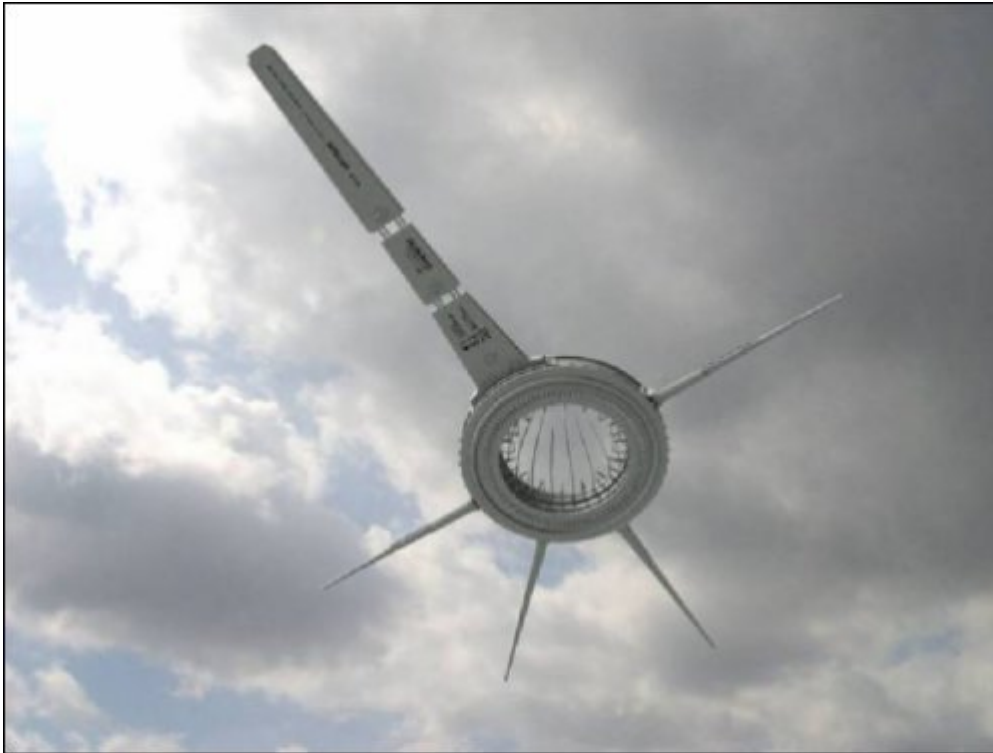


The CARET Programme: A Fortean Essay in Story Technology

by
Colin Bennett



The Caret Programme

In June of 2007 there appeared a web site <http://isaaccaret.fortunecity.com/> apparently authored by one Isaac Caret. He claimed to have worked for the U.S. Department of Defence from 1984 to 1987 in a laboratory in Palo Alto, California. This site contained pictures of an extraordinary machine hovering above power lines. The pictures were more clear than most UFO pictures, and a short video soon made its appearance. Since the machine looked most unearthly (see above) and could not be verified as a piece of known human technology, there was much discussion about these photographs, and this continues throughout the Web world.

Linda Moulton Howe <http://www.earthfiles.com/> in her usual thorough manner, has collected a mass of data concerning witnesses and origins of these spectacular photographs. She continues to update this information. Go Caret Videos on Google for good selection of pictures and videos.

Presumably prompted by the appearance of such pictures, Isaac Caret spoke to George Noory of Coast to Coast, and claimed to have extensive knowledge of the origins of such craft as those depicted. Caret also presented a fully detailed report on his site in which he said:

"I am also trying to get in touch with the witnesses so far, such as Chad, Rajman, Jenna, Ty, and the Lake

Tahoe witness (especially Chad). I have advice for them that may be somewhat helpful in dealing with what they've seen and what I would recommend they do with what they know. If you are one of these witnesses, or can put me in touch with them, please contact Coast to Coast AM and let them know."

Caret claims that he "worked" (he does not give his speciality or qualifications) on what he calls the CARET program in the 80's. He claims that his programme was concerned no less with reverse-engineering bits and pieces of extraterrestrial alien technology. In assuming that this work continued after he left the CARET programme, Claret says that in his opinion the CHAD UFOs (as they shall be called) are vehicles which are retro-engineered versions of the alien technology he himself worked on.

"During my time there, I worked with a lot of the technology that is clearly at work in the recent drone/strange craft sightings, most notably the "language" and diagrams seen on the underside of each craft. What follows is a lengthy letter about who I am, what I know, and what these sightings are (probably) all about."

