

terstellar spacecraft is far more anthropocentric - attaching as it does some overriding significance to our small planet. If our views on the frequency of intelligence in the galaxy are correct, there is no reason why the earth should be singled out for interstellar visits. A greater frequency of visits could be expected if there were another planet populated by a technical civilization within our solar system, but at the present time there is no evidence for the existence of one.

Related to the interstellar observer idea are the "contact" tales-contemporary reports of the landing of extraterrestrial space vehicles on earth. Unlike the UFO reports, these tales display a striking uniformity. The extraterrestrials are described as humanoid, differing from man only in some minor characteristic such as teeth, speech, or dress. The aliens-so the "contactees" report-have been observing earth and its inhabitants for many years, and express concern at "the present grave political situation." The visitors are fearful that, left to our own devices, we will destroy our civilization. The contactee is then selected as their "chosen intermediary" with the governments and inhabitants of earth, but somehow the promised political or social intervention never materializes.

Psychological Factors.-The psychologist Carl Jung has pointed out that the frequency and persistence of these contact tales-not one of which has been confirmed by the slightest objective evidence-must be of substantial psychological significance. What need is fulfilled by a

belief that unidentified flying objects are of extraterrestrial origin? It is noteworthy that in the contact tales, the spacecraft and their crews are rarely pictured as hostile. It would be very satisfying if a race of advanced and benign creatures were devoted to our welfare.

The interest in unidentified flying objects derives, perhaps, not so much from scientific curiosity as from unfulfilled religious needs. Flying saucers serve, for some, to replace the gods that science has deposed. With their distant and exotic worlds and their pseudoscientific overlay, the contact accounts are acceptable to many people who reject the older religious frameworks. But precisely because people desire so intensely that unidentified flying objects be of benign, intelligent, and extraterrestrial origin, honesty requires that, in evaluating the observations, we accept only the most rigorous logic and the most convincing evidence. At the present time, there is no evidence that unambiguously connects the various flying saucer sightings and contact tales with extraterrestrial intelligence.

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Further Reading: Jung, Carl G., *Flying Saucers* (New York 1959); Menzel, D.H., and Boyd, L.G., *The World of Flying Saucers* (New York 1963); Ruppelt, Edward, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (New York 1956); Shklovskii, Iosif, and Sagan, Carl, *Intelligent Life in the Universe* (San Francisco 1966); Tacker, Lawrence, *Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force* (Princeton 1960); Vallee, Jacques, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon* (Chicago 1965).