

Travel

# Recall Argument Against Travel

Communication is much cheaper than travel

Energy needed for Mass (M) at speed (v)

$$E = \frac{1}{2} M v^2 \quad \text{if } v \text{ much less than } c$$

e.g., travel to nearest star (4 ly) in 40 yr

$$\Rightarrow v = 0.1 c \quad \Rightarrow \quad E = 4.1 \times 10^{-9} \text{ ergs}$$

for  $M = m$  (electron)

Photon       $E = h\nu$

$$h = 6.6 \times 10^{-27}$$

$\nu$  = frequency

$$= 6.6 \times 10^{-18} \text{ ergs}$$

$$\text{if } \nu = 10^9 \text{ Hz}$$

Ratio  $\sim 10^9$  (and photon gets there in 4 yrs)

100 M watt transmitter - 1 yr

$$\text{\$ } 40 \times 10^6$$

Spacecraft to nearest star

$$\sim \text{\$ } 5 \times 10^{16}$$

(some recent analysis questions this conclusion)

# Why Consider Travel?

# Reasons for Interstellar Travel

Reasons:

1. Communication if searches fail
2. Exploration of other planetary systems

Planetary Science

Exobiology (many bacterial planets)

$$N_\ell = \underbrace{R_* f_p n_e f_\ell}_{\text{Birth Rate}} L_\ell \quad L_\ell > 3 \times 10^9 \text{ yr on Earth}$$

	<u>Birth Rate</u>	<u><math>L_\ell</math></u>	<u><math>N_\ell</math></u>
Happy Feller	50	$3 \times 10^9$	$1.5 \times 10^{11}$
Angela Angst	$7.5 \times 10^{-4}$	$3 \times 10^9$	$2.3 \times 10^6$
Average Guy	2.2	$3 \times 10^9$	$6.7 \times 10^9$

## Other Reasons

- Colonization
  - Species Immortality
  - Could survive the end of life on Earth
- The explorer's urge
  - “to boldly go ...”

# Pattern of Solar System Exploration

1. Ground-based observations (telescopes)
2. Fly-by missions, Radio back results
3. Orbit or land, Radio back results
4. Mission with human beings  
Return to Earth (Moon Only)
5. Permanent Base (Not Yet)

Expect similar for Interstellar

Except

No Round Trips

Distances to Stars ~ Light Years

$$\text{Time} = \frac{\text{Distance (Ly)}}{\text{Speed (Ly/y)}} \simeq \frac{4 \text{ Ly}}{0.1 c} = 40 \text{ yr}$$

Round trip = 80 y

# Project Daedalus

# Design study for Fly-by Barnard's Star 6 ly away

# Inertial confinement fusion

(Ignite pellets of hydrogen w/lasers, particles)

Terrestrial fusion:  ${}^2\text{H} + {}^3\text{H} \longrightarrow {}^4\text{He} + \text{n}$   
                                   deuterium tritium                   causes problems

Daedalus:  ${}^2\text{H} + {}^3\text{He} \longrightarrow {}^4\text{He} + \text{p}$

$\Delta E = 4 \times 10^{-3} mc^2$  charged, control with mag. Field

Problem:  $^3\text{He}$  rare  $\Rightarrow$  Mine Jupiter?



Design:  $v = 0.12c$

travel for 50 yrs

500 ton payload

54,000 tons at takeoff

50,000 tons of fuel

$v_e = 10^4 \text{ km s}^{-1}$

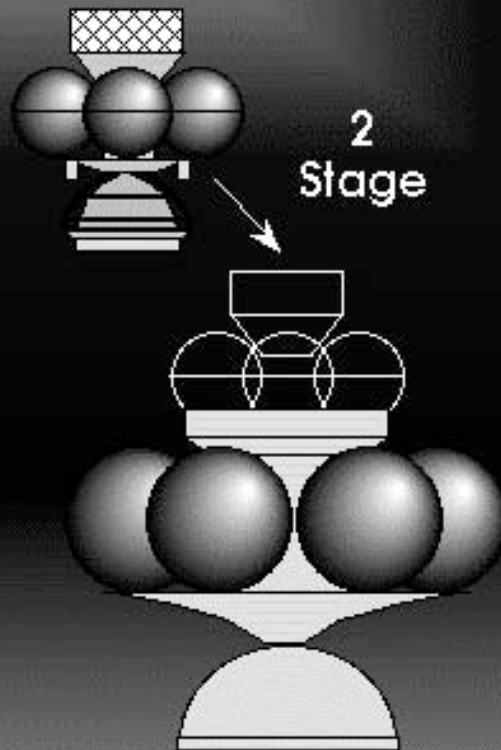
$R_M = 12 \text{ or } 100$   
(payload)