The Web is of course notorious for launching scams of all kinds. Most Web Radio jocks are ready to take such things in without much questioning, although some are more discriminating than others. Almost all such scams blow away very quickly, and it must be admitted that most are great fun whilst they last, setting hares chasing in all directions. But on occasion there comes along a story which shows that it is part of a powerful agenda of persuasion and is not merely a light-hearted scam. Such was the Planet SERPO story. Before being blown apart, this story spread vast confusion on the Web as a fine old tale of how a number of Americans were abducted by aliens in the 1960s and taken to Planet SERPO. Compared with the sophistication of the CHAD operation (as it shall so be called), the SERPO tale is amateur retro science-fiction, pure schlock bat-winged baboonage of the kind that left the retail shelves generations ago. The only difference is that many claimed the story was real.

Both SERPO and CHAD have been rejected as subjective, or unreal, and these are two of the more charitable epithets applied to SERPO. But before we discuss the role of techno-fantasy in our culture, we need to know something about Plato (circa 500 BC) the Greek philosopher.

The question of the structure of the objective-real bedevilled Western philosophy until Plato solved the problem with his Allegory of the Cave in his book *The Republic*. The Allegory describes prisoners so chained and masked that they could never see a fire lit behind them. What they saw as "real" were the shadows thrown by the fire onto the cave wall in front of them. Because of their situation these shadows were interpreted by the prisoners as representing the substance and actions of the real world.

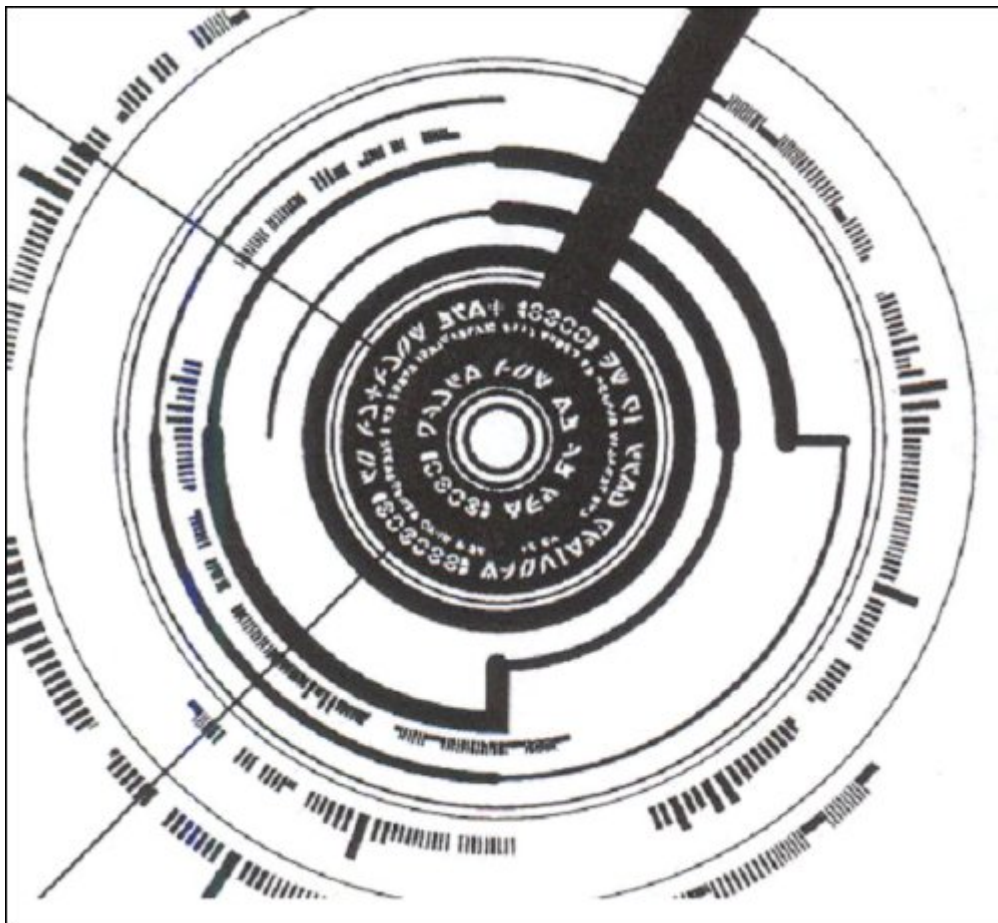
Though Plato had the most profound influence on Western Culture, his Allegory in particular was largely ignored if only it was somewhat subversive to the growth of scientific and mechanical cultures, which largely divorced mind from Nature and developed the "scientific" cult of "objectivity." Science and mechanism dominated the idea of the real, which became a thing which could be measured, and such measurements could be agreed upon by social and intellectual consensus. This formed a consensus culture which largely agreed that what could be measured and predicted, organised and investigated, had laws which represented the laws of "reality."

