. A.S. Kline (*Poetry in Translation*, 2015), lines 4117 - 4120.

²⁰ Christian Wildberg, "Neoplatonism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2019), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/neoplatonism>.

²¹ Wildberg, "Neoplatonism."

²² Wildberg, "Neoplatonism."

²³ Plotinus, *The Enneads* 1. 8. 5. 5-9 (trans. A.H. Armstrong).

²⁴ Sonja Weiss, "The Net in the Sea: a Note to Plotinus' En. IV 3 (27).9.34-44," *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 24, no. 2 (February 2019), 239, <https://doi.org/10.5817/GLB2019-2-16>.

²⁵ Enn. I. 8. 8 (trans. Mackenna and Page).

²⁶ Shelley Jordan, "The Repression of the Feminine in Astrology," *A Place in Space*, Accessed August 24, 2020, <https://www.aplaceinspace.net/pages/repression-feminine-astrology>.

²⁷ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967), 6, <https://www.cmu.ca/faculty/gmatties/lynnwhiterootsofcrisis.pdf>.

²⁸ White, "The Historical Roots," 6.

²⁹ White, "The Historical Roots," 6.

³⁰ White, "The Historical Roots," 8.

³¹ Damian Carrington, "Humans just 0.01% of all life but have destroyed 83% of wild mammals – study," *The Guardian*, May 21, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/21/human-race-just-001-of-all-life-but-has-destroyed-over-80-of-wild-mammals-study>.

³² Carrington, "Humans."

³³ Carrington, "Humans."

³⁴ Carrington, "Humans."

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³⁷ M. Kelley Hunter, "The Dark Goddess Lilith," *The Mountain Astrologer* (April/May, 1999), https://www.mountainastrologer.com/standards/editor's%20choice/articles/lilith_hunter/lilith.html.

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³⁹ Lisa Friedman, "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Wins a Victory in Dakota Access Pipeline Case," *The New York Times* (March 25, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/25/climate/dakota-access-pipeline-sioux.html>.

⁴⁰ "Extinction Rebellion Day 2, London to be gridlocked for third day running," *Extinction Rebellion* (November 23, 2018), <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/2018/11/23/extinction-rebellion-day-2-london-to-be-gridlocked-for-third-day-running/>

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⁴² "Coastal GasLink to lay first pipe in July as pipeline construction ramps up," *Global News* (June 17, 2020), <https://globalnews.ca/news/7077554/coastal-gaslink-first-pipe-july/>.

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