$s.i. = 10^6 \text{ sec}$

# Nuclear Concepts

*Project Daedalus*  
1973-1978

*British Interplanetary  
Society*



2  
Stage

$10^2$  t  
payload

$10^6$  Isp  
12% Light  
speed

Micro-Fusion  
explosions  
~ 250/sec

**36 YEARS\* Interstellar fly-by**

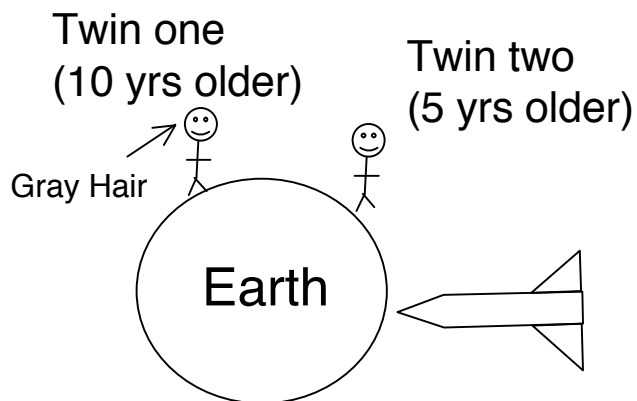
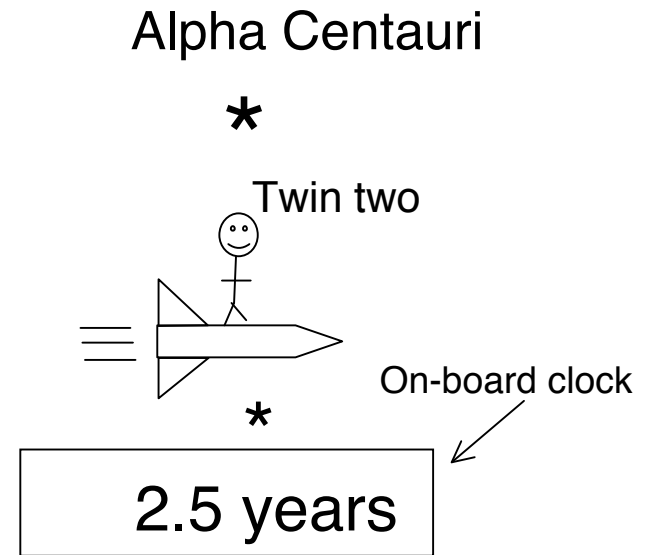
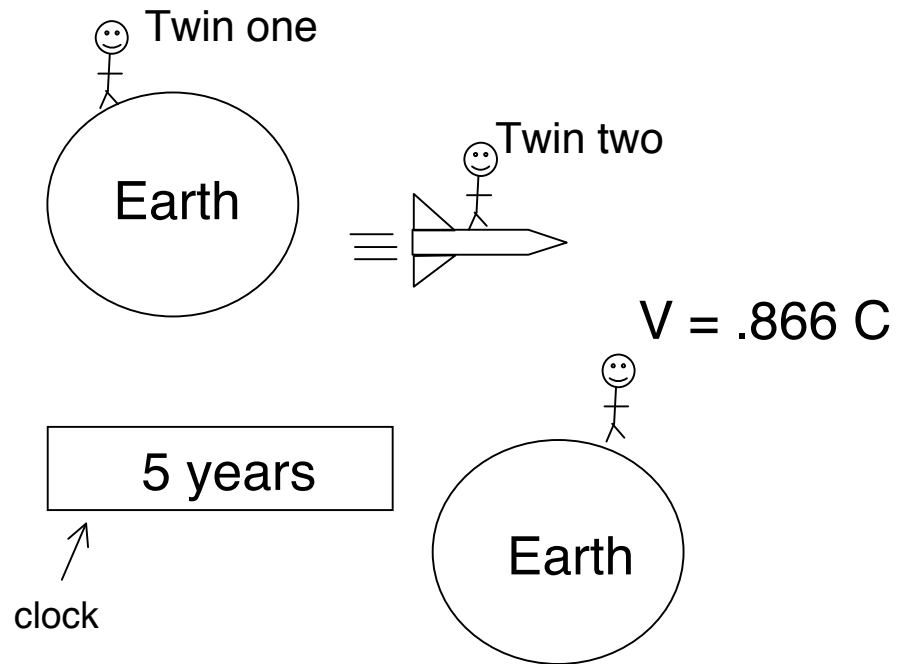
\* Was 50 years to Barnard's star ~5.9ly

