

Asteroid 433 Eros: The Astrology of Love

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by Kim Falconer

**When will I fall in
love? Where is my
soul mate? Is this
relationship good?**

The most frequent questions asked of the astrologer often have something to do with love. How do we answer? Where, in the horoscope, does the eye go first?

We might look at Venus to discover what we value and attract. We may look next at the Moon to investigate the give and take of nurturing. We look at the Ascendant and Mars, noting powers of initiative and the expression of vital energy. We look at the seventh and fifth houses, their rulers and any transits or progressions looming on the horizon. We look at the chart as a whole. Yet, how many of us are looking at the most specific indicator of attraction in the solar system? How many of us are looking at Eros?

Asteroid 433 Eros can give us information on a very specific kind of love. When touched off by transit, aspect or synastry, Eros evokes passions that ignore lunar comfort, Venus sensuality or Mars desires. Eros is not about relationships that make us feel secure. It is not about getting our way or winning love. It is not about commitment or harmony. Eros describes something altogether different. It describes the nature of erotic love.

At first, it may seem excessive to study asteroid 433 Eros when the horoscope bulges with numerous important symbols. Between mid-points, Arabic parts, fixed stars, Centaurs and other bodies, isn't it already getting too complex? As eminent astrologer/author Dennis Elwell says: We are talking about human beings here. It is supposed to be complex! Where then can we find this little planetoid named for the god of love?

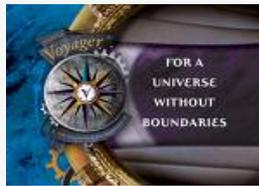
Eros is one of the Near Earth Asteroids, also known as a planet crosser. He orbits between Venus and Mars, taking 1.76 years to complete a cycle. Tumbling silently end over end, Eros has now caught the attention of scientists by hosting the first satellite ever to reach, orbit and land on an asteroid. Given the known link between discovering a planet and the awakening of social values corresponding to what that body represents, this is the time for the astrological community to discover the significance of Eros as well.

What is the god of love all about? The name itself is the ancient Greek word for erotic love, although its meaning is not necessarily sexual. Eros to the Greeks meant a merging of the souls in such a way that it created a lasting transformation. It can happen in any situation of great intimacy, emotional risk, taboo passion or creative expression. Harriet Eisman describes Eros in current terms.

"Eros brings beauty, meaning and divinity into our lives. It comes to us through a very particular epiphany, a passionate inspiration present in a particular lover, teacher, melody, or landscape. We long to follow it always. But this is not the whole story. For Eros also brings us obsessions, cruelty, abandonment, and betrayal. It may come through anguish..."



About the author and astrologer Kim Falconer



Kim Falconer @ Voyager Online Blog

Eros is about merging with the beloved to create change, because we must. With Eros, there is great risk, danger, and often compulsion, whether the beloved is an individual, a creative project or an icon of the divine. When Eros meets in two charts, no matter how unaffected the other planets are, something begins to brew beneath the surface. Given a chance to operate, a potent energy is always unleashed.

Venus and Eros may initially seem indistinguishable in the horoscope. Both are deities of love and represent involvement with another person or creative pursuit. Both are closely linked in mythology as well. Yet, they are not the same. By understanding the differences between these two deities, mythically and psychically, the distinction in the horoscope becomes clear.

Venus, as goddess of love, entices us to relate according to her pleasure, described by sign, house and aspect placement. Venus says come hither to connect, choose, indulge, have sex or social interactions and experience loveliness. Where Venus rules in the chart, we find our orientation towards and desire for socially significant relationships, values and appreciation of beauty.

Eros is the god of love. Originally, he predates Venus/Aphrodite, creating the manifest world long before she emerges from the sea. Later, he is Venus's son, doing her bidding by causing others to fall in love. Sometimes he operates solely on his own, inducing his victims to fall into the madness of divine passion, not by choice or desire, but by fate. Venus may rely on his help, requesting assistance or demanding action, but it is Eros who fires the arrow! Once pierced, even the gods could not deny Love.

Where Eros rules in the astrological chart—by sign, house and aspects—marks our beliefs, orientation and experiences of erotic love. This includes creative passions, transformational and sometimes taboo unions and the power of fate to manifest through intense intimacy with another. It can involve a direct experience of the divine.