This "concrete" idea of the real appeared to be unassailable until in the early part of the twentieth century when writers such as Charles Fort came along to challenge it. Here, as the author of *Politics of the Imagination*, an award-winning biography of Charles Fort (with a Foreword by John Keel), I offer a Fortean analysis of the CHAD phenomenon. All references here are to the diagrams, photographs, and pages from the CHAD Reports Manual, and the lengthy commentary by "Isaac" himself, as seen on <http://isaaccaret.fortunecity.com/>

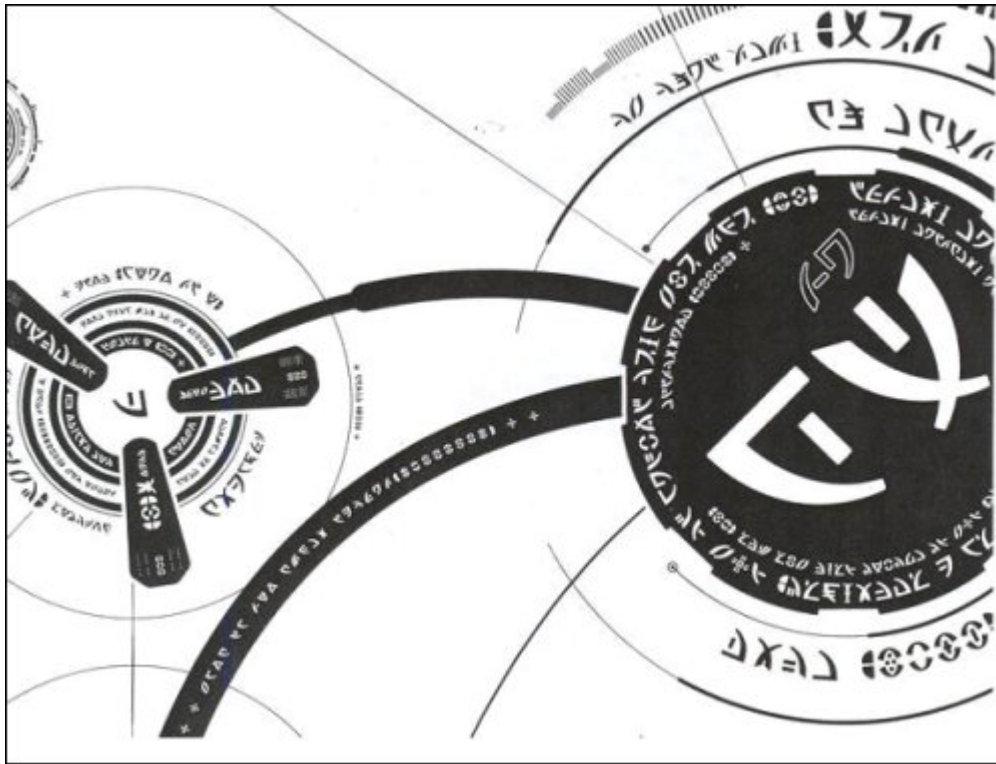
Isaac's commentary is entitled My "Experience with the CARET Program and Extra-terrestrial Technology" and is dated June 2007.

The only trouble with the commentary is that it is far too well sculpted for someone who claims he is not a writer. "Isaac" takes his time, unfolds the story in skilled fictional terms, frequently hesitating in relaxed professional narrative style. He uses rhetoric, self-questioning, and complex irony. The voice is warm, assured, and very human as if he is used to narrating with a well-modulated voice at just the right distance before a studio microphone. Despite the protestations of innocence, this is well-rehearsed piece has a detectable (and betraying) polish. It could be done as straight Radio talks-feature without any changes.

The Line Drawings



Isaac gives some line drawings (above and below) which are from page 2 of the "Linguistic Analysis Primer"



These diagrams are equally skilled as the narrative voice, reminiscent of someone who is under the influence of Miro. The drawings are not distinct knowledge so much as a display of various highly professional skills. For instance, the inscribed font and alphabet above are beautiful pieces of work, done by someone with great skill and expert typographical knowledge. Constructing elliptical and circular form of the “alphabet” alone could not have been easy. Graphic artists are paid scores of thousands of pounds for original fonts, and this one appears to have given his talent easily, or else he was paid an enormous amount which deepens the mystery again. Trying to copy these line drawings is not easy. They must have been done on a huge canvas, because bringing the fonts down to screen size they become almost obliterated. The only way to see the letters clearly (as above) is to paste in Photoshop, crop a small piece, and zoom to 100% . The exquisite precision can then be seen. The skill is equal to that of a watchmaker or jeweller. Yet another mystery: even at this zoom, some of the smaller thinner lines still do not separate. I give a reader a guess then, say 200%? Yes, they separate at this zoom, thus ever single piece of the design can be seen clearly. But it means that the size of the original canvas must have been mind-boggling!

