Cosmic In-Sight #3 by Gael Chilson, www.athomewiththestarsastrology.com

The current planetary conundrum - four heavyweights in square and opposition to each other, more or less, locked into this Grand Cross formation for what may seem to some an agonizingly long time, calls to my mind the image of fermentation.

Fermentation is defined by the Worldbook Dictionary in the following ways: "v.i. 1. To undergo a gradual chemical change in which substances, especially bacteria or yeast change sugar into alcohol and produce carbon dioxide; 2. To be excited; seethe with agitation or unrest. v.t. 1. To cause to ferment. Enzymes help ferment animal and vegetable matter; 2. To act on as a ferment; 3. Figurative - to cause unrest in; excite; agitate; 4. Figurative - to inflame; torment; exacerbate."

In the case of this planetary configuration which includes Mars, Jupiter, Uranus and Pluto, it seems the planets are acting like enzymes. Their energy fields are lining up in such a way as to catch our planet, Earth, in the crosshairs, so to speak, heating up the energy field, inciting unrest, agitation and tumult: a transformational process similar to that of fermentation.

We have two planets, Mars and Jupiter, that normally travel fairly quickly over degrees of the zodiac, usually spending no more than one to two days on any one degree, actually hanging on one degree for a whole month! Not only that but they are doing that in the degrees pertinent to the Grand Cross alignment, and although not exactly at the same month, they follow each other in a one-two punch that keeps the heat on these same degrees of Cardinal/Householder Signs for a long period of time. This commences with Jupiter reaching 10 degrees 59 minutes of Cancer, by retrograde, on February 15, 2014 and not leaving that degree until March 25, having gone stationary-direct (resuming prograde motion) on March 6, 2014 at 10 degrees 27 minutes. Mars returns by retrograde motion to 9 degrees 59 minutes of Libra May 7, 2014 and doesn't leave that degree until June 2, having gone stationary-direct on May 19, 2014 at 9 degrees 2 minutes.

The retrograde motion of any planet is, of course, a matter of perception from our Earth centered viewpoint. The planets in retrograde seem to go backwards in relation to the backdrop of the Zodiacal stars, stop at what can be termed a "still point" and then resume forward motion. We can think of this in terms of a re-investigation of that material which only a short time before these planetary forces activated in a forward motion.

Jupiter represents the principle of expansion which is easy to understand since this gaseous planet is the biggest planet in our solar system with an internal combustion heat source that almost allowed it to be a small sun. How do humans expand and what allows human expansion around the globe - their belief systems. Hence, Jupiter is associated with religious belief systems and dogma. Let us not forget that even science can resemble religion. All of our concepts about the status of life may be attributed to a belief in what is or is not so.

Add to this Jupiterian principle the idea of the planet currently residing in the Sign of Cancer, the archetype of family: that which nurtures and protects the seed from germination to fruition. Under this fermentation process there is bound to be a lot of tumult and agitation relative to our concern for our families, our tribe, our nation. What must we all go through in order to arrive at the viewpoint that we all live on one Earth that supports and nurtures us all? Without a healthy Earth we may all be doomed.

According to the "Sabian Symbols As An Oracle" by Lynda Hill, in which an image is ascribed for each degree of the Zodiac, the degree upon which Jupiter rests for such a long time is the 11th degree of Cancer. (All degrees with minutes are rounded up to the next degree in this system.) The image is "A Clown is Caricaturing Well Known Personalities." Keywords of explanation given are: "exaggerated responses, trying to be something or someone that one's not, putting on a face, making fun of someone."

Change agent Uranus transits the 11th degree of Aries for much of the time Jupiter is on the aforementioned degree, making an exact square between the two for several weeks. The image for 11 Aries is "The President of the Republic, or the Ruler of One's Country." Keywords are: "developing willpower; inner power, discipline and integrity; discipline of thoughts, emotions and actions; accepting responsibility for one's actions; taking charge." The fermenting action between these two planets is likely to produce results that at first might seem unpleasant or out of control. If you have personal planets (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars) or the angles of your natal chart in or around these degrees (9 - 13 of Cardinal Signs), you are on the front lines along with the United States (with it's Sun at 13 degrees of Cancer). Stepping up and taking charge is necessary in the face of unprecedented challenge.

Two months later Mars will touch off the degree of 10 Libra whose image is "A Canoe is Approaching Safety Through Dangerous Water," with keywords such as "recovery, remission, light at the end of the tunnel, personal initiations, trials of test and defeat; being stoic; exercising care and restraint; deliverance on many levels."

The fermentation process may be producing some favorable results by the time Mars leaves this degree. We see the possibility of the calm stream ahead. We will never be quite the same. An alchemical process has taken place. Hopefully an awareness of this process will lead to more successful outcomes, at least in terms of our perspective, than if going through it blindly.