

MANIFESTING SOUL PURPOSE

ERIS in The Charts of Two Women Artists

by Andrea Conlon

This article explores the meaning of the dwarf planet Eris for an individual, as reflected in the charts of two women vocal artists who couldn't be more divergent musically and culturally, **Aretha Franklin** and **Deva Premal**. Deva is a German-born European, and Aretha was African-American. Almost everyone knows Aretha Franklin, 'The Queen of Soul,' but you may be less familiar with Deva Premal, a monumental presence in the genre of sacred Sanskrit chanting and hymns. Both women have moved me deeply and made huge contributions to our culture.

I was inspired to write this article by a curious happenstance. In looking up the birth data of these two musical Goddesses, I discovered that both have *exact Sun/Eris conjunctions in Aries, in the 5th House!* *What might it mean if you, too, carry the Eris archetype strongly in your*

birth chart? I hope you find this piece useful in your life and work.

Sun Shine Eris!

In the charts of Aretha and Deva, we have examples of a pure expression of Eris, both with partile Sun/Eris conjunctions. Any planet conjunct the **Sun** fuses its qualities with the very essence of Self and describes how one's creative life force shines. The Sun also relates to a person's unique life purpose, and we will see this reflected in these artists' lives. This conjunction is amplified outward into a creative

expression because of the **5th House** placement. Leaving tangible evidence of one's soul process in the hands of the world is a fifth house process.¹ Indeed, both artists have expressed the unique soul mission of Eris in the 5th House. Their artistic output is exceptional and highly individualistic.

Collective Eris

Eris was discovered in 2005. In the astrological community, we take the discovery of a planet to correlate with a new impulse to be integrated into the collective psyche, signaling an evolutionary step to be taken. There has been some speculation about the meaning of Eris collectively but very little about the significance of this influence in personal charts. So, let's start by looking at its effect on the collective.

In his brilliant book *Discovering Eris* (2012), Keiron Le Grice outlines many global problems that seem to correlate with Eris.² The ecological crisis and global terrorism are two fundamental problems synchronous with Eris's discovery. In particular, the ecological crisis shows the disastrous separation of human civilization from nature. Through diverse expressions of globalization, we have become aware of our

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Aretha Franklin. Kingkongphoto & www.celebrity-photos.com from Laurel Maryland, USA, CC BY-SA 2.0
Deva. Original uploaded by Jalal (Transferred by Maurilbert) CC BY-SA 3.0

interconnectedness and the need for global unity. What happens in one part of the world is telegraphed throughout. COVID-19 has been a recent lesson on this.

Another issue is that of increasing financial inequality. The phenomenal wealth of a few contrasted with widespread poverty today can be seen as a consequence of unchecked capitalism and corporate hegemony.

Another concern is the focus on image and the tendency to distraction in our current culture.³

These global problems describe the most salient correlates for Eris today. I believe they correspond to Eris, the warrior goddess, manifesting in themes of strife, discord, and resentment caused by injustice.

Strife and Discord

Le Grice impressively unpacks Eris's mythological theme of 'the Goddess of strife and discord.' Here *strife* is seen as driving human evolution and is a 'fundamental cosmological principle.'⁴ He writes, 'while the words discord and strife usually carry wholly negative connotations, ... [we should] direct our attention to the deeper philosophical principles they represent.'⁵ He notes that Jesus, Nietzsche, and Aurobindo have all spoken of the constructive value of strife. Strife and discord are necessary steps toward greater planetary unity. The strife and discord we are now wrestling with is the threat of climate catastrophe.

Almost everyone alive today has **Eris in Aries** with her 557-year orbit around the zodiac, meaning we will live through this for a long while. Eris, as the sister of **Mars**, suggests that all our Eris placements potentially partake of either a more evolved Arian pioneering, courageous spirit or the lower manifestation of violent discord. Our present conflicts and war seem to be the latter, also fueled by the current long **Eris/Pluto square**.

Eris and Pluto

Eris' place in the solar system is highly suggestive. We know that, for the outer planets, the further you get from the Sun, the deeper the archetypal principle that is expressed.

Le Grice proposes that "Eris is most likely a deeper principle than Pluto, representing a dimension of experience that can only be consciously realized after the 'descent' into the Plutonic underworld of the psyche."⁶ This suggests a kinship between Eris and Pluto; evolutionarily complex, potentially dark, and destructive.

