

Eros Rising, Sex Therapy and Uranus in Taurus



by Andrea Conlon

Much has been made of the seven-year transit of Uranus in Taurus regarding its potential for shake ups in the financial markets. *But what about the other side of this transit, that of Eros and our relationship with the body?* I think it deserves at least as much consideration.

In the divine mind of the zodiac, Taurus is the earthy embodied aspect of Eros itself! Ruled by Venus, Taurus represents the most purely earthy and sensual expression of Venus, the Goddess of Love. Our capacity for sexual pleasure is our birthright as embodied humans. Let's be inspired by the potentials of Uranus in Taurus to be awakened into the sacred physical.

In this article, I'd like to explore the birth chart of sex therapist Dr Ian Kerner, whose Sun sign, not so coincidentally, is Taurus. Dr. Kerner works with all flavors of sexual relationships and is known for his groundbreaking work *She Comes First*, and more recently, for *So Tell Me About the Last Time You Had Sex*. His focus is on empowering all couples to open to this potent energy in our lives. As he says, quoting from the Upanishads, *"We are told that the energy that supports all creation manifests as the warmth that arises when we are touched"*. What a beautiful statement, and how essentially Taurean in spirit.

From the perspective of his cultural contribution in the area of sexuality, his chart contains a wealth of resonant symbolism. First, we see a powerful conjunction of Sun/Mars/Ceres in Taurus in the fifth house. This indicates that embodied sensual pleasure is at the core of his identity; a naturally bold and sensual eroticism.

As the Sun's natural house, the fifth is the house of self-expression, love affairs, children, play and pleasures of all kinds. But Steven Forrest has perhaps the most profound understanding of the fifth house from an evolutionary perspective. He

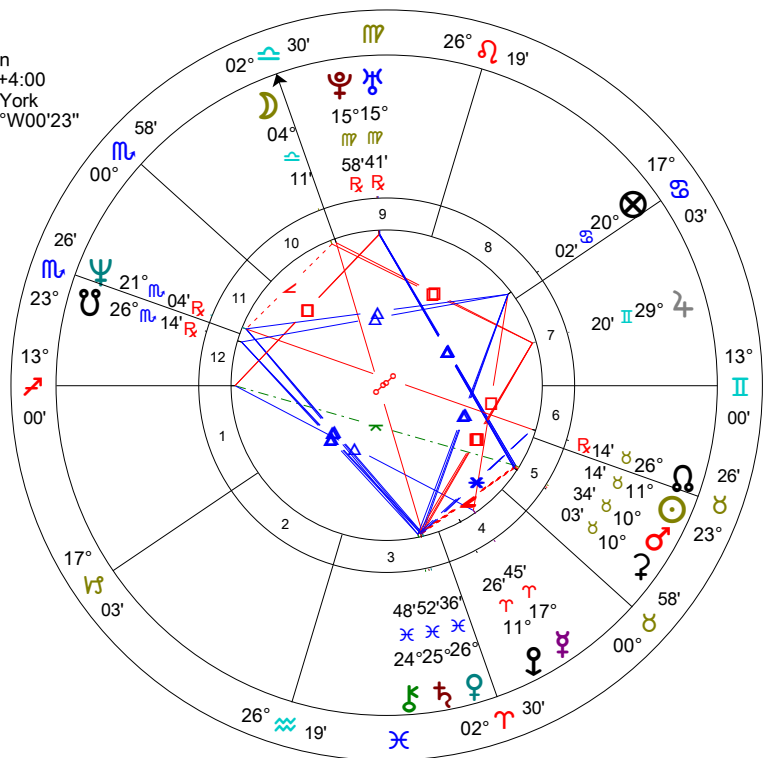
notes that life experiences can harden us and shut us down. Existence on planet Earth has always contained a great deal of struggle and adversity, with its history of violence and cruelty. Forrest asserts that to come into this life with a powerful fifth house means that *pleasure* is restorative to the soul, and a necessary method of healing. The importance of pleasure should not be trivialized. And while all aspects of sexuality are sensationalized in our culture, it is ironically also trivialized. We do not live in a sex positive world, and those who dare to speak and write about it are trafficking in taboo areas.

Next, we see a Libra Moon at the MC. The symbolism of the counselor shines forth! Therapists need to have strong connecting, relational aspects in their charts, and a Libran Moon exemplifies these qualities. Through his work, his lunar instincts have found a natural expression in nurturing the relational lives of others. This is his worldly mission and gift to the community. This Sun/Moon blend finds quite a literal expression in sex therapy.