Sex and intimacy belongs to both bodies. Venus has sex for sensual pleasure (Taurus) or to seal a deal (Libra). Eros has sex for the intimacy and power it brings and for the potential to transform by touching the divine soul of another, at whatever cost. The same holds true for the creative process. Venus values and appreciates artistic expression for its beauty, refinement and the cultural and sensual articulation it provides; Eros creates because he is driven by the heart to merge, even briefly, with the ineffable. Eros has, up until now, been undervalued in our society because successful relationships are measured in terms of duration, commitment and orientation towards stability. Eros offers us a whole new yard stick, a whole new appreciation of intimacy and union that is based on risk and depth.

It was not long ago that astrologers had only seven bodies to assign the machinations of human kind. The attributes of Chiron, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were indistinct from Saturn, Jupiter or Mars. As the natures of the outer planets erupted into consciousness, so did the significance and distinction separate out in the horoscope. Eros may, at times, sound a bit like Venus, a bit like Mars, a bit like Neptune and a bit like Pluto. With awareness and study, the characteristics of this body will become distinct.

The Mythology of Eros

Eros, as relatedness, some say, is the oldest and the greatest of the gods... Ean Begg

A deathless god, Eros emerges from the writings of eighth century BC Greek poet Hesiod as one of four original deities. The son of Chaos hatched from the egg of night, Eros creates the manifest world. Amorphous and ineffable, he fathers the Olympians and all winged creatures. Hesiod's Eros has no body and little resembles images found in later legends. Although his form emerges more distinctly in subsequent history, the power to cause things to mingle remains his initial and fundamental domain. This mingling is seldom achieved without disruption. Hesiod said:

...(Eros) who breaks the limb's strength: who, in all gods, in all human beings, overpowers the intelligence in the breast and all their shrewd planning..."

As Eros' physical attributes in later Greek myth develop, little agreement

is found on his parentage. He is born to Uranus, the starry heavens, and Gaea, mother earth. He is also portrayed as the son of Artemis, the moon goddess, and Hermes, the trickster. He claims Iris, guardian of the rainbow and Zephyrs, god of the north wind, as parents. In Phoenician Mythology of the first millennium BC, he is the son of Chronas and Ashtart. Although unknown in Homeric times, the Greek writer Euripides (480?-406 bc) describes Eros in detail. Now he appears as Aphrodite's son, a youthful winged deity, the lithe and gorgeous god of love. Carrying a bow and quiver of arrows, he selectively shoots the hearts of the unsuspecting.

"Eros flies over the earth and over the loud-roaring salt sea and bewitches the one on whose frenzied mind he darts, winged and gold-gleaming, he bewitches the whelps of the mountain and those of the sea, what the earth brings forth and what the blazing sun looks down upon, and likewise gods and mortal men."--Euripides

In some accounts, Eros is equipped with **two distinct kinds of darts**. The ones dipped in gold (Sun) cause the victim to fall madly in love. The ones dipped in lead (Saturn) cause an equally vial repulsion. Either way, it is Eros who now creates chaos!

Eventually, the god of love manifests in Roman mythology during the last few centuries BC as Cupid, son of Mars and Venus. Depicted with a blindfold to mark the seemingly indiscriminate nature of love, he now takes the form of a laughing infant who delightfully shoots arrows into the hearts of the unaware. His victims respond depending on their temper. The cold, hard heart dies; the gentle but perhaps broken heart heals in ecstasy. It is the nature of erotic love to transform the participants in accordance with their own disposition.

These changing forms of Eros suggest an attempt to convert the unfathomable power of love into an accessible humanized figure representing personal feelings. Jung spoke of Eros in this way:

"Eros was considered a god whose divinity transcended our human limits, and who therefore could neither be comprehended nor represented in any way. I might...venture an approach to this daimon... but I falter before the task of finding the language which might adequately express the incalculable paradoxes of love."

Some of these incalculable paradoxes are portrayed in the love story of Psyche and Eros, written by Lucius Apuleius in 170AD. The story opens with young Psyche in big trouble. She has unwittingly evoked the wrath of Aphrodite by maturing into a stunning beauty. Folk in the surrounding kingdoms have gone so far as to compare Psyche's looks favorably with the goddess of love herself. Aphrodite is not pleased, and she plans to do something wicked about it!

