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FLYING BUT UNIDENTIFIED! A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO UFO[2] PHENOMENA[3]

Abstract: This paper deals with the most important aspects of the UFO phenomenon. What has been presented here is a short history of the development of the phenomenon, the most important protagonists and the key events that have influenced the shaping of the idea about the existence and contacts with extraterrestrial intelligences. The phenomenon of the contact with extraterrestrial beings, the role and the positions of the most famous persons who claimed they had maintained communication with alien entities, abductions by aliens as well as the organizations of contactees have been considered. The conceptualization of the role of extraterrestrial beings and the messages that they are, allegedly, sending to mankind have been presented and the messages' religious contextualization was pointed out.

Key words: unidentified flying object, aliens, contactees, abductions, UFO organizations, UFO movements, UFO religions

Introduction

Have you ever seen an unidentified flying object? Or... have you had a close encounter of a different kind with the extraterrestrial phenomena and beings or... do you know someone who claims to have had such an experience?

Still, whether or not you've ever had an opportunity to see unusual lights coming from above or unknown objects in the sky, whether aliens have ever abducted you (or people close and known to you) or you may not be able to recall a personal experience when possible "evidences" of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligences are being talked about, you must have heard about the UFO phenomenon and know the elementary assumptions related to the

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"contacts" of our and "other" worlds. The information from the field which, in its commercial version, known to most under the term "science fiction", is available and present on every step. Pop-cultural conceptualizations of this idea have inevitably reached even those who wouldn't call themselves "fans of the genre" "Doctor Who", "Battlestar Galactica", "Star Trek", "Star Wars", "The X-Files"… are just a few of the series' and serials' titles that have popularized the idea of the intelligent form of life beyond the known limits of the planet Earth. The list of films, books, texts and newspaper articles which deal with these problems would not even fit into a work of a much bigger volume than planned.

According to the poll conducted by Gallup in the late XX century in the United States of America, about 90% of the population had certain knowledge about the UFO. Even more interesting is the information that, also according to a poll conducted in the USA, there were more interviewees who knew what the term UFO represents than those who could remember the name of the president Gerald Ford... and that only six months after he left the White House (Bullard 2000, ix). These results of the above mentioned polls we owe to the undoubted popularity of the UFO phenomena which have been developing for a number of years. This exemplary ideological, religious, media and pop culture phenomenon has become a part of our daily lives through various manifestations, such as – theological debates about the origin of the world, scientific discussions about the sustainability of life outside the Earth, UFO museums, entertainment industry and the widest variety of (more or less) utilizing objects and souvenirs.

First "journeys" and the contactees

When talking about the UFO phenomenon and the possible encounters with "aliens", the famous "incident" in Roswell is largely considered to be the starting moment or the turning point in the existence of this idea in worldly debates. Indeed, 1947 as well as the mentioned case[4] represent the beginning of a period in which the UFOs were very lively discussed. During the fifties, in the twentieth century, especially in the USA, the UFOs and the "aliens" were a very present topic in the media and literature and the official services recorded a high number of reports of the widest range of contacts with extraterrestrials, again reports came from people of completely different social classes. Still, it is less known that there were some extremely interesting and detailed descriptions of similar events and contacts with different worlds even in previous centuries.

People who claim they have been able to directly communicate with intelligent extraterrestrial beings in different ways have an important place in

[4] 1947 is important for the history of the UFO phenomena for several reasons, but that will be discussed more in the further text.

the history of the UFO phenomenon. In the Serbian language there is no such term which could be widely applicable on these individuals, but it seems that the expression *"kontakteri"* which represents a literal translation of the English term "contactee" represents their role and their position the best. In the vastness of different testimonies of this kind certain regularities can be noticed and they shall be discussed in the further text. For now, we will state that the testimonies of the contactees describe their personal experience with extraterrestrial intelligent beings which can be realized through alien visit to our planet, telepathy, that is, by an out-of-body experience or by the contactee's voyage through the galaxy by their interlocutors' means of transport or even by a visit to their planets. This type of communication is never one of personal nature; cases in which the received information concerns the contactee's life and future solely are rare. As a rule, this communication is initiated by the aliens and the topics that are discussed concern the entire humanity, so the contactees are often perceived as the mediums chosen to deliver these important messages.

