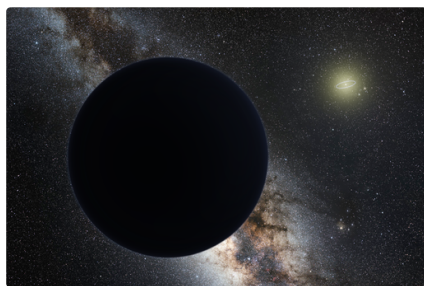


# Searching for Planet X - How Will Astrologers Unlock the Meaning of A New Planet?

by Ray Grasse



Of all the discoveries made by astronomers during the last few centuries, few if any have held as much importance or excitement for astrologers as the announcement of a new planet in our solar system.

And it just so happens that we've been hearing lately about mounting evidence for a new, previously unknown body at the fringes of our solar system—likely the size of Neptune and orbiting the Sun once every 10,000 to 20,000 years. For astronomers, faithfully abiding by Pluto's official demotion from its former status as "planet," this new body is generally referred to by unofficial title "Planet Nine"—though I'd prefer to go with the alternative moniker suggested by others, *Planet X*.

If confirmed, this would of course be a special cause for celebration amongst astrologers, but also a certain amount of hand-wringing.

Why either?

I say "celebration" because, for astrologers, a new planet represents a novel state of consciousness in the collective psyche, and with it a new set of symbolic possibilities. Think of it as similar to a painter acquiring a new color to add to his or her palette. (Of course, "new" is a relative term here, since any newfound planet would have existed for eons of time, just hidden from sight, with its discovery symbolizing those energies emerging more prominently *into consciousness*.)

On the other hand, a discovery would inaugurate a certain amount of "hand-wringing," too, since it would begin the thorny process of determining just what this new body *means*—something that could take years or even decades for astrologers to determine, or agree upon.

While it's obviously too early to say anything concrete about Planet X, there are some general guidelines we could draw up regarding what we have to look for once the announcement has been made. After all, we do have some experience in these matters, considering humanity's encounter with the previous three trans-Saturnians: Uranus in 1781, Neptune in 1846, and Pluto in 1930. By looking to what occurred in the years surrounding those three discoveries, we can find some useful pointers as to how we might approach any other discovered bodies. What follows are a few simple examples of what I mean.

## The Revolutionary Impact of New Planets

Perhaps the most obvious point to make about the earlier bodies is the way each one coincided with assorted rumblings of social revolution. That makes a certain archetypal sense when you consider how each new planet represents a disruption in the established astronomical order, as literally a new world of knowledge opens up for humanity.

Will that happen with the discovery of the next new planet? Almost certainly—and to my mind, that possibility is underscored by this body's predicted orbit. Whereas Pluto extended the boundaries of our solar system far beyond their previous limits, the new planet is theorized to be roughly *10 times farther out from our Sun than Pluto*. If nothing else, that suggests the state of consciousness it represents could be *very* out of the ordinary!

Let's see if we can narrow this down a bit more, by speculating about a few specific areas.

### Politics

Around the time of Uranus's discovery in the late 1700s the world was in the throes of a monumental political shift with the rise of modern democracy, exemplified by the American and French Revolutions. The period around the discovery of Neptune also represented a period of upheaval, reflected not only in the European riots of the late 1840s but by a growing concern over the rights of the downtrodden and the enslaved throughout the mid-1800s. The years on either side of Pluto's discovery were turbulent as well, coming at the tail end of the so-called "Roaring 20s" and shortly after the start of a worldwide depression. There was growing anger among ordinary citizens across the world over our broken political and economic systems, which precipitated reforms in America by "New Deal" president Franklin Roosevelt, while in Germany and Italy led to the rise of fascist dictators who channeled that populist rage in different ways.

The social shifts throughout all three of these centuries represented a rising up of oppressed and ordinary peoples over growing injustices and inequalities. Does that give us some clues as to what might happen with the new planet? If so, it may well explain some of the unrest we're already seeing in countries around the world.