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# Faster Travel?

- If we could travel close to speed of light
- Time Slows down
- Could travel more light years than years on the space ship clock
- Though not on the clock on the home planet

# e.g. Twin Paradox

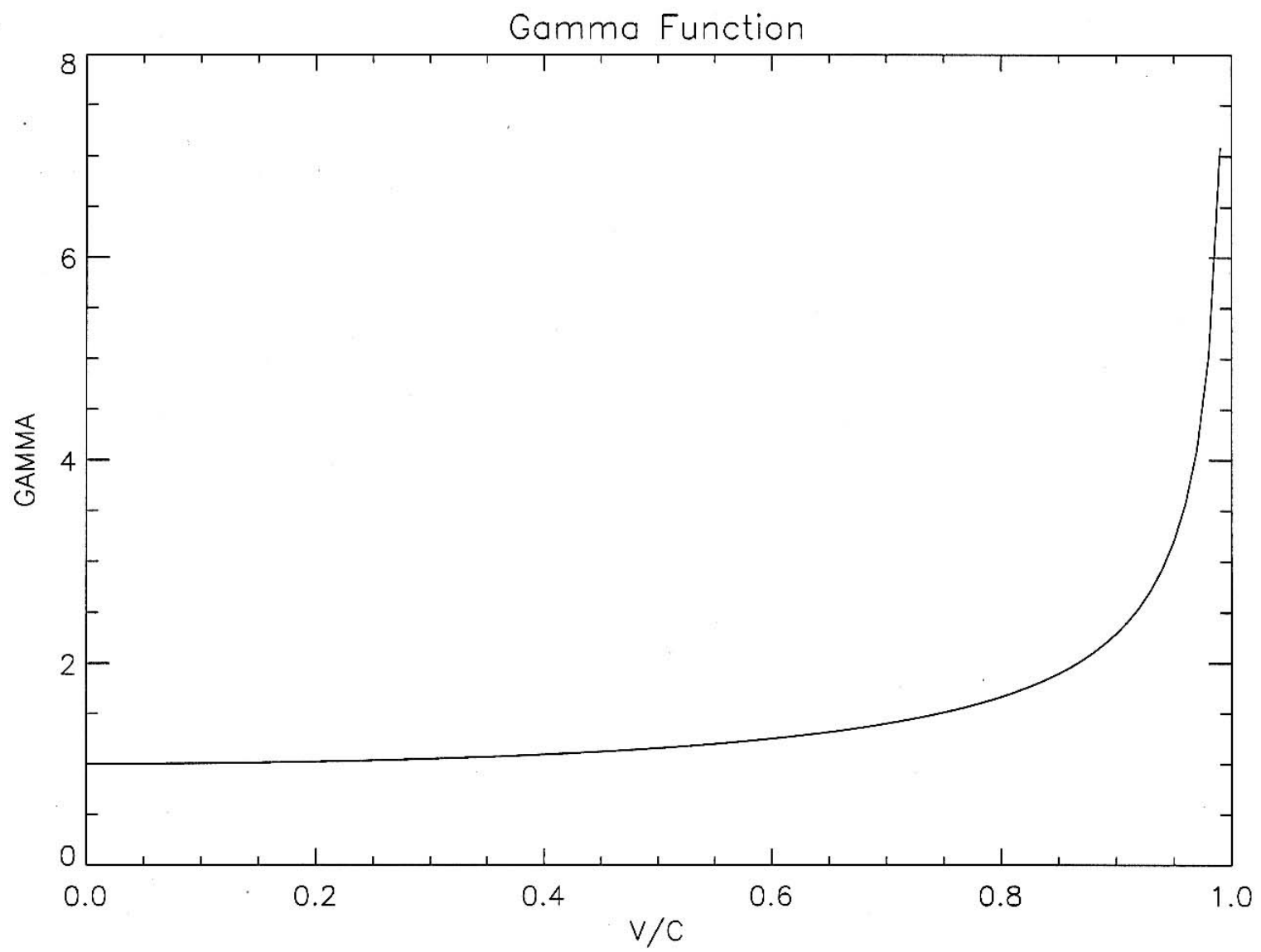


Time measured by Twin one

Time measured by Twin two

$$t = \gamma t_0$$

\*  $\gamma = \frac{1}{\sqrt{1 - (v/c)^2}}$



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HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE?

**TABLE 18.2** Round-Trip Times for Journeys at an Acceleration of 1 g<sup>\*</sup>

Time as Measured by Spacecraft Crew (years)	Time as Measured on Earth (years)	Greatest Distance Reached (light years)	Farthest Object Reached
1	1	0.06	Comets
10	24	9	Sirius
20	270	140	Hyades
30	3100	1,500	Orion Nebula
40	36,000	17,500	Globular cluster
50	420,000	170,000	Large Magellanic Cloud
60	5,000,000	2 million	Andromeda galaxy

<sup>\*</sup> Following an example given by Sebastian von Hoerner, we imagine a spacecraft that accelerates at 1 g; that is, the force of acceleration or deceleration equals the force of gravity at the Earth's surface. After one year, such a spacecraft would be moving at a velocity very close to the speed of light.