More than a decade prior to Roswell, more accurately, in the early thirties of the twentieth century testimonies about the alleged direct meetings of the two contactees – Willard Magoon (1930) and Guy Ballard (1935) with aliens were published and attracted great attention. Magoon claimed he had his experience at the beginning of the century when he, according to his words, had the opportunity to visit Mars. This, of course, was not planned; instead Magoon arrived on Mars by being carried there by "some invisible force". Magoon was fascinated by the natural beauty of the planet that had vast green forests, kept gardens and parks, but even more fascinated by the Martians, who were described as advanced beings who enjoy the technological progress which greatly exceeded the stage the inhabitants of the Earth were on. According to Magoon, the Martians were invisible and he could only feel their presence and they also mastered the manufacture of the automobiles or radio devices. By his own claim Magoon came back to the Earth as a changed man, with a message intended mostly for religious officials and leaders – that they should not be afraid of the scientific progress but that they should instead give their support to it (Melton 1995, 2).

Unlike Magoon, Guy Ballard did not have to travel to some distant planet. Ballard claimed that the Venusians contacted him on Earth and that after a certain period of intensive communication they took him to a meeting to a cave in north California, where in addition to twelve inhabitants of Venus and Ballard himself, there were also a hundred and five Earthlings. The Venusians arranged a pleasant atmosphere with the music of violins and harps, and they appeared to their guests illuminated with an intense light. On a big mirror that was used as a movie screen Ballard and all those present, were able to see the scenes from Venus which testified of a highly advanced society, both

scientifically and technologically. Venusians wanted to make sure that the rest of the population on the planet Earth would be conveyed certain information relevant to their future. Namely, according to Ballard, the Venusians were concerned for the Earth, believing that there were growing dark forces threatening it but they also announced a gradual return of prosperity after overcoming the emerging challenges (Melton 1995).

Before Magoon and Ballard, a French medium Hélène Smith claimed that she had spent time on Mars back in 1890. Smith described the planet and its interesting flora and fauna and she also claimed that she had learned to read and write in a language that is in use on Mars. This case received great public attention and the testimony was published due to the fact that Hélène Smith submitted all the "material" related to this case to Théodore Flournoy, a psychologist who reported and analyzed Hélène's story. Flournoy paid special attention to the "Martian" language, which he determined was infantile, a reduced version of French (Flournoy 1900).

However, in order to get to the very beginnings of the publishing of testimonies about personal experiences the contactees had with extraterrestrial intelligent beings and their worlds, we need to go back a hundred years more, around mid XVIII century. In this case, as in many other traditions that have an aura of mysticism, we inevitably come to the Swedish scientist, theologian and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Namely, in 1758 Swedenborg announced that he personally travelled to several planets of the solar system, and even to a few planets outside the solar system (Swedenborg 1758). Swedenborg described each of the planets that he, by his own claim, visited and he paid special interest to the anatomy and physiology of the Martians. Like the previously mentioned authors, Swedenborg, too, was particularly fascinated by the developed systems of social justice that have been established on the planets that he described.

Swedenborg's study directly follows a literary genre that was particularly popular in the European literature in decades prior to his work – the novella or a short novel, about the so-called fantastic journeys. In this type of novellas the hero travels to an unknown, remote location - space, inside the Earth, a distant land, or he travels through time. On his journey, or actually, at his final destination, the hero often encounters a perfect society, and, enlightened by this experience, he brings back to his world an important message for the community and humanity in general. As a rule, the ideas that are pointed out in these stories are - social justice, technological advancement, public education, moral and ethical system (Gove 1941). Although the roots of the idea found in the tradition of fantasy novellas are also present in Emanuel Swedenborg's work, a significant difference in relation to the authors of novellas represents the fact that Swedenborg insists on claims that he personally and genuinely visited remote planets. After Swedenborg, there

were many contactees who would try to convey to the public their most amazing "experiences" and one of them will, as it will be seen in further text, gain confidence in one part of the society and he will find, gather and organize a significant number of like-minded followers.

The First UFO "invasions"

The development of the system of communication and the media played a significant role in the construction of the idea of unidentified flying objects and their crews, as well as in the popularization of this phenomenon. Even though the traces of the unusual and inexplicable encounters with the phenomenon, that later received the name UFO, can be found in testimonies throughout almost the entire history of humanity and in its diverse cultures (Bullard 2000), after the mass media got involved into the story of these mysterious phenomena, testimonies about the encounters with UFOs began to take epidemic proportions, often hysterical.

