

April 2014 Grand Cross: Drawing a Line in the Sand

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A Grand Cross is a well-known astrological configuration formed by two sets of opposed symbolic points, with each set of opposites being perpendicular to the other. Grand Crosses are most significant when formed by planets. They are more rare than frequent, and their significance varies based on the particular planets involved and their respective speeds. For instance, Grand Crosses involving the Moon as one of their four points are quite brief, with “life-spans” measured in mere hours. More durable, longer-lasting Grand Crosses carry greater symbolic power.

Displayed on an astrological chart form with aspects drawn in, Grand Crosses appear as a square box with an “X” through the middle. (See the graphic figure below on next page.)

The vast majority of Grand Crosses occur in signs of the same modality — *cardinal, fixed, or mutable* modes. Cardinal Crosses are crisis-oriented and focused on problem-solving. Fixed Crosses involve values and policies. Mutable Crosses pertain to understanding and acceptance.

In late April, 2014, a particularly important Grand Cross will take shape for about six days in Cardinal signs between the planets Mars (in mid-Libra), Jupiter (in mid-Cancer), Uranus (in mid-Aries), and Pluto (in mid-Capricorn).

This is essentially a one-time event from **April 20th–25th, 2014**, with Mars and Pluto retrograde while Jupiter and Uranus are direct.

The Grand Cross occurs near the end of the Jupiter-Uranus-Pluto T-Square that began at wide orb in August 2013, with Mars finally arriving in late April to fill in the missing fourth point.

This Grand Cross is most exact around midday of Wednesday, April 23rd (GMT), with all four planets in the 14th degree (13°+) of cardinal signs:

Mars at **13° 37'** of **Libra**
Jupiter at **13° 53'** of **Cancer**
Uranus at **13° 39'** of **Aries**
Pluto at **13° 34'** of **Capricorn**

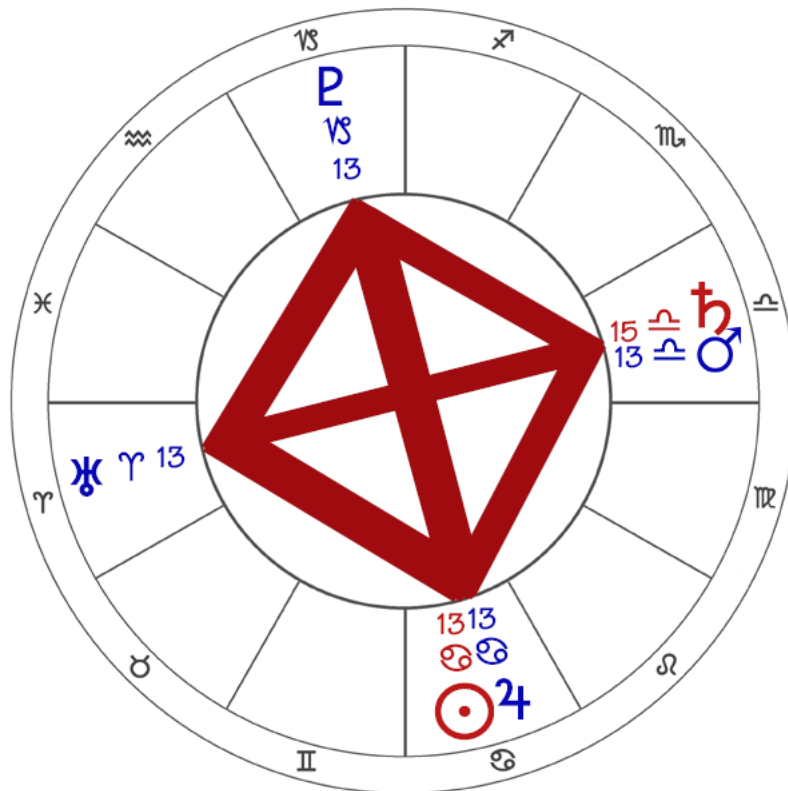
This is the most provocative "trigger" alignment that will occur during the entire three-year square between Uranus and Pluto, with their seven exact 90° passes between June 2012 and March 2016. Part of what makes the Grand Cross alignment so ripe with meaning is that Uranus and Pluto make the fifth of their seven exact squares during the Cross (on April 21st). That, friends, is very potent symbolic dynamite, with Mars as the blasting cap.

To add yet another layer to this poetically explosive cake, the late April Grand Cross falls within tight orb of the Sun-Saturn square in the July 4th, 1776 USA natal chart, which is the primary astrological indicator of the core paradoxes inherent in the American Experience (see my *Commentary #10: Uranus-Pluto and the USA Chart*). Well, gee whiz.

Cardinal Grand Cross

21 April 2014

(exact date of fifth of seven partile Uranus-Pluto squares)



transiting planets in blue

U.S. Sun and Saturn in red

No doubt many astrologers will be paying close attention to world news all month, but particularly during the fourth week in April, watching for any developments in civilization or the natural world that might correspond to a major disruption in the status quo.

My own orientation is a bit different. While I may note any specific occurrences in our collective life that happen in late April, I don't regard the Grand Cross primarily as an indicator of events. For me, the symbolic meaning of the Grand Cross is that of a boundary that separates "before" from "after." Before the alignment, one set of conditions or currents exist in the archetypal flow that massages our collective unconscious. After the alignment, a new and altered set of conditions or archetypal currents takes over, and our collective unconscious is massaged in a different direction. This is akin to the winds on the ocean. Sailboats can still navigate to go where they choose, but they must reset their sails to account for the shifted winds. Tacking against the wind may replace sailing with the wind at one's back, or vice versa.

