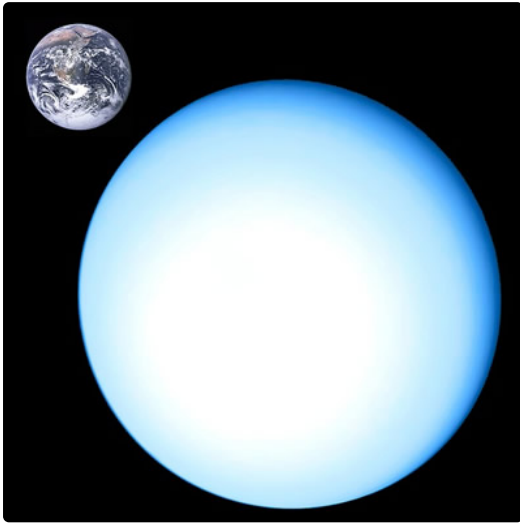


# Future Shock - Contemplating Uranus' Next Return to its Discovery Degree

by Ray Grasse



We all know about the doctrine of “planetary returns,” and how a celestial body circles back around to where it stood at the time of one’s birth. At such times, that body’s meaning is reconceptualized, reformulated, and can even reach a new plateau of expression. Even non-astrologers (whether they realize it or not) know about this principle, since it lies at the root of a particularly common ritual: the ordinary birthday, when the Sun makes a full revolution around the zodiac every 360 degrees from the time of one’s birth.

Yet returns don’t simply affect individuals but entire nations — possibly even the entire Earth. I’m not simply referring to national horoscopes and the way planets return to their natal positions in those charts, although that’s true, too. I’m talking about the fact that the three outer planets of our solar system — Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto — were discovered on specific

dates in recent history; this allows us to construct charts for their positions and then determine when they will return to the zodiacal degree they occupied at the moment of their discovery. Such times could well be thought of as planetary returns not just for specific individuals or even nations, but *for everyone, everywhere*.

For example, Pluto was discovered in 1930, but its orbit around the zodiac is so lengthy (more than 250 years) that it won’t return to its discovery degree in Cancer during the lifetime of anyone now reading this. Neptune doesn’t take quite as long to circle around (roughly 164 years), and it finally experienced its first return to its discovery degree somewhere between 2009 and 2010. (There is disagreement about the exact timing, due to the role that precession plays in these calculations.)

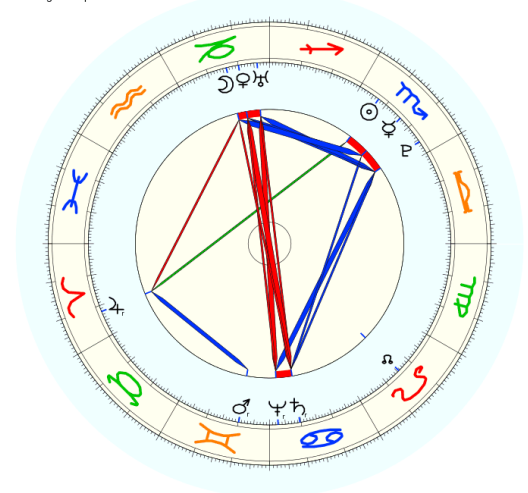
Uranus was discovered by William Herschel in 1781 (see **Chart**, right) and is slated to return to its discovery degree at 24° Gemini in 2031, with an orb of several years on either side. So, it’s natural to ask: What will this bring for humanity?

Fortunately, because Uranus’s orbit around the zodiac takes only 84 years, we already have two Uranus returns under our belt to study for clues about what might be expected this next time around. Let’s take a quick look at some of the events surrounding those previous returns, along with symbols around the original discovery of Uranus, to help us make some educated guesses about this impending one.

## Looking Back: The Discovery of Uranus

As I explored in my book *Signs of the Times* (Hampton Roads, 2002), the entire period around the discovery of Uranus in 1781 saw a number of dramatic trends taking shape throughout our world, of which two are particularly noteworthy for our purposes. The first of these is political. The period of the late 1700s has often been called the “era of revolution” — popular uprisings upended governments in America and France, and spurred unrest in other parts of the globe. With the emergence of modern democracy, this was a time when people power was arising as a force for change and, with it, a newfound sense that ordinary citizens could seize the reins of power and determine their destinies for themselves. It was a transformation in the popular consciousness, and the seeds planted during this period would have lasting effects for centuries to come.

