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[Book Catalog](#) An excerpt from Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies :

## EDITORIAL NOTE

As early as 1946 Jung had begun to collect data on unidentified flying objects--newspaper clippings, reports issued by groups dedicated to their study, statements from the scientific, military, and governmental establishments, letters from people all over --and he read virtually every book on the subject. His published letters give us a vivid notion of his preoccupation with the phenomena. Typically, in February 1951 he wrote to an American friend:

"I'm puzzled to death about these phenomena, because I haven't been able yet to make out with sufficient certainty whether the whole thing is a rumour with concomitant singular and mass hallucination, or a downright fact. Either case would be highly interesting. If it's a rumour, then the apparition of discs must be a symbol produced by the unconscious. We know what such a thing would mean seen from the psychological standpoint. If on the other hand it is a hard and concrete fact, we are surely confronted with something thoroughly out of the way. At a time when the world is divided by an iron curtain-- a fact unheard-of in human history--we might expect all sorts of funny things, since when such a thing happens in an individual it means a complete dissociation, which is instantly compensated by symbols of wholeness and unity. The phenomenon of the saucers might even be both, rumour as well as fact. In this case it would be what I call a synchronicity. It's just too bad that we don't know enough about it."

Before he could address himself to serious writing about the Ufos, Jung had several other obligations to discharge. In the few years following his seventy-fifth birthday, Jung published the German originals of several works of significance: in 1951, *Aion*; in 1952, "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," *Answer to Job*, and *Symbols of Transformation*; in 1955-56, the prodigious alchemical tract *Mysterium Coniunctionis*; and in 1957, *The Undiscovered Self, or Present and Future*, on the relation of the individual to a mass society. His first public utterance on the subject of Ufos was a letter to the Zurich paper *Weltwoche* in 1954, turning down a request for an interview but answering a series of questions. Extracts from Jung's statements began to appear in the "flying saucers" press in the United States and England, sometimes in distorted form that created misunderstanding. In 1958, he brought out his book, called in German *Ein moderner Mythos von Dingen die am Himmel gesehen werden*. R.F.C. Hull's translation, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*, appeared the next year, and to it Jung added material remarking on some other publications about Ufos and a special preface about how his views had been misunderstood.

The monograph on Flying Saucers was included in volume 10 of the Collected Works, *Civilization in Transition* (1964), along with essays bearing on the contemporary scene and, in particular, on the relation of the individual to society. It is reprinted here in that form, together with relevant texts from volume 18, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*--the 1954 *Weltwoche* statements and corrective statements to the press as of 1958. For other comment on Ufos and their psychological import, the reader is referred to the indexes of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by C. G. Jung, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe (Vintage paperback edn., New York, 1965); Letters (see n. 1); and *C. C. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, edited by William McGuire and R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, '977).

-- W. M.