The last decade of the XIX century brought the first major wave of UFO encounters from around the world, especially in the USA. In the period from November 17th, 1896 until the mid of May of the next year, tens of thousands of people participated in the "sightings" of various aircrafts that significantly exceeded the achievements of the technology of the time (Sanarov 1981). Namely, in the time of the technological revolution in the last decades of the XIX century, a successful, commercial air transport was the most anticipated invention (Bullard 2000). The public was familiar with the early (mostly unsuccessful) attempts to use a machine to fly into the sky, and the speculations about how the engineers were, in fact, very close to finishing heated up everyone's curiosity and imagination. Different flying patents were registered, which raised tensions and hinted that there soon might be a perfect solution. After November 17th 1896, when the local newspaper in Sacramento (California, USA) published a text in which an adventurer-explorer from New York announced he would, within two days, fly his own aircraft to California, there was a wave of reports of sighting the flying objects in the California sky. As early as the following day, several hundred residents of Sacramento claimed to have seen an unidentified aircraft. The following year, about 3000 testimonies of various experiences with the UFOs and 66 contacts with their crews were reported in the USA alone (Bartholomew 1991). All of the described means of flying seemed to be, both in appearance and performance that were attributed to them, well above the level of technological development of the time. Interpretations of their origin and their crews were diverse and ranged from the idea that they were secularized but lucid, eccentric, talented inventors, to the notion about unknown people (for example, people from the North Pole, who informed the contactees about their advanced cities, that had

central heating and streets lit by electricity obtained from melting the icebergs) to the inhabitants of distant planets - almost as a rule from Mars. The common thing for all these experiences was the fact that the visitors from the air were represented as the possessors of special, advanced knowledge and skills, and who in communication with ordinary people, often conveyed information of the scientific and technological importance, and predicted the imminent boom in the development of the civilization. Contacts were usually established when the flying ships descended due to breakdowns that had to be repaired or in order for the crews to get the necessary supplies. It might be worth mentioning that the Count Zeppelin made his first flight in 1900, while the Wright brothers presented their first successful aircraft 1n 1903.

It is a significant fact for the first wave of the UFOs that it occurred just before the American-Spanish conflict, which had culminated because of the need to control or appropriate Cuba. In many statements of this period, where persons reported meetings with an unknown aircraft, are dominated by the idea that the aircraft was involved in a mission to liberate Cuba, that is, to bomb the Spanish conquerors. Also there is often the idea of a modern weapon and technology that fall into the domain of science fiction, things such as an anti-gravitational device, (Bartholomew 1991).

Of course, it should not be overlooked that, closely related to the period we are talking about, the public was presented with the latest research results of the two scientists who spoke in favour of the possibility of the existence of intelligent life forms beyond Earth. Namely, the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli announced in 1877 that he saw "canals" on Mars, which, in his interpretation represented the evidence of the existence of the irrigation system, and therefore the evidence of the existence of intelligent beings on this planet. Percival Lowell, an American astronomer, claimed in 1890 that not only there were canals on Mars, but that he was also able to see the actual vegetation by using his telescope in Arizona (Squeri 2004). Although such allegations were soon denied with the development of research techniques, Lowell's and Schiaparelli's ideas inspired a number of UFO enthusiasts.

The first wave of "invasions" continued with sporadic testimonies over the next ten years, the testimonies that have, from 1908 until the First World War, again transformed into a group of new reports and a number of stories of visions, encounters and contacts with UFOs.

Smaller waves of appearances of unknown aircrafts were documented in 1908 in Washington, New England and Denmark, and a new big wave in 1909 in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. As the First World War was approaching, testimonies about the "phantom" aircrafts started coming from Canada and Norway and from 1913 to 1917 throughout the United States, unusual appearances in the sky were observed, which were, in an atmosphere of preparation for a global conflict, mainly interpreted as spy scandals. UFO

wave of the 1930s was noticeable the most in Sweden and Norway and the Soviets were held responsible for the origin of most of these aircrafts.

During the World War II, mysterious balls of light known as the "Foo Fighters"[5] became famous. These balls of light were either isolated or grouped and they followed the Allied aircraft pilots on their missions both in the Pacific and in Europe, and in addition to the anxiety created by the fact that they did not belong to any known army on Earth, they were also suspected to be secret weapons employed by the enemy. Immediately after the war, in the summer of 1946, the Swedish Army reported approximately a thousand encounters with silver rockets of unknown origin. Although there were reports on a number of them falling into the Swedish lakes, no trace of these rockets has ever been found or at least their discovery has never been published (Bullard 2000, xv-xvi).

The new era – "Flying saucers" and Roswell

It was possible to observe from the previous examples that the myths about the alien entities, their worlds and their different forms of communication with the Earthlings, grabbed the public's attention long before Roswell. However, 1947 is definitely the beginning of the modern era in the history of the UFO phenomenon, and not just because of the famous event in the mentioned place in New Mexico.