The irate goddess calls on Eros, her son, to punish the mortal girl for this unforgivable transgression. He must pierce Psyche's heart, causing her to fall in love with a vial creature. Yet, Eros is so surprised by her loveliness, he accidentally pricks himself on one of his own arrows when he sees her. Instantly, he falls in love and steals her away to his magical palace.

Although treated as a queen with all her needs met, there are conditions to living with Love. Psyche is not allowed to look upon the face of Eros. She is not allowed to know who he is. Inevitably, Psyche grows restless and betrays Eros by glimpsing him while he sleeps. Shocked by his magnificence, she falls on one of his arrows, swooning helplessly with love herself. Eros is outraged by the treachery and flies away in disgust.

Suicidal with regret, Psyche prays, paradoxically, to Aphrodite, who answers her with a set of cruel tasks. After completing all but one, Psyche fails at the final moment. Eros simultaneously recovers from his morose and rescues her, again. This time Zeus grants her immortality and Psyche and Eros wed on Mt. Olympus with all the gods and goddesses attending. Agony, ecstasy, to the edge of despair, so go the trials of erotic love.

Plato called Eros a Great Daimon, a dispenser of fate. He felt that love was a moving force in the universe and when touched by this god, hearts ignited, empires crumbled, battles raged and worlds changed. He also felt that the god of love could bring an individual closer to the divine. In Alciato's Book of Emblems we see Eros snapping in two the power of the heavens, depicting the force of erotic love.

The winged god has broken the winged lightning-bolt. Now Love shows that there is fire stronger than fire.

Eros in the Signs

The asteroids or 'minor planets' are by no means minor in their power of expression. --Demetra George & Douglas Bloch

Eros, like any planet in the astrological chart, represents a basic human need or drive. He moves us with a passion and intensity colored by the nature of the zodiac, and describes our approach to erotic love and creativity.

Eros in Aries wants action, competition and victory! The more impossible the relationship, the more ardent he becomes. Risky creative projects bring out the fervor in him and passion awakens during challenge and adventure. He hates feeling trapped, dominated or smothered.

Eros in Taurus seeks the indulgences of sensuality, be they in the dining room, on the artist's canvas or in a king size bed. He finds joy in tangible pursuits that revolve around making the body, or the bank account, feel good. He longs for transformation yet paradoxically dislikes change and upheaval.

Eros in Gemini thrives on the communication of ideas and the intellectual stimulation found in sharing observations, data and little understood facts. Tricky, curious and zany, this Eros flits from peaks to valleys—from head to heart to soul. In art or relationship, he can use triangles to avoid claustrophobia.

Eros in Cancer experiences a certain measure of affinity and ease with erotic transformation. Here the boundaries dissolve into a place of intimate rapport where emotions, fears and pains merge and mingle into one, in the studio or in the bedroom. There can be reluctance in the inevitable letting go.

Eros in Leo has a desire to feel extraordinary in an erotic union or project. The second of the fire signs, Eros here requires energy and returns it in playful abundance. He dazzles in the spotlight of admiration and gives priority to the creative, artistic side of life. Enter the drama and the theatrics!

Eros in Virgo has the propensity to analyze passion extensively before giving into them. There is an earthy, sensual quality to love and creativity, once the critical eye is closed. They relish the moment but do care what any bystanders might think. This makes the taboo uncomfortable and often inevitable.

Eros in Libra wants, above all, to participate with a significant other in many splendid activities. Eros here longs for beauty and refinement, yet grapples with intensity and closeness. Life needs to unfold pleasantly, but watch out for the Devil's advocate if things get out of balance.

Eros in Scorpio has desires that are potent, fixed and involve a great deal of focus. He is interested in a deeply personal form of union and creative expression. There are few qualms about ripping off the surface scab of social superficiality to expose the true nature of one's soul beneath.

Eros in Sagittarius is spontaneous, exuberant, adventurous and fickle. He prefers a lively experience with the beloved, one that will take him to the limitless reaches of the universe. Being with this Eros means being ready to soar. Travel is his watchword and that does not always mean physical!