# Problems with fast travel

- Mass ratio ( $R_M$ ) increases rapidly with  $v$ 
  - $M = M_o \gamma$
  - at  $v = 0.99c$ , best possible fuel:  $R_M = 14$
- You have to take fuel to slow down
  - Fuel is payload on the way out
    - $R_M = 14 \times 14 = 196$
- To return you need all this fuel as payload
  - $R_M = 196 \times 196 \sim 40,000$
- And you need antimatter-matter for  $R_M=14$

# Rocket Limitation

*Propellant Mass to send one canister past  
Centauri Cluster within 900 years*

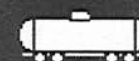
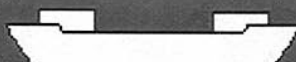
Chemical	Fission	Fusion	Ion/Antimatter
(500 sec)	(5,000 sec)	(10,000 sec)	(50,000 sec)
$\approx 10^{137}$ kg	$\approx 10^{17}$ kg	$\approx 10^{11}$ kg	$\approx 10^5$ kg

A BILLION

A THOUSAND

TEN

Not enough  
mass in  
universe



**Conclusion: we need a  
Propulsion Breakthrough ; NO PROPELLANT !**



# No Propellant?

- Bussard RamJet
  - Scoop up fuel as you go
  - Problems
    - Very diffuse (need huge scoop)
    - Hydrogen is low-grade fuel
    - You want rare  $^2\text{H} + ^3\text{He}$

# Future Fantasies?

Consider now some things that are outside physics as we know it, but **might** be possible.