Namely, on June, 24th 1947, a businessman Kenneth Arnold from Idaho (USA) flew his private plane and at the moment when he was flying near Mt Rainier, Washington, he suddenly noticed nine unusual objects in a double echelon formation which flew by his airplane. Kenneth described their movement as resembling a plate thrown in such a way that it would bounce of the water surface, and he estimated that they flew faster than double the speed of light (Arnold & Palmer 1952). At the time when this event allegedly occurred, the speed of light had not been reached yet by any known means of transport. As soon as the next day, Arnold passed the story of his experience to the media and the term "flying saucers" saw the light of day. And, very soon, it became the most popular name for the means of transport believed to be used by visitors from other planets. The media were competing who would be the first to bring the new "facts" from Arnold's experience, so they mostly delivered partial information and statements taken out of the context. In any case, since June 26th, thousands of articles and polemics were published, and according to the Gallup poll of August 1947, nine out of ten Americans were familiar with the story of the flying saucers (Lewis 2000, 33-34).

[5] "Foo Fighters" is a term that is based on the frequently repeated motto of a famous cartoon character in the USA – "Where there's foo, there's fire too". It has been used to describe the phenomenon which after Kenneth Arnold got the name "flying saucer".

In an atmosphere of fascination with flying saucers one of the most important and certainly the most famous event was also the previously mentioned incident at Roswell. The story about Roswell is particularly interesting because of the fact that, after the alleged event of the UFO crash happened, it was written and talked about for several days in the late forties, but in fact, it took an entire thirty years for the whole thing to erupt in the forefront and to reach the position of a pop culture phenomenon.

Events in the Roswell case have still not been precisely dated, because there are, among other things, some disagreements in various sources about the sequence of events. However, the one thing all the testimonies from the reports agree on is that the incident took place early in the summer of 1947 in the state of New Mexico (USA), about fifty kilometres from the city of Roswell. According to most sources, the foreman on the Foster ranch, William Brazel was in his regular tour of the farm when he noticed a group of unusual items - rubber strips, a material like aluminium foil, solid paper and sticks - scattered around a part of the property. Since he had to rush to complete his regular duties, Brazel didn't pay much attention to this debris. Ten days later, the news that Kenneth Arnold had a meeting with a UFO, which from that moment on got the name "flying saucers", echoed the world, but as Brazel lived quite isolated, with no phone and away from populated areas, he heard this news no sooner than July 5th when he was on business in a small town of Corona. Arnold's story prompted him to think that the debris he found on the Foster ranch might have something to do with the UFO, so he notified the local sheriff about the object he had found on July 7th and the sheriff passed the information to the military authorities at the Roswell Army Air Field (Ziegler and Saler 2000). The same day Major Jesse Marcel and another counter-intelligence officer visited the said place with Brazel and picked up all the material found and took it to the military base. The next day a public relations representative from the Army base announced that the army came into possession of a "flying disc" which was then handed to the senior military jurisdictions, and that gave the print media sensational news. However, the same day, the regional Chief of Staff, General Ramey, called for a new press conference in which he denied what his colleague had said and stated that what was found was actually a broken a meteorological balloon. Shortly after that, public attention shifted its focus to other everyday events and the Roswell case almost fell into oblivion.

However, thirty long years later, a UFO researcher and enthusiast made an interview with Major Marcel who, through the National Enquirer, later presented his testimony that was significantly different from the official information that closed the Roswell case in 1947. It was after this that the case returned to the spotlight and received popularity of fantastic proportions, making it almost synonymous with the UFOs experiences. Marcel expressed the opinion that the objects that were found on the Foster ranch were of