Pluto was discovered in 1930 and is correlated with events like the rise of fascism leading up to World War II, nuclear

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energy, and the capacity for the wholesale destruction of the planet. Over the years, astrologers have interpreted Pluto in the charts of individuals in various ways. Steven Forrest understands Pluto as our deepest soul wound in need of healing.⁷ Liz Greene posits Pluto as the survival instincts of the collective, the primal force of death and rebirth wired into the natural world.⁸ So, for both Forrest and Greene, Pluto represents a principle of metamorphosis, a place of primal intensity, the duality of power, and powerlessness in the birth chart that requires conscious evolution.

The Warrior Goddess

Henry Seltzer explores Eris's mythic and feminist themes in his excellent book *The Tenth Planet*⁹, one of the only works on Eris for the personal birth chart. It's an appealing and romantic notion, but I believe it's an apt one today where almost everyone alive has Eris in Aries. In this rendition, Eris has a Martial overlay. This goddess manifests as a fighter for justice and the underdog. Seltzer focuses on Eris in the birth charts of the early feminist thinkers.

Resentment and Justice

Righteous resentment is an emotional reaction to mistreatment. It is a form of suffering too commonly disowned. But resentment is a natural reaction to injustice! "Eris, I believe, might therefore correlate with the experience of injustice that underlies resentment and the process of coming to terms with this through greater spiritual and psychological awareness."¹⁰ And, what of justice for the Earth itself? "The ecological crisis might be seen as the unforeseen response and reaction of the Earth to its unintended violation by human civilization."¹¹

Le Grice speculates that **Eris rules Libra**. This is a sign whose meaning, through **Saturn's** exaltation in Libra, has to do with justice and mediating between opposing forces. With Eris in Aries, Libra's opposite sign, we might hope to see the warrior wielding the sword of justice to

protect those who cannot protect themselves. Perhaps Gaia itself is wielding the sword of justice for the crimes against her.

Eris at the Personal Level

So how does all this speak to the personal chart? Moving from these collective themes to the personal chart, we must remember that things don't translate exactly. However, we can take a clue from **Pluto**, closely related to Eris. We don't tell a person in whose chart Pluto is strong that they are a fascist or an embodiment of nuclear destruction. A 'Plutonian person' may be controlling or a criminal but might also be a healer of any ilk, astrologer, therapist, or doctor. A musician is a healer too! A Plutonian person may wield power harnessed for collective good.

Eris in the personal chart partakes of this quality but in a deeper way. It seems to be a drive to activate and express that which is a fundamental quality of a person's being. We can say that Eris is the force for embodying one's soul purpose.¹² We will look at **Deva Premal** and **Aretha Franklin** as shining examples of an 'Eristian' person.

Sun/Eris and the Father

Psychological astrology ascribes to the principle that a planet conjunct the **Sun** tells us something about the archetypal inheritance from the father. With an exact Sun/Eris conjunction, we would expect to see something in the biography of these two women that would also reflect a father who carried a strong soul purpose.

It is well known that Aretha Franklin's father was a powerful and dominant force in her life. Although she struggled to free herself from him to find her creative stride, she remained devoted to him. He was a prominent minister of a Baptist Church in Detroit who was friends with Martin Luther King, Jr., which reflects his strong sense of soul-purpose for spiritual expression, and justice for African-American people.

Deva Premal's father also played a crucial role in her initiation into the musical direction her life took. Her father sang the most sacred Gayatri Mantra to her while

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SACRED SPACE

she was in the womb, and she, in turn, sang this same hymn to him as he died.

For both artists, spirituality is an essential motivation behind their music. Deva Premal is beloved throughout the world for her Sanskrit chants and hymns. To me, her music emanates from The Goddess and brings peace and healing to a world badly in need. The Dalai Lama is one of her fans. Aretha Franklin's Gospel album *Amazing Grace* remains the top-selling gospel collection of all time. Her dominant 9th House and Neptune-ruled South Node reflect a profound orientation to her spiritual life.