Eros in Capricorn has powerful concepts about what is good and what is good enough. There is a need for competence and capability and an earthy sensuality that only unleashes after great time or deliberation. He looks for worldly results, until the mystic arrives. Then, the journey really begins.

Eros in Aquarius carries a high voltage charge with stimulating encounters that need a lot of air space to conduct electromagnetic charms. He desires the weird, the wonderful and the unusual, in the beloved or through the creative process. Fixed on autonomy, he may find intimacy brings shattering transformation.

Eros in Pisces wants to lose all sense of where he ends and the beloved begins. He desires a return to paradise, a drink from the Holy Grail and union with the divine. He is willing to give up everything to melt and merge until he is no longer distinct but part of a greater whole.

Eros in Aspect to the Natal Planets

The madness of being in love clearly shows many characteristics of soul activity: interference with plans and projects, long periods of time spent in daydream...projection of ideal fantasies...confusion about personal goals and values, a weakening of willpower—all of these reveal an activation of the deeper strata of the soul. --Thomas Moore

The aspects link the planets, points and angles together in the horoscope, creating indivisible bonds. Some ties will be harmonious; others will seem antithetic. The vital point is that they are connected at all. By looking at the Eros aspects in the natal chart, deeper meanings emerge.

If Eros links to the Sun, then evoking passions and erotic love will ignite an awareness of the essential Self. Contact with the Moon can link erotic love to comfort and nurturing while Mercury may want to express passion through the written or spoken word. Venus contacts may heighten the value of erotic love, combining it with charm and grace, while a Mars aspect may use it as a weapon or defense. Jupiter might dive into intimacy without hesitation; Saturn may be reluctant to let down his guard. A contact with Chiron may bring a deep insight through erotic love, and Uranus can mean sudden transformation or unexpected encounters. Neptune aspects to Eros may search for divine union through the erotic, more or less constantly; Pluto may tear down and rebuild the heart, over and over again.

Eros in the Houses

Any planet or sign in a house always suggests the most natural way to unfold the life plan in the area of life the house represents--Howard Sasportas

Eros by house pinpoints where, on an inner or outer level, erotic love may awaken. It also describes a place where Eros may arrive, unannounced, to create, challenge and transform us.

Eros in the first House contributes towards the general approach to life. He may be part of the mask. Eros in the second house values erotic union as a resource. It's like a second skin. When Eros resides in the third house, communication and familiar environments can hold a passionate experience of love and creative expression.

When Eros is found in the fourth house, the erotic links closely together with experiences of home and family. It resides in the roots of the being. Eros in the fifth house can appear through self-expression—offspring, art work, performances, novels. There is a drive for distinction. Eros in the sixth may have some finely tuned proficiency when it comes to passion, art and erotic love! It can manifest in the day to day living.

Eros in the seventh can turn socially significant relationships into erotic unions. The paradox between commitment and transformation abounds. Eros in the eighth house has an increased desire to experience the erotic on a risky, often taboo level. Throw out the rules and enter the depths! With Eros in the ninth house, discovery of new and previously incomprehensible concepts, peoples or vistas ignite feelings of passionate wonder and intrigue. There could be foreign affairs.

Those with Eros in the tenth house want the world to know they are passionate, erotic, potent and charismatic. It may be part of the career. When Eros is found in the eleventh house, friendships, groups and goals take on creative and amorous qualities. A twelfth house Eros may awaken through injury, suffering or confinement. The case of the doctor and patient, or even bereaved brother and widow come to mind. Creative expression comes from the depths of the collective.