Name: of William Herschel born on Sa., 15 November 1738 in Hanover, GER 9e44, 52n24	Time: 12:00 p.m. LMT hyp. Univ.Time: 11:21:04	ASTRO-DIENST www.astro.com Type: 2.ATW 0.0-1 4.Okt.2017
Natal Chart (Method: Astrowiki / Placidus) Sun sign: Scorpio		



The other dominant trend of the era was technological in nature, as reflected in the rise of the Industrial Revolution. This was a period of extraordinary innovation, with such diverse developments as the modern steam engine, the cotton gin, and myriad experiments with electricity.<sup>1</sup>

However, in some ways, the most iconic technological development of the period was the advent of aviation. In 1783, just two years after the discovery of Uranus, the Montgolfier brothers staged a public demonstration of the first hot-air balloon capable of carrying passengers. It was, in a very real sense, the birth of modern aviation, since it signaled humanity's starting to gain mastery over gravity, and eventually led to the emergence of such technologies as airplanes, jets, rockets, even spacecraft. That one balloon soaring skyward became a profound sign of the times, not just technologically but also in terms of humanity's breaking free from the Saturnian limitations of the past in other ways — religiously, politically, economically, and creatively.

## The First Uranus Return: 1863

Uranus made its first full revolution to its discovery point in 1863, although its influence can be extended for ten or more years on either side. Throughout the mid 1800s, the concern for personal freedom and civil rights expanded exponentially, as reflected in the abolition of slavery in countries around the world and the growing sympathy for the rights of the poor and disenfranchised. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was signed during the exact peak of the return in 1863. Although the American Civil War was the most conspicuous manifestation of this social ferment in the United States, similar developments were occurring elsewhere, too — for example, Russia's abolishing of serfdom in 1861.



Technologically, this was a time when mechanical innovation was transforming our world in dramatic ways as well. The mid-to-late 19th century saw the emergence of such innovations as the telegraph, electric lights, the transatlantic cable, photography, the steamship, and ever-expanding railway systems. In science, Charles Darwin ignited an intellectual revolution with the publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859, a book that forever altered the way humans viewed the world and themselves.

But significantly, this was also a time when the possibility of lighter-than-air travel was gaining momentum in popular culture. Jules Verne's *Five Weeks in a Balloon* was published in 1863, while his book *From the Earth to the Moon*, published in 1865, introduced readers to the possibility of journeys beyond the Earth and even humanity's interaction with alien beings. In fact, the term "aviation" itself was coined in 1863 by French pioneer Guillaume Joseph Gabriel de La Landelle.

## The Second Uranus Return: 1947

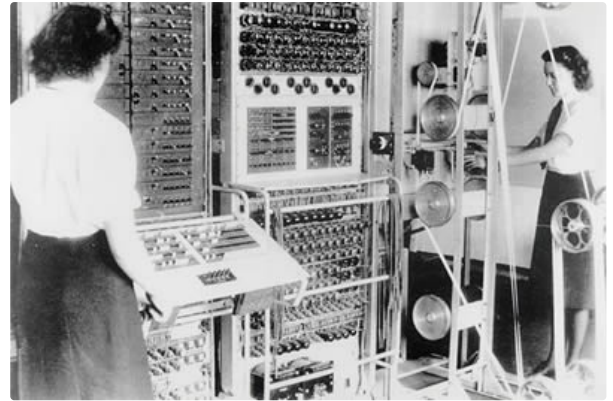
The 1940s marked yet another period of extraordinary social ferment around the world. In addition to the profound impact of World War II, this decade would also serve as a major milestone in the emergence of individual rights, not simply with the wartime overthrow of fascism but also with the establishment of key democratic governments around the globe — the most dramatic example being India, which in 1947 became the largest democracy in the world (and remains so to this day).