Sex therapy is intrinsically radical and did not exist before the work of Masters and Johnson. Again, we find resonance in Ian's chart. He was born in the middle 60s, and so the cultural and sexual revolution of that era is also a piece of his soul. His chart contains an almost perfect conjunction of Uranus/Pluto in the ninth house in trine to Sun/Mars/Ceres in the fifth. This is an earthy and radical soul. These configura-

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Ian Kerner
Natal Chart
May 1 1966, Sun
10:27 pm EDT +4:00
New York, New York
40°N42'51" 074°W00'23"
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



tions indicate an innate harmony and flow between the philosophy of the sexual revolution and his fifth house inner process. Uranus and Pluto are of course in Virgo, so there is a strongly service oriented dimension to Ian's life as well.

Ian has endeared himself to men and women with his first book *She Comes First*, a manual on cunnilingus but more generally promotes the importance of women's sexual pleasure and discusses how a woman's partner can participate more intimately in it. In that book, he reveals himself as a feminist man who cares about women's sexual pleasure and 'the orgasm gap' between men and women. Published in 2004, the book continues to sell to young and old alike. 'Cliteracy', a term Ian coined, are important concepts in the field of sexuality today. His new book, *So Tell Me About the Last Time You Had Sex*, represents his mature work as a sex therapist, and offers helpful practices for couples.

There is a pleasure prohibition in our culture. While sex appears everywhere in media, entertainment, and advertising, the deeper reality is that we don't talk about it, but rather treat it as abnormal. This is a natural outgrowth of growing up in families where sex seemed not to exist or was actively shamed. To understand the origin of our society's sexual suppression, we need look no further than religion's long

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history of shaming the body. In Liz Greene's essay on Mars titled 'Thugs and Warriors' she writes, "Christianity has a lot to answer for in terms of distorting the expression of Mars, although the church itself has a long history of violent Martial behavior." But this is pervasive in most other cultures and religions as well.

Both Ian's Sun and Moon are ruled by Venus, which carries enormous importance. It is a particularly complex Venus indeed—in Pisces conjunct Saturn and Chiron! This is the signature of a wounded healer, which could manifest in various ways. Ian has been open about his own history of sexual issues

which led him into the field. One could also speculate that the parental marriage was fraught with difficulty and had a deep impact on him. Ironically, it almost seems a prerequisite for a relationship therapist to have complex and difficult aspects to Venus.

The Virgo/ Pisces axis is one of service. On the high end, Venus in Pisces has innate qualities of compassion and devotion. The added complexity of Venus conjunct Saturn and Chiron symbolize the need to wrestle with the relational pain in our human condition, and the pain of wounded trust. For this kind of person, the suffering in the human collective cannot be ignored. The Saturn/Chiron conjunction in Pisces symbolizes a profound spiritual wound to humankind. *Indeed, is not the shaming and debasement of our sexuality one of the most egregious wounds we all carry?* It is a spiritual service to help people with their sex lives because sex is a sacred energy.

The Venus/Saturn/Chiron conjunction falls in the third house of learning, speaking, writing, and teaching, which Ian embodies as a sex educator and writer, as well as a psychotherapist. He compassionately engages with others to dispel sexual ignorance and repair damaged love lives. His unique voice brings humor and playfulness to the serious topic of our sexual anxieties. You might find yourself laughing out loud reading his work.

Sagittarius is the Ascendant in this chart, which promotes his bold and confident outreach into the world. Sagittarius's ruling planet, Jupiter, describes how we seek higher meaning. Here Jupiter in Gemini in the seventh house of relationships symbolizes an engaged and questing spirit, a quality that is readily seen in Ian's work. He thrives on dialogue with a diversity of people. In particular, he is comfortable with and supportive of sexual diversity. Therapists are taught to 'be curious' about their clients and their patterns, and with Ian this quality of curiosity comes as second nature.

The last piece of Ian's chart I'd like to focus on are the Nodes of the Moon. In a broad sense, the Nodes of the Moon represent our path of destiny (Rudhyar). One of my wise mentors said that the entire chart funnels into the nodes! Who were you before you were in this body? The South Node reveals traces brought over from the karmic past. It is the royal road to understanding anyone's unresolved karma, and the wounding experiences that seek resolution (Forrest).