extraterrestrial origin and that they had some very unusual characteristics. For example, they couldn't be punctured or burned (Berlitz and Moore 1980). This kind of development led to the appearance of hundreds of witnesses who claimed that they were in some way connected to the Roswell incident and their statements served as the basic material on which numerous books and articles on the issue were published (Berlitz and Moore 1980; Randle and Schmitt 1991, 1994, Friedman and Berliner 1992; Saler, Ziegler and Moore 1997; Korff 2000). Although the versions of the event that were put together on the basis of testimonies of the participants in the Roswell case differ in some issues, they do have something in common. It is the claim that the objects found in 1947 were, in fact, the remains of at least one UFO that crashed near Roswell - or was damaged in the air above Roswell (lightning strike, malfunction, a collision with a weather balloon) but crashed on another location. Objects were of an unknown material, they had unusual characteristics and symbols that could not be deciphered. The UFO crash killed its crew but at least one alien survived and was taken away by the military representatives, along with the rest of the material, to the military base for further testing and analyses. The Army managed to cover up the whole event by methods of intimidation and manipulation of information. The Roswell case is perhaps the best example of a "conspiracy theory". Debates about what actually happened in New Mexico in 1947 have been going on with an undiminished enthusiasm and there are conferences organized by the UFO associations and movements that are trying to resolve disagreements about this case through discussions. The institutions in charge maintained the position that there had not been all that much of extraterrestrial going on in the Roswell case. The United States Air Force report of 1995 states that the weather balloon was a part of a secret project known as "Mogul". This project involved meteorological balloons that were able to reach great heights and were equipped with additional radar technique in order to detect the waves that a potential Soviet nuclear weapons testing might produce (United States Air force 1995). Roswell is the subject of several feature, television and documentary films and series, and in different ways it inspired many authors from different fields, such as music, literature, comics and even video games.

New "invasions" and the "middle generation" of contactees

After the "introduction" of flying saucers at the end of the forties of the twentieth century and the overproduction of stories about encounters with alien spacecrafts, what followed were periods of new waves of "invasions" of the Earth by UFOs, in 1952, 1957, 1964-68, 1973 that were mainly contextualised by the Cold War tension and the nuclear arms race, and continued throughout the eighties until today (Bullard 2000). The descriptions of the shapes of the

unknown aircrafts varied from the disc, cylinder, torpedoes, eggs, to triangular and single-winged constructions. As a rule, these aircrafts were always at least one step ahead of the technical resources the public was aware of, and most belonged in the domain of science fiction. However, what is particularly significant for the history of the UFO phenomenon is the appearance of the new generations of contactees and organizations that dedicated, as we shall see, their entire existence and mission, by using very different approaches, to the UFOs and the visitors from outer space.

One of the most controversial and therefore, one of the most interesting figures in the UFO movement that appeared in public during the late forties and the fifties of the twentieth century, is certainly George Adamski, an American of Polish descent. Adamski is the prototype of the new type of contactees, and he was among the first who gained enormous popularity with his testimonies about contacts with UFOs, claiming that he was chosen to deliver important alien messages and wisdom to humanity. We don't know much about his life before he became famous as a contactee and as an author of several books and articles on this subject. After he served shortly in the U.S. Cavalry on the Mexican border, Adamski got married and situated on a ranch in California, where, with the help of like-minded people, he later bought a piece of land and opened a cafe and an observatory. Clearly interested in mysticism and metaphysics from the earliest age, Adamski founded the Royal Order of Tibet in 1936 and began to teach the "knowledge" of the occult nature. However, Adamski quickly shifted his interest to the ideas related to UFOs and he revealed his first contact with UFOs on October 9th 1946. Three years later he published his first book which made his way clear to a significant position in the circles of people interested in the UFO phenomena (Adamski 1949). However, Adamski gained a worldwide fame by publishing his second book in 1953. In the book he presented Orthon to the public – a tall, blond inhabitant of Venus, with whom Adamski allegedly established a telepathic connection a year earlier. Through Orthon, Adamski was then given hieroglyphic, encrypted messages from the "Space Brothers" who were interested in the future of the Earth and its inhabitants. Adamski claimed that he learned, through the contact with the Venusians, whose aircraft he managed to see up close, that they have been secretly present on Earth for some time. He also stated that their mission was a peaceful one and that they were concerned about the human inclination towards war, especially the nuclear arms race, which threatened to disturb the harmony of the Universe (Leslie and Adamski 1953). Adamski allegedly possessed a number of photographs that were supposed to support his stories about seeing UFOs, as well as the encounters with extraterrestrial beings. In the vastness of testimonies about the contacts with aliens, Adamski became famous for claiming that the government scientists had evidence of the existence of intelligent life on other planets, that he travelled to Saturn on a space ship he boarded in a U.S. military base, that he