Eros by Transit or Progression

"Eros...stalks, goads, ruins, and transforms us... (he) appears to us from the corners of the earth or the depths of self with a force and urgency and sometimes a destructiveness so powerful we cannot help ascribing (it) to a god, for nothing else--no psychologizing, no moralizing--makes

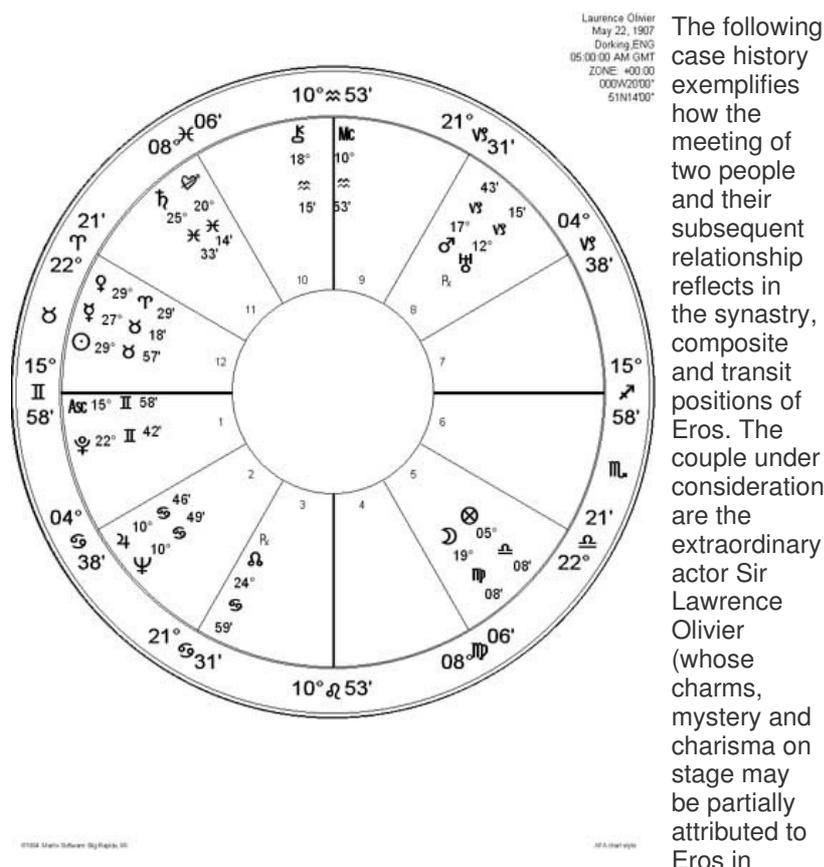
any sense.”--Peter Merin

As Eros moves through the sky by transit, direction, progression or even converse progression, he makes aspects back to all the planets and points in the natal chart. Likewise, the rest of the planets by transit will periodically make aspects to the natal and progressed positions of Eros. These contacts often coincide with a time when erotic love and creative power awakens.

When this happens, the intensity of emotions, the sensations of passionate creative desire and even the experience of falling in love can seem overwhelming. Frequently, there is a tangible component, an event, which can make the compulsive feelings of love and creativity merge with the drive for sexual intimacy. In this case, transits involving Eros may coincide with the appearance of a specific individual that captivates the heart and enraptures the soul.

Case History:

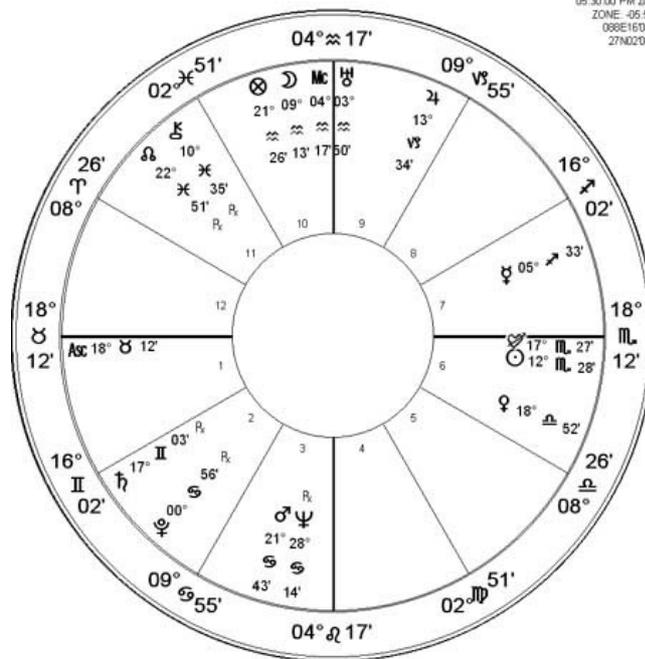
Once again, desire - That looser of limbs and bitterly sweet - Makes me to tremble You are irresistible --Sappho



Pisces exact on his Venus/MC midpoint) and the equally talented, yet mentally tormented, Vivien Leigh. Although these example charts may be read against the plethora of biographies found on both individuals, here the attention will be restricted to their involvement with each other and the nature of 433 Eros.