ASTROLOGY *and* RELATIONSHIP

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In Ian's chart, the South Node lies in Scorpio, the sign of sex in the twelfth house, conjunct Neptune and in trine to the stellium in Pisces. Again, we see such powerful archetypal symbolism for a sex therapist. *Scorpio* is the sign that traffics with the taboo, the extreme, the edgy – unlike Taurus' need for grounded simplicity. It seems spot on with work involving the taboo topic of sex. Ian identifies with being a sexual detective, sleuthing out the deeper underlying issues in the sex lives of the people he works with. Thus we see both sides of the Taurus/Scorpio axis in Ian's chart and life.

One of the hallmarks of Ian's work is 'psychogenic arousal', or the role that fantasy can play in sexual arousal. With Neptune, the planet of imagination, in the passionate sign of Scorpio and in trine to Venus in Pisces, it would be hard to come up with an astrological signature more suited to sexual fantasy. One senses a frustration in him and his writings that this area does not come easily to his patients. If I were his astrologer, I'd counsel him to be patient with those of us who don't have this natural imaginative capacity.

This configuration in Ian's chart suggests an interesting idea; in addition to the unabashed sensuality reflected there, a deep sensitivity and soulfulness come out in his work with his Neptune trine Venus/Saturn/Chiron in Pisces. The Neptune in Scorpio cohort naturally links trance states

and sexual passion. But here, Neptune is connected to a South Node in the twelfth house, which suggests some kind of profound loss of self. Perhaps it symbolizes a past life where someone of a passionate nature was in a setting where the *sacrifice* of sexuality was required - like a monastery. The Pluto rulership of the South Node in the ninth house of religion, in Virgo, is also consistent with this possibility. Of course, any planetary placement can be read on many levels, almost like a dream. This is the case with Pluto in the ninth house. It represents both Ian's current philosophical lens, and the wounding from his karmic past.

Continuing with this idea of Kerner's life path and soul work, we can bring in other threads. Although the surface of the chart and identity is the Sun sign of Taurus, underneath in the deep river of soul is Scorpio, the sign that is known for its passion and intensity. Scorpio's intensity is driven by the need to bond deeply, and for emotional truth. As a sex therapist, we can see Ian as the shaman who guides others in retrieving a piece of their sexual soul. The Taurus/Scorpio axis is such a rich part of this chart, and integrating this axis is his evolutionary path.

Two final points about the South Node... That it is conjunct Neptune in Scorpio indicates mystical and occult experience and being in the twelfth house, shows a wisdom that is born of loss. With this in mind, I would say that Ian is healing an old karmic wound around sexuality, while taking us all with him on the healing journey of reclaiming our own capacity for sexual pleasure. He advocates for all of us. While many might be satisfied with only psychological or scientific explanations for sexual dysfunction, we perhaps shouldn't be so quick to ignore the karmic and past life traumas that

are key factors a person is working through in this life. The nodal axis provides the psychic fuel for who we are today.

Then there is the North Node, which symbolizes our most important and pressing focus for soul growth. Ian's North Node lies in Taurus in the sixth house of service and mentoring. At the conclusion of his recently published book, Ian writes that he hopes to be a sexual mentor to others as he had hoped for a sexual mentor when he needed one as a younger man. Ian has stated in interviews that one of the greatest compliments he can receive is getting emails from parents that they bought *She Comes First* for a son or daughter. He is living his dharma, which is to be in practical service to others through the sixth house north node in Taurus.

These are some of the core themes in Dr Kerner's chart. He is a respected authority in the field of sexuality. Many will appreciate the naturalness with which he writes and speaks about sex, as well as his regard for the sexual pleasure of women. It's not that he has discovered sex, but that he has remembered it - which too many of us have forgotten or neglected. His work is a significant contribution to the collective shift toward a more open and healthy relationship to our sexuality which lies at the very core of our humanity.

In conclusion, Ian's life and chart are a beautiful example of the embodiment of transiting Uranus in Taurus. Uranus excites, awakens, and liberates, while also disrupting old forms. This is the part of Uranian energy most of us resist, and which can be so fearsome. The transit through Taurus, one of the key zodiacal signs of Eros, potentiates a renewed relationship with love, desire, and pleasure. As Ian has said, there are many paths to pleasure. Perhaps we can find some new ones with the passage of Uranus through Taurus. With Ian and others pointing the way, it could even be a lot of fun.

"With life as short as a half-taken breath, don't plant anything but love"

— Rumi

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