# Wormholes

General relativity:

A. Einstein

Matter warps space-time

This warp is gravity

e.g. Black holes pinch off a piece of the  
Universe - even light cannot escape

Rotating black hole ———> wormhole

# Wormholes

Unlikely to form when a star collapses

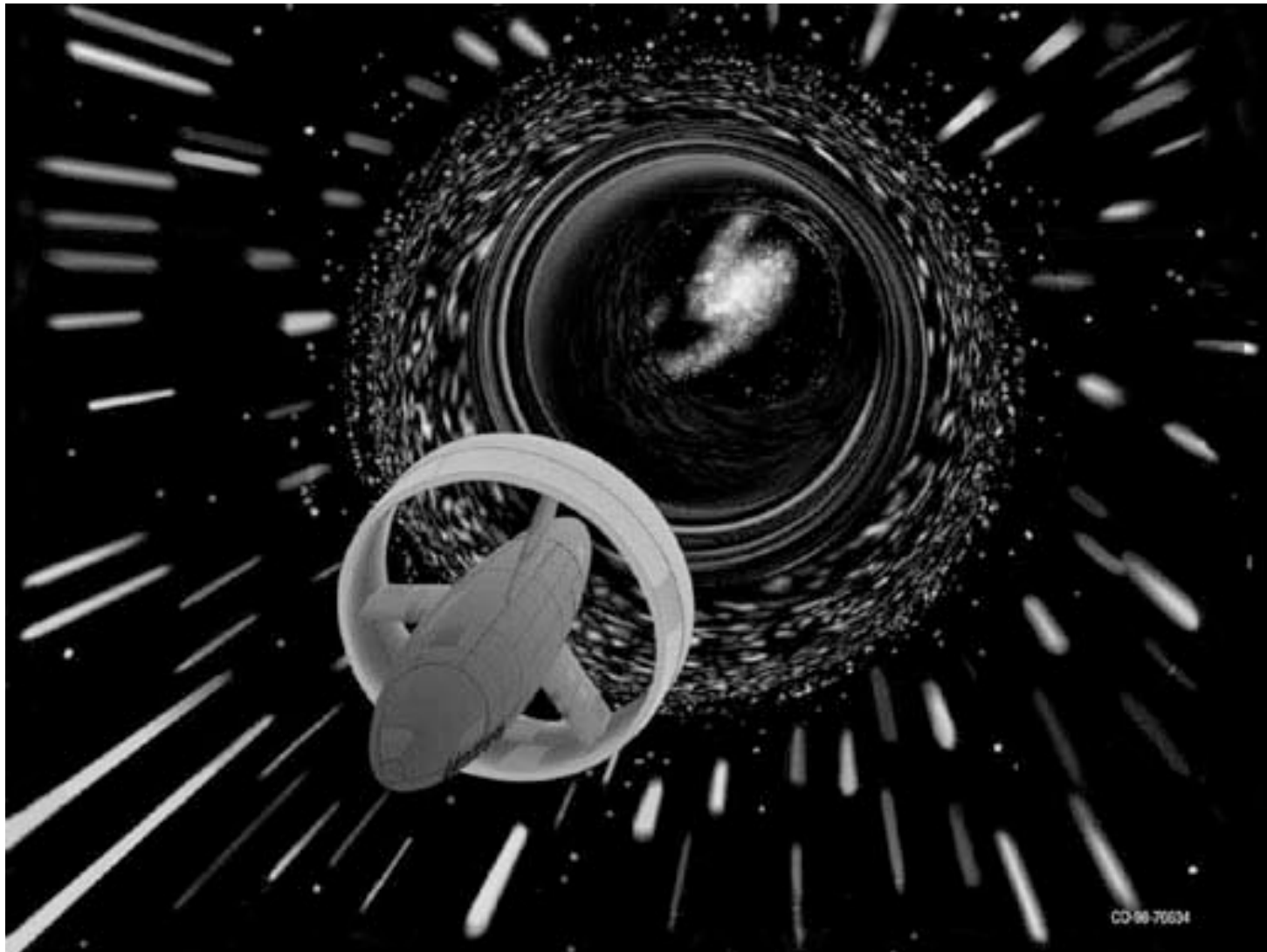
If it forms, it is unstable

Traveler probably cannot pass through

Loophole - stabilize it somehow?

Exotic Matter?

# View entering a wormhole artist's conception



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# Warp Drives

Faster than light travel?