Nodal Axis and Other Aspects

It is striking that these two charts have not only exact Sun/Eris conjunctions but also **Scorpio Rising!** And each has a **Virgo/Pisces** Nodal axis, although reversed. We see vividly that the power behind Aretha's voice was fueled by an emotional **Cancer Moon** trine her **Scorpio Ascendant**. Also, **Mars in Gemini** was out of bounds, conjunct **Jupiter in Gemini**. You have only to listen to her scat singing and the way her voice was a raw communication that reached into the human soul to recognize the distinctive signature of her out-of-bounds Mars.

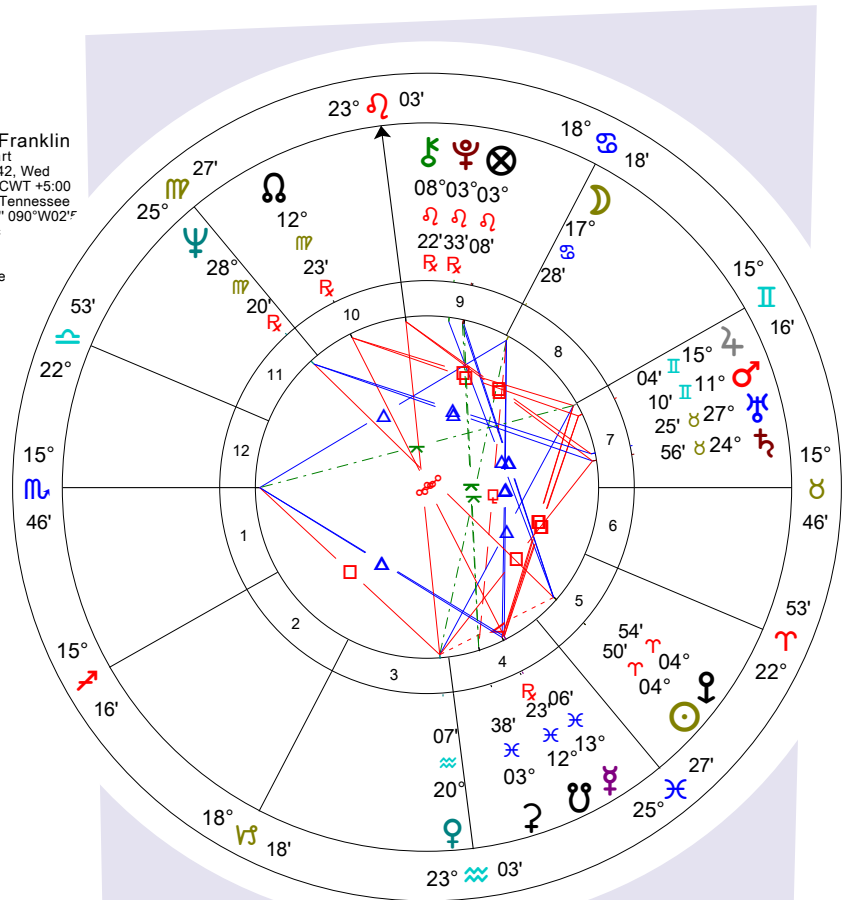
Deva, on the other hand, is a peaceful warrior, a channel for a calm embrace by the divine. Her massive **Aries** energy is ruled by **Mars in Taurus**. We see that her artistry is guided by the Taurean motivations of peace and calm.

Deva landed in Osho's ashram in India at twenty years old, where she met her life partner and musical collaborator Miten. Unlike Aretha, who was a child prodigy, Deva took longer to step into her musical gift and mission.