If this was a page of instructions from a mechanical workshop, the letters would not be so beautifully done; on machine parts they would be engraved with an electric scribe, or stamped on a fixed plate in a rather rough and ready manner. In other words what we are dealing with here is techno-theatre, not machine instructions. It is information-mockery as art form. Yet another quite remarkable thing is that given the 100% zoom on Photoshop in order to make the images clear, the creator must have been working on a surface at least fifteen feet x 10 feet, with a big process camera suspended over the entire area! Yet another remarkable thing is that in all fairness, not many folk at all are going to the trouble to copy, crop, and zoom to see just a small part of the plan, circuit, or whatever it is. This means of course that the diagram cannot be seen in detail as a whole! (reminder of Nasca lines, corn circles?) Such an artist who likes to keep his light under a barrel is rare.

Again, the text pages of the Report are brilliant pieces of expert summary, written by someone who has a most detailed and scholarly knowledge of present day discussions on "anti-gravity," The material in the

few odd pages of the Report is very definitely Web-derived and traceable to certain Lists and sites, such as American Antigravity at <http://www.americanantigravity.com/>

It appears that the CHAD "aliens" derive quite a lot of their technical knowledge from such very human sites as these!

Airborne Approximations: Fort's Degrees of the Real

Once we have text, mechanism, and technological claim viewed as theatre, we head straight for the work of Charles Fort to enlighten us. We do this with a wary look over our shoulder at our friends in the Jurassic Museum, who make all kinds of intermediate-reality forms reminiscent of CHAD, see <http://www.mjt.org/intro/genborch.htm> and the book Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonders. The sites <http://www.argn.com> and <http://www.immersivegaming.com/> are also worth a look at as regards CHAD-style gaming.

Basically, the Fortean view gives rough-and-ready percentages to the degrees of "reality" in stories, which range in our own day from "cold" scientific claims to the "hot" wild tales of SERPO, Dan Burische, and Hoagland. What Fort calls "reality" ranges between 0% and 100% of some ineffable archetype, such as the limit in the Calculus, or the theoretical abstractions of Plato's cave-shadows. These are analogous to the idea of a frictionless surface or the impossibility of perpetual motion. In this sense all "realities" are approximations, as are the bones of the landed fish in Hemingway's story, *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The idea that nothing in the world, no action, thought, event, is ever quite real in the absolute concrete sense is perhaps the most disturbing idea we can contemplate. It does however shed light both on the assassination of JFK and 911, whose systems cannot be entered by rationalisations alone. The idea of Fortean percentages can change our entire framework of perception and allow us to enter systems locked against the absolutism of finite rationalisations.

In their wisdom, scientists try to clean up noisy systems with the mathematical equation, which was of course intended to clear up such ambiguity. However, to reduce a bus load of fighting drunks to a point mass rolling down an inclined plane is to lose out on a lot of fun, never mind throw the baby out with the bathwater. The equation, just like the fairy-story, is a way of managing frameworks and imaging concerning modes of perception. In this sense, science can indeed be viewed as one big advertising system, selling "fact" as ruthlessly as others sell SERPO and CHAD stories. That science is a culture amongst other cultures is not taught as such. It should be. Anything which controls us in this sense is deeply political. Looking around the world at the moment, the "scientific" view has a great deal to answer for. Attempts at imposing order on both the universe and that glorious mess called humanity do not have a good reputation. The human mind thankfully refuses to be brought to heel by a set of rules organised by filing clerks and Victorian Station Masters, almost all of them from the Protestant lower middle class. On our Fortean scale of percentages of wonder, the output=input trading universe ranks low. As the Pope said recently to Prime Minister Tony Blair, "miracles are hard to find in Britain."

Technology and Mythology: Story Lines are Noisy Things

Does "Reality" Belong to the Scientists? Do they own it? The "reality" that scientists jaw about is forever an approximation if only because both language and concept are constructed entirely of metaphor, image and symbol. Not even legal or scientific documents can be entirely shorn of ambiguity. Therefore to a greater or lesser extent, each text (either spoken or written or "viewed") contains that drama of ideas we

call mythology.