held secret meetings with the Pope in the Vatican and the United States president John Kennedy and the people from his administration in connection with the "Space brothers" and, finally, that the Venusians, by using the flying saucers rushed to provide him with transportation even on shorter distances on Earth (O'Leary, 2000). Due to these, often extravagant and even bizarre testimonies, Adamski was suspected of fraudulence and discredited by a number of UFO researchers. He was accused of plagiarizing ideas from the old science-fiction books and movies, doctoring photographs and a few of his close associates eventually admitted that some of Adamski's claims had been invented and redesigned (Melton and Eberhart 1995). However, despite the controversies that followed him and the odium of the UFO researchers circles he brought upon himself, Adamski was able to gather a significant number of followers, forming in 1957 a club "International Get Acquainted" which brought together both those interested in UFOs and those who wanted to receive the "knowledge" and "wisdom" that Adamski, allegedly received from the "Space Brothers". In the late fifties and early sixties, Adamski made a world tour with his lectures, he initiated a periodical, while his books became some of the most widely read books about UFOs. Today the "Adamski Foundation" which was established in 1965 still exists and continues the tradition of his teaching and a number of individuals and smaller groups all over the world operate under the influence of the "secret knowledge" which Adamski believed he had been conveying.

As already mentioned, the fifties of the twentieth century, were very fruitful when it came to the number of contactees who presented their testimonies to the public and who tried to deliver the messages that they had allegedly been receiving from aliens to as wider circle of people as possible. In addition to Adamski, during this period a series of contactees appeared who all had a very important role in the development of the UFO phenomenon.

For example, on July 28th 1952, while he was sleeping during a break at work in California, Truman Bethurum, was woken by eight small men, who took him in a flying saucer that was nearby and there he met their captain - a beautiful woman in her forties. These visitors allegedly came from the planet Clarion which is located in the solar system but has remained undetected because it is always on the other side of the moon in relation to the Earth. By Bethurum claims, Clarionites are a peaceful people who are visiting the Earth because of their concern that it will be destroyed by its inhabitants in a nuclear war (Bethurum 1954). In 1955, by order of the captain from Clarion, Bethurum established their commune in Arizona.

The list of the contactees from the fifties is long and among the more interesting cases are those of Howard Menger and George Williamson. Menger, a veteran of the Second World War and later a farmer in New Jersey, was first introduced to the public in a radio show in guest which he guested along with another, already famous contactee, George Van Tassel. Menger claimed that he

had been seeing flying saucers from early childhood and that he was in contact with a beautiful blonde woman he had seen coming out of a spaceship. She conveyed that she and her people come to Earth to help the humans solve their problems (Menger 1959). Menger claimed that he had photographs of the space ships. It was later found that these photographs have been a hoax - painted scenes that were photographed.

Williamson also had unusual out-of-body experiences since his youth, but he had the first contact with extraterrestrial beings in 1952 in Arizona, in the company of his wife and another couple, friends of the family. It all happened through a combination of the phenomenon of automatic writing, Ouija board and then radio signals. For a short period he was a follower and associate of George Adamski. After a series of experiments of varying length with different metaphysical associations and spiritualists, Williamson published books in which he practically introduced the fragments of the theory of ancient astronauts[6] for the first time. Namely, Williamson claimed that the aliens interacted with the Earthlings since ancient times, as a result of which, some peoples are of extraterrestrial origin (for example, the Hopi Indians). He was the first person who presented the famous Nazca lines as markers for the landing of alien spacecraft (Williamson 1957, 1958, 1959). After a series of discoveries about the false representation of his origin and education, Williamson changed his name to Michael d'Obrenovic (which he claimed was, in fact, his real name) and almost disappeared from contactees' circles.

A certain number of people who claimed they were maintaining communication with extraterrestrial beings, and that they were channelling their messages to humanity, have successfully formed organizations of the contactees, many of which are still active in preparing the public for the arrival of "Space Brothers." The most famous ones and the most important for the development of the UFO phenomenon are organizations like "Aetherius Society", "Unarius", "Cosmic Circle of Fellowship", "Mark-Age Metacenter" or "Ashtar Command".

New types of encounters - abductions and the abductees

If the forties of the twentieth century brought the term "flying saucer" and were filled with sightings of unknown aircraft and the fifties gave birth to a

[6] The theory of ancient astronauts is highly developed and has many followers, but opponents as well. One of its most important protagonists is the Swiss author Erich von Däniken. In short, it tells a story of an alien intervention in the origin of the human race, about the presence of aliens on Earth since the "ancient" times, for which the evidence is often found in megalithic and monumental buildings of the ancient world, as in many different artefacts that allegedly represent extraterrestrial beings and their devices, as they were perceived by the inhabitants of the Earth of that time.

whole new kind of generation of contactees that conveyed to the public messages from the extraterrestrial beings, as well as gaining great popularity and forming a following - then we can say that in the sixties, and especially in the seventies, a new kind of witnesses emerged with not so pleasant experiences in contacting UFOs and aliens. These experiences became known as alien "abductions".