The flip side of Uranian "people power" was the overthrow of China's established government by revolutionaries spearheaded by Mao Zedong, giving birth to the People's Republic of China. Though reformist in several positive respects (e.g., the virtual elimination of prostitution and China's then-existing drug problems), this created another form of tyranny with its own problems and social issues. And in the U.S., the Central Intelligence Agency was formally established in September 1947, bequeathing its own decidedly mixed legacy to the world.

Technologically, the late 1940s ushered in a period of unprecedented innovation and mechanization. As writer and blogger Christopher Loring Knowles expressed,

"In historical terms, this is as if your three-year-old were in nursery school one day and then graduated from Harvard at the top of her class as soon as she turned four. There's simply no precedent for the high-tech explosion that began in the late 1940s."<sup>2</sup>

Scientists had unlocked the powers of the atom and, in 1945, unleashed them to devastating effect in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The transistor was developed in 1947, and went on to become the most popular electronic communications device in history. Computer technology was developing at a rapid pace, with the first stored-program computer (nicknamed *Baby*) having run its first program in 1948 at the University of Manchester. The 1940s were also a time of major advances in aviation, with the development of rocketry and sophisticated new aircraft, as well as the establishment of the U.S. Air Force during the summer of 1947.



But a far more unusual "aviation"-related development also took place during this period — namely, the so-called Roswell incident, in which two or more alien spacecraft purportedly crashed in the New Mexico desert. A source of heated controversy in the decades ever since, the event itself occurred in early July 1947, literally within days of Uranus's return to its discovery degree at 24° Gemini. <sup>3</sup> Whether this was indeed an encounter with alien races or something far more prosaic, the omenological symbolism of this story is worth reflecting on, as we're about to see.

## The Third Uranus Return: 2031

The next return of Uranus to its discovery degree is set to occur in 2031, though its presence will be felt for years on either side. What will this bring for those of us who are around to witness it? To a large extent, it will undoubtedly bring about a culmination of those trends that began around 1781, which were reinforced during that planet's subsequent returns — and that's the approach I'll be taking here.

In our previous encounters with Uranus, there were major convulsions in the world's political order, so it's safe to say this return will see a good deal of that as well. Does this portend the advent of one or more major wars (or revolutions), such as occurred during the late 1700s, the mid 1800s, and the 1940s? That's a real possibility. Also, considering the roles that China, India, and Israel played during the last return period (the late 1940s), it's conceivable that these three nations could become especially important players in the coming global changes within that time frame.

Technologically, the late 2020s and early 2030s will likely usher in startling new inventions and scientific breakthroughs in such areas as computerization, atomic research, astronomy, and media and telecommunications technologies. But there will almost certainly be a dark side to all of this, too. Nuclear accidents, à la Fukushima (perhaps worsening repercussions from Fukushima itself)? Accelerating environmental collapse? Ever-mounting problems posed by our surveillance technologies?



Another possibility: The period around the discovery of Uranus during the late 1700s saw the growing popularity of "automatons" — complex mechanical contraptions designed to mimic human or animal behaviors. It's curious that, as Uranus swings back around again, society seems to be careening toward the wholesale robotization of our world, to the extent that some analysts are predicting that humans could be eliminated from the workforce almost entirely. Perhaps the next Uranus return could be a time when that trend reaches critical mass, culminating in what some have imaginatively called *the rise of the machines*.

An even stranger possibility for this next Uranus return might be inferred from the Roswell incident of 1947. As an omen, what could that portend for this coming period? My own suspicion is that this will be a time when humans finally establish (open) contact with nonhuman races — and if the events of the summer of 1947 are any indication, this could even take place in the days or weeks immediately around

the first exact return, sometime during the first half of July 2031.<sup>4</sup> Such an interaction could arise from our own explorations of space and other planets, or perhaps from other intelligent races reaching out to make contact with us or to simply make their presence more obvious. Whatever form this takes, it would obviously signal a profound turning point in human history, with untold consequences for our religious, scientific, and social institutions.

## **Coda**

One last thought. Because of the symbolic connection that many astrologers perceive between Uranus and the sign Aquarius, it's possible that such occasions of Uranus returns provide us with "sneak previews" of the emerging Great Age. What will the Aquarian era bring, in terms of cultural, technological, and political changes? It's possible that the period around 2031 — like those of our previous rendezvous with this planet — will offer us more than a few important clues. Stay tuned!