Lawrence saw Vivien first in May of 1935 when she was performing on stage. Both were married, and both had a child. Lawrence felt an immediate attraction and later that year, during a Christmas party, the two were introduced. At that time, transiting Eros was returning in Lawrence's chart and trine to Vivien's Sun/Eros in Scorpio. Their affair began shortly after. According to accounts, Lawrence said of her, She had . . . an attraction of the most perturbing nature I had ever encountered.

During this period, Jupiter—the planet of expansion and opportunity—was transiting in Scorpio and then Sagittarius, making first a trine to Lawrence's Eros in Pisces and conjunct Vivien's Sun/Eros. It was sextile his Mars and trine both their North Lunar Nodes. Later, it set off his Moon/Eros/Saturn/Pluto/Asc T-square by taking up residence in the empty sign and activated Vivien's exact Eros/Saturn quincunx.



Transiting Neptune—the planet of longings and sacrifice—was moving up to a square with Lawrence’s Ascendant and would spend the next year hovering over his natal Moon in Virgo, again setting off his T-square. It was trine to Vivien’s Ascendant and square to Saturn inconjunct Eros from the fifth house. The compelling affair

remained secret while they worked together both on stage and movie sets.

With Lawrence’s natal Eros sitting right in the thick of this T-square (involving the first, fifth and eleventh houses), we can imagine that emotional attachments were never light or superficial for him. The experiences of woman as Mother, Lover and dark primordial force mixed with his needs for nurturing, security and erotic transformation. The combination could be disquieting, making it difficult to express the divergent feelings. Saturn wanted to control and contain the raw emotions, while Moon/Eros/Pluto would detonate against any such restraints. (It is interesting to note that later in their marriage when Vivien’s episodes of depression and hysteria worsened, Lawrence became the solid and sometime withdrawing container (Saturn) to Vivien’s manic outrage (Moon/Eros/Pluto).

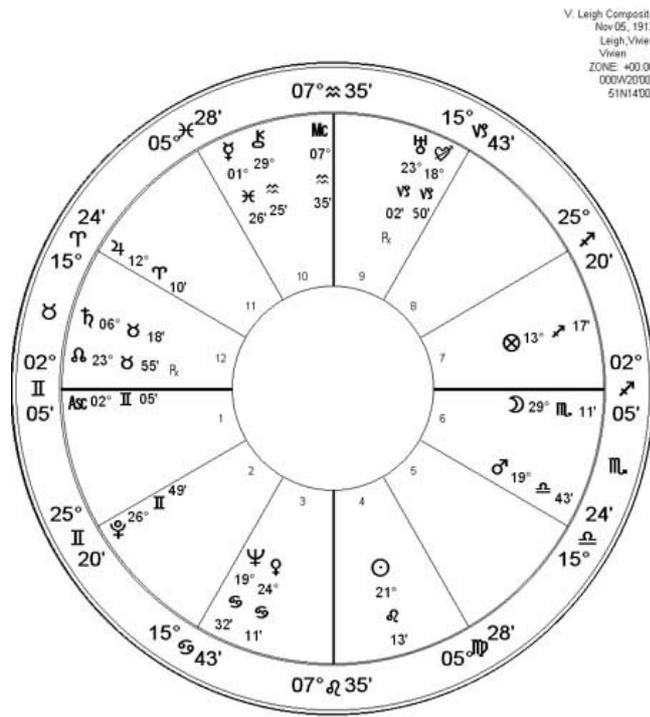
With their Eros’ trine in water, the need to merge and transform in the erotic intensity of a taboo relationship was mutual. That need was also, like its element, boundless. That they found heighten expression on stage and screen is obvious in some of the roles they played! Just being together would have ignited the passions and powered their sense of creativity. They continued their affair until their wedding on August 31, 1940. For a time, the erotic nature of the relationship brought passion, meaning and love to their lives, although moving it from a fifth house love affair to a seventh house commitment took its toll.