Not possible for ordinary matter, physics

$$M = \gamma M_0 \Rightarrow M \rightarrow \infty \text{ as } v \rightarrow c$$

Loophole:

c is a speed limit for motion in space-time  
not of space-time

e.g. The space-time of the universe expanded faster than c during very early inflationary expansion

The Universe now seems to have a lot of  
“dark energy”

Source unknown

Acts like antigravity on large scales

Could we ever control this?

# Alcubierre Warp

~ 1994 Miguel Alcubierre suggested use of “exotic matter” to surf a space-time distortion

Contract space in front, expand behind

Does exotic matter (negative mass) exist?

Can we control it?

Energy requirements

Originally thought to exceed that available in entire universe

Later calculations are less extreme



## Back to Reality

- Hard to decide if very advanced civilizations might develop such schemes
- Use only laws of physics as constraint -  
    apply to all civilizations, no matter how  
    advanced their technology

# Colonization

Assume Daedalus technology      ( $v = 0.1 \text{ c}$ )

$$t = \frac{d_*}{v} \sim \frac{4 \text{ ly}}{0.1} = 40 \text{ yrs}$$

Multi-generational travel  
(space colony + propulsion)

How long to colonize galaxy?

# Colonization

$$t_{\text{gal}} = \frac{r_{\text{gal}}}{v_{\text{exp}}}$$

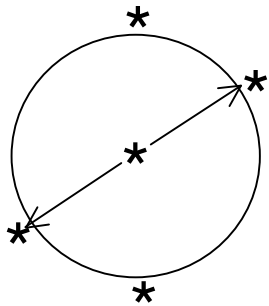
$$v_{\text{exp}} = \frac{2d_{*}}{t}$$

$$t = \frac{d^{*}}{v} + t_{\text{reg}}$$

e.g.

$$v = 0.1 \text{ c}$$

$$t_{\text{reg}} = 500 \text{ yr}$$



$$\Rightarrow v_{\text{exp}} = \frac{4 \text{ ly} \times 2}{540} \simeq 0.015 \text{ c}$$

$$\text{If } r_{\text{gal}} = 80 \times 10^3 \text{ ly}$$

$$t_{\text{gal}} = \frac{80 \times 10^3}{1.5 \times 10^{-2}}$$

$$\sim 50 \times 10^5$$

$$t_{\text{gal}} \ll \text{age of galaxy}$$

$$5 \times 10^6 \text{ yr}$$

# Colonization

With “reasonable” assumption,

$$t_{\text{colonization}} \ll t_{\text{Galaxy}}$$

How likely?

How many civilizations ever developed?

(Time available:  $10 \times 10^9 - 5 \times 10^9 \simeq 5 \times 10^9$ )

# Colonization

$$\text{Birthrate} \times \text{age of Galaxy} = N_{(\text{ever})}$$

Happy Feller	50	$\times$	$5 \times 10^9$	$=$	$2.5 \times 10^{11}$
Angela Angst	$7.5 \times 10^{-8}$	$\times$	$5 \times 10^9$	$=$	375
Average Guy	0.93	$\times$	$5 \times 10^9$	$=$	$4.7 \times 10^9$

If even one of these decided to colonize, it should already have happened!

Possible consequences:

1. Galactic community
2. Solar-system has been visited
3. Solar-system being monitored
4. Solar-system leakage radiation detected?

# Hart Hypothesis

Fact: There are no intelligent beings from outer Space on the Earth now.

Only 5 possible explanations:

1. Space travel is not feasible
2. Civilizations chose not to colonize
3. Not enough time to colonize galaxy
4. The Earth was visited but they did not colonize
5. There are no other advanced civilizations

# “Answers” to the Hart Hypothesis

1. Colonization may be much slower  
 $10^6$  yr regeneration  $\rightarrow t_{\text{colon}} > 10^{10}$  yrs
2. Nomads/explorers make trips, not colonists!
3. May be harder to adapt to life on a new planet than  
“we” think.  
We need 20 essential amino acids
4. Optimist’s time scale for colonization  $> t$  for biological evolution  
Maybe  $>>$
5. Possible development of “ecological ethic”  
Do not interfere
6. They are here! UFO’s