The first reported case of abduction by the extraterrestrials was recorded on September 19th, 1961 in New Hampshire. While returning home from a vacation, Mr and Mrs Hill, Betty and Barney, noticed that an unusual light in the air above was following them. At one point the light came close enough for them to be able to see that this was a disc-shaped aircraft. They could hear strange beeping and the spacecraft quickly disappeared from their sight. When they arrived home, they realized that they had come back two hours later than planned. After a while, due to sleeping disorders and problems associated with anxiety, the Hills had to ask for the help of a psychiatrist. They underwent hypnosis with a Boston psychiatrist and what came up was an absolutely unexpected and amazing story. The Hills recalled a road block made by tiny beings with large heads and big eyes, with small ears and mouths and gray skin and without hair. The creatures controlled their minds and took them to a spaceship that landed nearby, where they carried out several medical experiments on them. After that, the leader of the group addressed Betty Hill telepathically and they were returned to their car and allowed to continue their journey (Bullard 1989). With the Hills' permission, the notes from the therapy were forwarded to the local newspaper and, based on them a book published (Fuller 1966) and a TV dramatization was made which aired on NBC television in 1975.

After the publication of the Hills' testimony, a number of stories where people claimed to have had identical or similar experiences began to appear. This phenomenon achieved the highest popularity after the publication of a book by Whitley Strieber in 1987, in which the popular author of horror novels described his personal experiences with a UFO abduction (Strieber 1987). People who presented their stories and details about their stay with the aliens began to appear in radio and TV programs. In the late eighties, UFO researchers recorded over 600 personal experiences different people had with alien abductions and, according to a survey conducted by the SF magazine "OMNI", the number of those who thought that they were abducted was doubled. The largest number of testimonies about the abductions was recorded in North America and followed closely by South America, Great Britain and Australia, while in continental Europe only a few cases (three of which in the Soviet Union) were recorded. In the nineties, the production of the literature that dealt with the testimonies of the abducted and the interpretations of this phenomenon outshone all other topics related to the UFOs (Whitmore 1995).

Although in many of the stories about the kidnapping there appear to be significant differences, there seems to be a common, "standard" structure of this experience.

The structure of testimonies about the abduction, in almost all the reported cases consists of several or all of the following elements - the act of abduction itself (unusual creatures take the witness to the space ship), physical and psychological tests are conducted, a communication is established, the abductee is shown the surroundings of where he's being kept (usually the inside of the spacecraft), the abductees are taken to an unknown location where the abductors reside, the contact with the supreme or divine being is established and they are given the knowledge and messages that are of interest for the humanity and finally follows the return home, to everyday life, in which the physical, psychological and paranormal consequences of the abduction occur (Bullard 1989; Withmore 1995). Many witnesses do not remember at all that they were kidnapped and are often subjected to hypnosis in order to recall this experience.

The opinions of researchers of the abduction phenomenon differ on the matter of its background and nature. On the one hand, sceptics believe that these are fantasies induced by hypnosis or frauds and fantasies based on published stories and science fiction films, while the authors who are (more or less) trying to explain the phenomenon of kidnapping rationally seek the arguments in prenatal memories or the trauma of birth, in the electromagnetic radiation or in the Jungian archetypes. On the other hand, UFO believers argue that these abductions represent the scientific research the aliens are conducting on our planet, whether they are only using us as genetic material or making preparation for their future arrival (Bullard 1989).

New contactees

The late forties and the fifties of the twentieth century brought the revolution to the UFO phenomena. The surge in the number of people who claimed to have had some sort of contacts with UFOs and groups of contactees and researchers of the UFO phenomena, set the standard and, to a great extent, determined further developments relating to the collective fascination with extraterrestrial beings.

In the decades that followed more people emerged who gained popularity by publishing their experiences in alien encounters, but in far smaller numbers and with a significantly smaller influence on the development of the UFO phenomenon than their predecessors.

Nevertheless, among the new contactees several controversial figures managed to attract (and keep) the attention of the broader public. Some of the best known are: Eduard Meier, Frank Stranges, Brad Steiger as well as the controversial "entertainer" Uri Geller, who, in addition to making performances

that are supposed to prove his psychokinetic, telekinetic and precognitive powers, keeps occasional contacts with extraterrestrial entities.

Instead of the conclusion – Landing

In spite of all the previously described or mentioned cases of contacts with alien beings and their vehicles, their landing on Earth has still not happened... or at least there are no confirmations from the official government institutions.