The flaw in the metaphor is that sailors are well aware of the winds, and so are unlikely to miss changing conditions. By contrast, the archetypal winds through which collective humanity "sails" exert their influence beneath the level of ordinary consciousness. Like the invisible water around the fish, the archetypal currents through which we swim are imperceptible to most people. And even for that percentage of human beings who can "feel" the shifts in the archetype current, making the necessary adjustments to maintain a chosen course is difficult. It's one thing to reset the sails on a boat and execute different sailing maneuvers. It's quite another thing to consciously adjust beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in the complicated stew of private and shared human experience.

We are all creatures of our times, actors in an unfolding drama, and — to one extent or another — we all read our lines from the script. Yes, latitude exists for improvisation, characterization, and moving from one role to another. We are not required to be mere automatons (even though some humans might as well be robots). We are permitted to perform with heart, gusto, grace, and intelligence. But the story itself is moving on — the plot thickens, as has often been said — and we the actors must move with it.

Another similar way of describing the meaning of the April Grand Cross would be to suggest that this brief alignment represents the symbolic moment of "critical mass" in the unfolding Uranus-Pluto square.

Let me offer one among many possible examples of what I mean by "critical mass:"

In the nearly two years since the Uranus-Pluto square made its first pass, we've seen a gradual and sporadic ramping-up of the symbolic meanings of the square — radical and revolutionary changes in the status quo of how we humans live together on this planet with each other and with the rest of Mother Nature's living world.

For instance, denial of climate change — either as a significant and ongoing phenomena or as something directly attributable to human activity — was in full swing in 2012. Spokespersons for denial, mainly in politics and corporate business, screamed their screed loudly and used every available traditional media outlet to pooh-pooh the idea of climate change and promote their own views, namely, that everything is "normal," and that we should stop worrying about

disruptions in climate and the environmental stability of the earth. Over the first two years of the Uranus-Pluto square, that onslaught of luddite protest to reality has gradually quieted to a lower but still persistent background growl.

April 2014 may represent a kind of "line in the sand." Before April, climate change deniers worked hard to present their views as the "sane" ones, while simultaneously painting those of us who see climate change as real with every slur their broad brushes could muster. We were "kooks," "pessimists," "tree-huggers," "pointy-headed scientists," "dystopian doomers," or even co-conspirators in some liberal/progressive plot to frighten people to death and thus win votes or garner money. These are much the same people as the "drill, baby, drill" crowd who profit from continuing reliance on fossil fuels and deny any looming energy crisis.

After April, however, the Grand Cross implies that those who deny climate change may be seen increasingly by the public as the real kooks or hidden agenda types looking to feather their own nests by opposing the hard truth of what's happening. In other words, the votes are in, and the losers are those with their heads in the sand.

While people from every country and culture are contributing — either actively or passively — to the conditions of modern civilization that produce the climatic aberrations that destabilize the natural world, America is the only one of the most powerful nations on earth that has thus far staunchly refused to acknowledge this dangerous development in our environment, despite massive evidence to the contrary.

From April on, and with progressively more weight in the years ahead, consensus is likely to be reached that human activities are producing the conditions that result in disruptive and potentially disastrous changes in the natural regulatory systems that maintain the homeostasis of weather and the environment. Steps will be taken. Laws will be passed. Money will be spent. Whether these measures will be wise or foolish, effective or useless, well-received or rejected by the body politic, I do not know and will not hazard a guess. But I would suggest that April 2014 is the point past which pressure for these kinds of measures begins to build in earnest among the general population, and any government that refuses to implement such reforms will face a growing public outcry that could eventually lead to revolution, probably abetted by further breakdowns in the diminishing effectiveness of the established institutional order.

My best interpretation as an astrologer is that many such issues that divide us will be subject to the same upwelling away from the existing status quo and toward provocative change from May 2014 on. Politics, business, economic and financial issues, concerns about race and gender, energy, food and water, toxic environments, medicine, education, etc. will all be more and more subject to serious, sometimes profound change in the years ahead that represents an end to "business as usual."

Of course, universal agreement about anything is next to impossible for human beings. Wildly divergent opinions about every aspect of human experience will

continue to be put forth by individuals and groups. Nonetheless, history reveals trends and tides, and in this decade the trend is toward increasing recognition that the way we've lived over the past two centuries of "modern civilization" — however understandable those developments may have been, given the conditions that spawned them — has led us to the brink of disaster.

Uranus and Pluto leave no doubt that dramatic changes are imminent, one way or another, either chosen by us or forced upon us. Our choices over the past 50 years especially may not be significantly more egregious or wrong-headed than those of earlier periods, but having amassed so much more power, those choices carried more far-reaching repercussions. From this point on, whatever we choose (or don't choose) has even greater impact on our lives and the world that supports us. Throughout our evolution, human folly has had painful, sometimes tragic, but always limited effects. Those limits have been removed by our overwhelming numbers and collective power. Our lack of wisdom now has potentially fatal consequences on a massive scale.

Will we come to our senses, begin to grow up as a species, and make wiser or at least better choices for the future? That remains to be seen.

As we look back from the end of this decade in 2019, we may see 2014 as the fulcrum, the year when humanity — or at least those elites in each society who manage the institutions and make social policy — began to realize and acknowledge that sweeping changes in how we live and conduct our affairs were not only necessary, but inevitable.

I could be wrong, of course, but that's how I interpret the meaning of this month's Grand Cross.