### Technological Changes and New Energy Sources

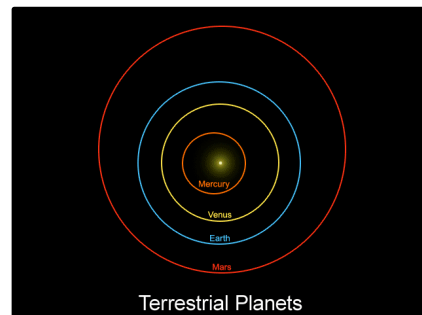
Each of the previous three discoveries has accompanied stunning developments in both science and technology, as well as in our ability to access and exploit Nature's resources. The very Uranian 1700s saw the rise of mechanization and the Industrial Revolution, including assembly-line mass production, steam power, and early investigations into electricity. During Neptune's century, humanity awoke to the potentials of another major fuel source—oil. (The same year Neptune was discovered, businessman Samuel M. Kier from Pittsburgh found oil seeping into his salt well, which he bottled and sold as medicine, and in 1859 the world's first oil well was drilled.) And the years around the discovery of Pluto witnessed the unlocking of the atom, and with it the daunting specter of atomic energy.

What could a new planet signal? It's worth noting we're already seeing a growing number of stories in the media about new or alternative energy sources, including clean energy and renewables and a renewed interest in cold fusion. Or will it turn out to be something entirely different from anything known before?

### Aviation

As I've written about elsewhere, the discovery of Uranus coincided with the birth of modern aviation, with the launch of the first hot-air balloon in 1783 by the Montgolfier brothers in France. In the years around Neptune's discovery, George Cayley built the first manned glider, and Henri Giffard built the first airship powered by an aircraft engine (unsuccessfully, alas). And of course the 1900s saw the rapid rise not only of conventional aviation but the first liquid-fueled rockets in 1926, culminating eventually in space travel.

It's tempting to speculate about another quantum leap in aviation or space exploration. Perhaps that will involve the much-discussed "EmDrive" technology, designed in 2001 by aerospace engineer Roger Shawyer and thought by some to revolutionize space travel. Or could it be the development of anti-gravitational technology, so often discussed in UFO-related circles?





## Archaeology and History

To my mind, one of the more intriguing aspects of all the trans-Saturnian discoveries has been the way each one has coincided with a shift in our understanding of history. Think of it this way: because of the time it takes for light to travel, this literally means that the further out into space we look, the further into the *past* we are seeing. (When we look at Pluto through a telescope, for example, we're actually seeing how it appeared *five hours earlier*.)

As a result, the uncovering of these previously invisible bodies in our solar system can be viewed synchronistically mirroring a corresponding opening up of previously hidden knowledge about the deep past.

The same decade as Uranus's discovery, for example, geologist James Hutton presented a paper to the Royal Society of Edinburgh arguing that the Earth was far older than generally believed—and ever

since then our sense of the past has continued to exponentially push beyond previous boundaries, from the once-thought 6000 years suggested by the Bible to the 13 billion years theorized by modern cosmologists.

Nor is it just our *planet's* age that has undergone a major overhaul. As a result of Darwin's theory of evolution, we've revised the antiquity of the human species itself, as new discoveries in archeology have also continued to alter the way we date civilization's origins, too. Archaeological discoveries at sites like Gobekli Tepe in Turkey and Gunung Padang in Indonesia have forced us to rethink the true birth of human society by thousands of years. It's interesting to contemplate how our grasp of history could change with the discovery of a planet many times farther out than Pluto!

## Economics

Interestingly enough, there have even been shifts in our economic philosophies and systems with each new planetary discovery. The birth of modern capitalism is commonly associated with the publication of Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776, just five years before the discovery of Uranus. The birth of modern socialism is associated with the publication of Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto" in 1848—coinciding closely with the discovery of Neptune. Besides witnessing the rise of the modern "Plutocrat," the years around Pluto's discovery saw the rise of "Keynesian economics," with the publication of *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* by John Maynard Keynes in 1936. In addition to ushering in the concept of *macroeconomics*, Keynes work has been called "revolutionary" because of his views about the role of government in regulating free markets.

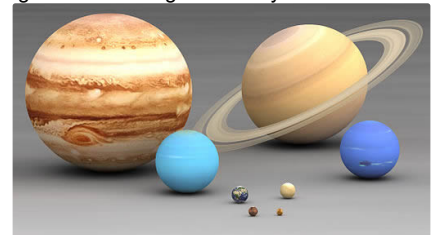
It's hardly far-fetched to imagine that a new planet could signal a new phase in our global economic system, and the way we fundamentally see money—especially considering the already-revolutionary impact the internet is having on how we do business.

## Some Technical Considerations

There are a few other points that could be useful when approaching a new planet and gauging it's importance in our own lives.