Vivien had natal Eros trine to Mars, opposite a Taurus Ascendant and semi-sextile the chart ruler Venus. She also had a wide T-square between the Ascendant/Sun/Eros/Moon, which complicated her search for Self through relationship. The mask she wore (Asc.), the individual she was (Sun/Eros) and what the public wanted her to be (Moon), caused grave conflict. Vivien’s Eros mixed with her sense of identity (conjunction the Sun), and her need for partnership to affirm that identity (conjunct the Descendent). Indeed, she was in relationship from the age of 19 until her death at fifty-three. When asked why she chose Jack Merivale as a companion when her marriage to Lawrence crumbled, she said: I need a man in my life. To be alone is nothing.

In Vivien’s Oscar winning roles as Scarlet in *Gone with the Wind* and as Blanch in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, her Sun/Eros in Scorpio soared and plummeted with the moods of her characters. She identified deeply with each role she played, taking longer periods to come back to herself between films. As time went on, she suffered from increasingly extreme bouts of spectacular excitement and optimism followed by devastating depression. She began drinking heavily.

In the composite chart, the T-square now includes the Sun/Moon/Chiron

and there is a cardinal grand cross involving Eros/Uranus opposite Neptune/Venus square Jupiter opposite Mars. The suddenness in which they met and the extreme emotion and intensity that radically altered their lives (Uranus/Eros), what they gave up, including their children, (Neptune/Venus) and the vividness of their joint productions (Mars opposite Jupiter) reflect these dramatic connections. Douglas Fairbanks Jr. said of them, Their romance grew to unbelievable fiery tension...a romance of classic proportions.



Together, they reached pinnacles of respect and admiration in their careers although Vivien's drinking, manic depression, ill health (she suffered from TB) and tremendous emotional need wore against Sir Lawrence's desire for peace and attention to his projects. He wanted solitude (Eros conjunct Saturn in Pisces in the eleventh,

Sun, Mercury, Venus in the twelfth) and she wanted the drama of social action (Eros/Sun conjunct the Descendent, Mercury in Sagittarius in the seventh, Venus in Libra trine the tenth house Moon).

What their Eros' drew together took twenty-five years to sever. The relationship itself appears to have been deeply transformational for both of them, carrying them to the heights of creativity and the extremes of emotion. They finally divorced in 1960 when transiting Saturn was conjunct their composite Eros (sextile both natal Eros). Vivien died six years later from a resurgence of Tuberculosis, exasperated by smoking and drinking. Sir Lawrence, himself in hospital at that time with cancer, came to her side to mourn her death. He continued to act until his own death in 1989.

Conclusions

The most beautiful sea hasn't been crossed yet. The most beautiful child hasn't grown up yet.

Our most beautiful days

we haven't seen yet.

And the most beautiful words I wanted to tell you

I haven't said yet ..."

Nazim Hikmet 1945

Eros functions most wholly through the magical encounters of sudden and often compulsive erotic intimacy, creative design and poetic expression. These experiences open us to the world of passion, desire and intense relating that brings a sense of life that no other occurrence can match. Suddenly, events become more meaningful, colors enrich, archetypal figures emerge and dreams turn into waking reality. Our link with the divine, with the desire to live completely and fully without apprehension or constraint, animates with a voraciousness paralleled only by other extreme events such as birth, or even death. Such is the nature of erotic love.

By including Eros in the natal, synastry and composite horoscope and by watching his positions by transit and progression, we can hope to learn more about our innate erotic nature. To ignore this god, even unwittingly,

is to ignore a piece of our own heart.

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Composite is constructed on the midpoint method, using midpoints for Asc.and MC as well as planets and points.

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Eros, provisional designation 1898 DQ, is a stony and elongated asteroid of the Amor group and the first discovered and second-largest near-Earth object with a mean-diameter of approximately 16.8 kilometers. Visited by the NEAR Shoemaker space probe in 1998, it became the first asteroid ever studied from orbit. The eccentric asteroid was discovered by German astronomer Carl Gustav Witt at the Berlin Urania Observatory on 13 August 1898, and later named after Eros, a god from Greek mythology.