As the level of scientific knowledge is growing daily and the information on the new findings is getting more and more accessible through various media, the UFO phenomenon and its protagonists are going through different stages of development and adaptation to more modern times. But, that information does not present anything new. Since the first recorded testimonies, contactees have conveyed to the public information on actualities and problems of the time they lived in, and which were based on the then level of knowledge, scientific discoveries and popular scientific assumptions.

Thus, the subjects that appear in the announcements of contactees range from the human anatomy with Swedenborg, to technological innovations such as automobiles, radio receivers, airplanes and "secret", modern weapons, to hydrogen or atomic bombs and environmental problems and issues of social disintegration. Swedenborg, for example, on his journey through the Solar System describes all the planets that were known until 1750, but fails to mention Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, that were discovered later (Melton 1995).

In the stories of the first contactees, the contact with the extraterrestrial beings was achieved mainly through an out-of-body experience - through astral projection or telepathy, which resolved the problems of overcoming the force of gravity and travelling enormous distances as well as the lack of developed equipment and resources. Adamski's generations of contactees, those from the fifties of the twentieth century, were able to add another tool to the existing techniques and methods - a flying saucer. What is interesting and inspiring in the next generation, in addition to the various types of space ships, are systems of (de)materialization as well as the presence of hidden aliens on Earth.

The first contactees linked their journeys and the origin of the beings with which they communicated mainly with Mars, Venus and the Moon. During the twentieth century, Venus slowly took over the dominance as a favourite residence of aliens, and Adamski's generation added to this list Saturn and Jupiter as well as some unknown planets in the Solar System, such as, Clarion. Keeping in mind the results of modern space research, that has rejected any possibility of the existence of intelligent life in the Solar System, it is more than clear why the generations of new contactees place their aliens in distant galaxies, undiscovered planetary or star systems, or, as it is often the case, their origin remains a mystery (Melton 1995).

Still, despite these contextual adaptations and changes, the experiences with UFO encounters and extraterrestrial entities, have retained through centuries many common characteristics that tell us, first and foremost, about the manner of conceptualization of the possible extraterrestrial intelligence and the position that it occupies. Regardless of the popular Hollywood ideas about the monstrous creatures from space that conquer our world, in the testimonies of people who claim to have experienced a contact with extraterrestrial beings, these examples are extremely rare (Bullard 2000, xxi).

The Creatures from the space are, as a rule, of humanoid appearance and characteristics. The aliens are all seeing and all knowing, they are on the far more advanced level of civilisation than ours. They are friendly to Earthlings and treat us as if they were our older, more powerful brothers. Their information is therefore trusted; they have a specific authority, achieved mostly by their level of technological progress and development. The very fact that they are present among us and that they were able to reach our planet is awe-inspiring, even though the science constantly fails to confirm their existence. Extraterrestrial beings, however, are interested in us, they follow us – they did not just appear out of nowhere or just ran into some sort of colony on Earth. They are worried about us and for the future of our world, they watch us and they know our problems better than we know them ourselves and they are willing to guide us through life. Even people who claim to have been abducted by aliens, an experience which is most often described as being very unpleasant, as a lasting impression of it state that the aliens are friendly to Earthlings (Whitmore 1995).

Everything that has been said adds a specific religious perspective to the UFO phenomenon, especially in view of the eschatological/moral/religious content of messages and the body of questions and problems related to life to which the extraterrestrials offer answers and which the contactees convey to the humanity. But, this is a special issue that will be addressed in another work.

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LETEĆI ALI NEIDENTAIFIKOVAN! KRATAK UVOD U NLO FENOMEN

Rad se bavi najbitnijim aspektima NLO fenomena. Predstavljen je kratak istorijat razvoja pojave, najbitniji protagonisti i ključni događaji koji su uticali na formiranje predstave o postojanju i kontaktima sa vanzemaljskim inteligencijama. Razmatrani su fenomeni kontakata sa vanzemaljskim bićima, predstavljene su najznačajnije ličnosti koje su tvrdile da su u komunikaciji sa vanzemaljcima, kao i otmice od strane vanzemaljskih bića ali i organizacije kontaktera. Predstavljena je konceptualizacija uloge vanzemaljskih bića i poruka koje ona, navodno, upućuju čovečanstvu, te je ukazano na njihovu religijsku kontekstualizovanost.

Ključne reči: neidentifikovani leteći objekat, vanzemaljci, kontakteri, otmice, nlo organizacije, nlo pokreti, nlo religije