\* One of the classic methods used by astrologers for understanding a new body is by studying the mythological name assigned to it by astronomers. The underlying belief here is that a certain synchronicity exists between that naming and its inherent nature. Despite some disagreement among astrologers over the reliability of this method, my own feeling is that—despite its limitations—it remains an extremely useful tool for unlocking a planet's symbolism and meaning. <sup>1</sup>

\* Some further clues may also lie in the Sabian Symbol of the zodiacal degree occupied by the planet when it's found. For example, Uranus was at 24 Gemini 27 when it was discovered, thereby placing it fully in the 25th degree of that sign. The Sabian symbol for that degree? *A GARDENER TRIMMING LARGE PALM TREES*. Considering the legacy Uranus has bequeathed to us in terms of modern technologies, there's something fitting about the fact that its discovery was associated with an image of humans manipulating and reshaping nature. In much the same way, it's possible that the Sabian Symbol for a new planet could shed light on its meaning and subsequent role in humanity's future.



\* There have already been some discussions as to what zodiacal sign Planet X could possibly rule. Presuming that Venus now rules Libra and that Mercury rules Gemini (though some dispute those associations), then the new planet could conceivably rule either Virgo or Taurus. Or is it possible this new planet falls outside the conventional rulership scheme altogether? Or might it enjoy another "co-rulership" status similar to the way Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto are viewed by many as sharing rulerships of Aquarius, Pisces, and Scorpio? One approach that could help shed some light on this would be to closely study world events around the planet's discovery, and see if they resonate to any one sign more than another.

\* Yet another way to gather insights into a planet's symbolism is to track the ephemeris and watch what happens each time another planet conjuncts, squares, or opposes it. By way of illustration, a search of major transits to Uranus over the years, coupled with a scan of news or historical accounts, clearly suggests it has something to do with technology and social change (among other things). What would we learn from studying what happens whenever Jupiter, Saturn, or Uranus conjunct the new planet? This could also be done retroactively, by looking back over recent decades and centuries to see if any common threads emerge from its encounter with other planetary bodies.

\* Last but not least, once an ephemeris for the new planet has been established, look at your own date of birth to see where the body falls in *your* horoscope, to understand what significance it might be in your life. Because of its great remoteness, Planet X's orbit would necessarily be so slow that it could remain in the same zodiacal region for long periods; as a result, it's important to see if the planet specifically lands on an angle in your horoscope, such as the Ascendant or Midheaven, or if it's conjunct a personal planet like the Sun or Moon. Contacts like these would suggest a far more intimate significance for you than for the average person.

These are just a few ideas to keep in mind should an announcement about the new planet be forthcoming anytime soon. Stay tuned!

### Footnotes:

1. The debate over the value of mythic names assigned by astronomers to planets has come up most frequently in connection with the astrological Uranus. My friend and colleague Rick Tarnas has suggested that the rebellious Greek titan Prometheus is in some ways more fitting to convey the essence of Uranus than the tyrannical sky-god Ouranos. While I believe there's an important truth there, I don't think we can dispense with the Ouranos association altogether. I say that because the astrological Uranus strikes me as embodying both extremes of that rebel/tyrant polarity, as part of a two-fold dynamic. For instance a Promethean rebel by their very nature implies an oppressive power being railed against, while a tyrannical sky-god implies creatures who are being subjugated by that power. Neither one of those truly exists in isolation, with that balance of power shifting from one extreme to the other, teeter-totter style. Uranus is like that, too. As an imaginative example of this dynamic, consider the "Skynet" technology portrayed in James Cameron's Terminator films. Though having originated in the minds of brilliant techno-geeks, that technology is depicted as transforming over time into a tyrannical "sky-god" all its own, with artificially intelligent machines dominating and potentially even eradicating humanity. Or, for a more real-life example which illustrates much the same dynamic, look to how the Uranian energy manifested itself politically across the world shortly after its discovery. Having begun with upstart rebels in countries like America and France, over time those same Promethean energies morphed into their virtual opposite, and with equally tyrannical ferocity—e.g. France's "Reign of Terror" under figures like Robespierre, or the United States' eventual transformation from a beacon of freedom to an imperial military force hurling Promethean fire back down to Earth via drones and hi-tech bombers. In short, both the mythologies of both Prometheus and Ouranos offer valuable keys towards understanding Uranus's powerful—and complex—symbolism.