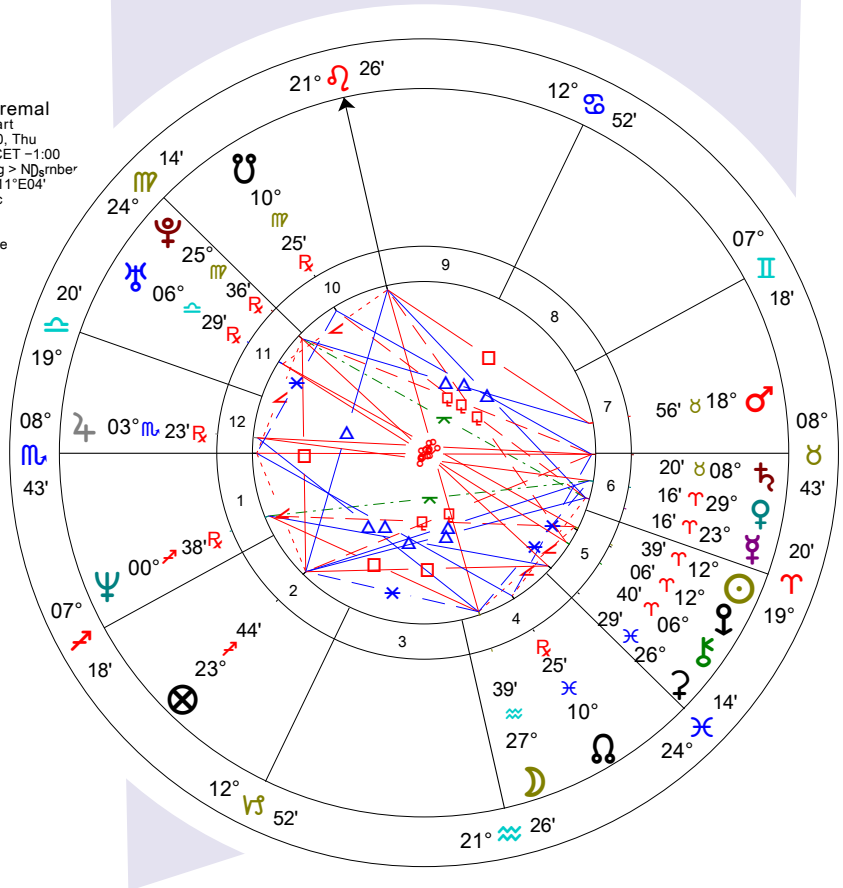
There are strong **Uranian** elements in Deva's chart, with an **Aquarius Moon** and **Uranus in Libra** in the 11th House in **opposition to the Sun/Eris conjunction**.

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Aretha Franklin
Natal Chart
Mar 25 1942, Wed
10:30 pm CWT +5:00
Memphis, Tennessee
35°N08'58" 090°W02'5"
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



Deva Premal
Natal Chart
Apr 2 1970, Thu
9:08 pm CET -1:00
Nuremberg - Nurnber
49°N27' 011°E04"
Geocentric
Tropical
Placidus
Mean Node



She brought forth a new artistic expression that is at the same time emergent from ancient Sanskrit chants, which carry spiritual power. Her voice is beautiful and soothing. As a German-born white person, she stepped out of her own culture and reimagined an ancient and sacred musical tradition.

Deva's chart contains a **North Node in Pisces** in the 4th House, ruled by **Neptune in Sagittarius** in the 1st House **square to**

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the Nodal axis. This is a theme of mystical truth-seeking and her cross-cultural orientation. The classical ruler of the North Node, **Jupiter in Scorpio** in the 12th House, brings a theme of healing through the mysteries transmitted in these ancient hymns. Her 1st House **Neptune in Sagittarius** is a sign of her evolutionary dharma of spiritual leadership, combined with massive Aries drive and leadership. Her music is a spiritual teaching for many.

In Conclusion

Regarding Eris as the Goddess of Strife and Discord, Le Grice writes, *"I wondered whether the strife and discord inherent within nature are now calling our attention to the neglected material realm, whose innate spiritual essence has been forgotten."*¹³ Eris gives us the impetus to meet this challenge.

It will take considerable time and experience for astrologers to discern the diverse meanings of Eris. Still, it seems to lend power and drive to its place in the birth chart, particularly to the principle of manifesting soul purpose. In Aretha Franklin and Deva Premal, we have two inspiring examples of powerful women who took up the quest to express their core essence.

I hope you will begin to resonate with Eris in your chart as a place of your deepest soul purpose. As Aretha sang, let's R E S P E C T the spurned Goddess Eris and all the evolutionary challenges she brings to the table.

REFERENCES

- 1 Spoken in a live seminar by Steven Forrest.
- 2 Keiron Le Grice, *Discovering Eris* (2012) (DE).
- 3 DE, p. 78.
- 4 DE, p. 83.
- 5 DE, p. 124.
- 6 DE, p. 109.
- 7 This is a core tenet of Steven Forrest.
- 8 Liz Greene, from a seminar on Pluto.
- 9 Henry Seltzer, *The Tenth Planet* (2015) (TP).
- 10 DE, p. 76.
- 11 DE, p. 75.
- 12 TP, p. 175.
- 13 DE, p. 81.

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