

The Grand Cross of Easter



April 15, 2014

It is a few hours until the lunar eclipse. Here in Melbourne the Full Moon will occur just minutes before sunset. Mars will have risen. Shortly after, the eclipsed Moon will rise and I am heading off to a local tower where I can climb high to look at the horizon. The sky is mostly clear and so I am hoping my view of the rising eclipsed Moon will be uninterrupted.

This full Moon is important in the western calendar as it marks the first one after the vernal equinox, which designates the date of Easter Sunday. The formula for Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox. The Western church uses the Gregorian calendar to set the date, but the Orthodox Church uses the older Julian calendar. Therefore they generally occur on different dates, but this year both the Western and Orthodox Easter Sundays fall on the same day. The seven days of Jewish Passover this year began last night and end the evening of the 22nd. This week these movable feasts of differing religious persuasions converge.

Easter marks the ancient's consciousness of the cycle of sacrifice and resurrection, death and rebirth, which is seasonally embedded in these religions. However this cycle of dying and resurrecting is a feature of most world mythologies. Central to the Christian idea of Easter is the cross. But the cross predates Christianity; its symbol is ageless, and permeates all cultures. When placed inside the circle it is the symbol of our Earth, our centre. As an archetypal symbol, the cross is present in all of us.

In the heavens a cross is also forming. On Easter Sunday a series of exact planetary aspects begin at 13 degrees of the cardinal signs hinging four planets together in a grand square. This is the 5th exact square in a series of seven that Uranus and Pluto form. Together these herald the opening square of the cycle, which was seeded in the mid 1960's. Uranus and Pluto are transpersonal energies and stress the necessity of a global and transpersonal outlook. These are energies beyond and much larger than us. The control mechanism is not in our hands. These seven squares occur in the period between 2012 and 2015; therefore this is a process, not an event.

Jupiter enters this relationship to form a T-square. By nature, Jupiter is a social planet and has its own cyclical relationship with Uranus and Pluto. It stresses social action and

awareness, conceptualising ways to understand the larger picture taking place. Beliefs are challenged, shattered, fortified, renewed; faith is tested with uncertainty. Jupiter is the symbolic civilising influence of the larger picture. How do we as a society, culture, race and community conceive and understand what is taking place.

Then Mars moves backwards into the empty leg of the T-square to form the grand cross in the sky. Mars is the planet that bears the personal frustration and tension of the cross; it is the urge to do something about our personal and individual agendas focusing on what we want to achieve during this transitional process. While much of the aggravation may not be of our doing, we still carry it. With Mars we have the most choice in how we respond and react. But Mars is retrograde and in Libra and this suggests that our personal will and impulse to act is not all up to us. The invitation is to respond and react as if we are in a relationship, not sole operators in the human matrix. It offers a request for reflection, mediation, contemplation and compromise.

So what does the grand cross mean? As a sign it locates us at a crossroads or crossed paths, a moment of adjustment on personal, social and global levels of being. A choice of direction arises; which path do we travel down? As a symbol it conveys the soulful understanding that we participate in something larger which infuses meaning and allows the mystery to be sacred. Without reverence the mystery becomes vagueness and doubt, even fear, creating anticipation. What does this mean and what will happen? However the grand cross literally plays out, our choice is how we participate with it. Anticipating what it might bring inhibits participation in its mystery. Whatever it brings has already begun and we are at a crossroads with that.

The synchrony with Easter offers us the metaphor that the cross is held within a process and we can honour it as a ritual passage. It is a holiday, a *holy day*. This year the cosmic, religious and man-made calendars are in synch, and so it seems that in some way we all might experience the Stations of the Cross.

April 16, 2014

As I approached the tower I was surprised to find so many others had the same idea, so much so I could not get into its parking lot. So I continued along the highway which also had great views. Cars were everywhere. I was delighted to see so many waiting for the heavenly spectacle. I was not alone. We found a good vantage point. I saw Mars first and then to its right was the charcoaled Full Moon just rising. Awesome. Entranced, we watched it rise across the darkening silhouetted landscape. We drove back home down country roads with the Moon guiding us home. It had begun to brighten. The light grew and demonstrated its phases, first the crescent of light, then half, then full again.

Standing in the stillness of nature, with outlines of mountain ranges in the background and graceful gums at my side, watching the Full Moon erase her darkened shadow, bright Mars at her side, stillness was inside of me. The majesty of the heavens' patterns is not just outside of us, but part too of our inner landscape. And we can willingly participate with both.

Following are the exact times that the stages of the cross form with some commentary on the unfolding of the three planetary pair cycles.

Planetary Aspect	Date	Planetary Positions
♃ □ ♃	20 April at 5.28 pm	♃ 13♌29; ♃ 13♍29
♃ ♂ ♀	21 April at 9.26 am	♃ 13♌34; ♀ 13♍34 R
♃ □ ♀	21 April at 5.21 am	♃ 13♍34; ♀ 13♍34 R
♂ □ ♃	23 April at 5.27 am	♂ 13♌ 48 R; ♃ 13♌ 48
♂ ♂ ♃	23 April at 5.08 pm	♂ 13♌ 39 R; ♃ 13♍ 39
♂ □ ♀	23 April at 11.38 pm	♂ 13♌ 33 R; ♀ 13♍33 R

	Commentary
♃ □ ♃	This is the final of 3 squares between these planets that mark the opening square of the 14-year cycle that began in 2010/11 in the last degrees of ♃ and the first degree of ♍. This is an unrestrained and adventuresome cycle which suggests innovative shifts in cross-cultural awareness, travel, education and beliefs; social awareness through liberation and visionary movements. It suggests the growth of the Promethean character, the spirit of change and rebellion against the status quo. In a system where there is already turmoil this could be volatile and eruptive; however it is also an image of possible inventive and ground-breaking action taken to address global dilemmas.
♃ ♂ ♀	This is the last of 3 oppositions in the 'full moon' phase of the 13/14-year cycle that began at the end of 2007 in the 29 th degree of ♃. Pluto is interested in eliminating deep-seated problems, and bringing repressed issues and taboos to the surface. It is also concerned with power and powerlessness so Pluto's opposition to Jupiter may reflect the exposure of scandal and deceit in the affairs of those invested with power in religious, educational, political and social institutions. Ethics and morality or the lack of these is uncovered.
♃ □ ♀	This is the 5 th in the series of 7 opening squares of the cycle that began in 1965/66 at 16/17 ♍. Due to Pluto's varying speeds through the signs the cycle can vary between 110 - 150 years. This cycle suggests that new ideologies, opinions, attitudes and ways of thinking develop and arouse new urges in societies that have become fixed. The opening square suggests movement and action, an instinctive impulse arises to act on the intention of the cycle which appeals to order and coherence. Consciousness is shone on deeply compulsive and blind actions of the collective. This cycles maps out global change through generations; the 1 st generation to carry this seed impulse is approaching 50.