From Paris Hilton to the Einstein "brains" mythology, people are governed almost entirely by stories of one sort or another. They certainly do not reason by using linked fully-conscious causal chains organised by the rules of evidence or social-democratic principles. Despite the protest of social-democratic folk, what we call thinking is a disgusting, noisy, and dirty process, and long may it be so. Such a great noise level distinguishes us from robots.

Story-lines are very noisy. But the noise and nonsense (conceived as play - vital to communication, discovery, and sanity) helps change the way we form modes of perception which help change mythology within languages and texts. This is one of the objects of the SERPO and CHAD operations. Seen in this light the claims of both belief and denial belong to a conflict in which images within stories are at war, and not end-stopped "facts."

In pre-electric times, royal courts, churches, and temples provided the control-mythology of the past within their accounts of Creation. The priesthood (almost always suspicious men who wear strange clothing, and claim virgin birth) manufactured images and events in much the same manner as CHAD and SERPO are manufactured. There is usually some mantra to chant and repeat, and absolutely every one of these gurus tells us how to behave and list the punishments for not doing so. The various religious hierarchies created by these strange individuals invented miracles, resurrections, all kinds of anomalistic events which were the big in-depth bug-eyed advertising campaigns of history. Control of images means of course control of individual and collective imagination, which is the final objective of all image-based suggestion systems. Once that is achieved, political control of time and thought, identity and action follow, and we feel "God" as a monkey sees and feels a hot water bottle as its loving mother. This illusion enables the creature to grow as much as does a packet full of "facts:" they are both equally as effective in operation. One is not "false" and the other "true" so much as both are different kinds of psychological management system, some more pleasant than others.

Science and rationalism are managed in much the same trick-or-treat way, but compared to (say) occultism and the paranormal, their cultural propaganda is far more effectively managed as Central Control of Prime Time. Old Ufology, as very primitive system speaking purely intellectually, is particularly susceptible to story-raiders such as SERPO and CHAD, and has as many hot water bottles as it has monkeys and word-processors.

Entertainment State: the Right Slogan for the Right Product

In our own Entertainment State, "fact" as operator means little, particularly in a mass-media age, with over-fed populations, battery-fed with consumerism and are brimful of TV soaps rather than being corpuscular. Such people are far easier to control than the under-stimulated and impoverished rustic proles of Orwell's 1884. Both the present conflict in the Middle East and the actions of the Bush/Blair administrations for example mean almost nothing in terms of "fact" in a pre-Web sense. All actions and operations are pure media: the individuals, the policies, the actions, all partake of an increasing unreality, from the Downing Street Memo to the Nigerian "yellow cake" scandal. The old word of objective and separate mechanisms as regards "war" alone is retreating from our culture as if it were a ghost, leaving our shredded moral values as the only real things left to us, but they too are now somewhat tenuous abstractions!

As we once opened up the interior of the "hard" (metaphor!) Newtonian billiard-ball atom to reveal extraordinary electromagnetic complexity, then we open up "fact" to find it consists of fractal-like sub-texts which are live memes of information. Every single element of perception is a mythological generator

containing nothing but images. Oar and horse, sails and rigging, steam and iron - we relate to these image-strands every time we visualise any one of these things into glorious prime time. Just two words such as "steam train," in performing, throw all kinds of seeding time-pods into inner space, which fertilise in turn, growing other nets beyond other nets. Thinking is that complicated. The merest fraction of a second contains an infinity of associations. Only the powerful image, and not intellect, can grasp and control this stream of consciousness. This is the reason why Paris Hilton plus SERPO and CHAD memes may in the end have far greater power than boiler-house science of MUFON.

Marilyn Monroe and Stanton Friedman: A Marriage of Inconvenience

Like everyone else, even the "scientific" brothers of MUFON produce endless Marilyn Monroe films in their head to infinity and beyond. They do this whilst calculating their blessed angles and times and trajectories. We are all such product-zombies. We are all acts and images. Brother Stanton as MUFON Man cannot help being sold as a packaged "nuclear physicist" when, bless him, he has not done any nuclear physics for over thirty years. This sells himself and it sells his books, for which he is not be blamed. Another well-known UFO physicist was demonstrating a point on a List by asking us to imagine a pencil being dropped onto a table, as a "clean" illustration if ever there was. I told him that by choosing a particular image, he had created a theatre, a relationship, and that this "simple" illustration once deconstructed was rich in symbolism and information. He stormed off saying this writer should be hung. If Ufology does not break out of such conservatism of bygone ages it will die. Here there was brutal rejection of Complexity, and Chaos, replaced by good old Victorian action-and-reaction physics, end of argument. By stripping the pencil/table event of all its anomalous sub-texts, he no doubt got the answer he wanted.

Here is the MUFON problem in a nutshell. The physicists of Old Ufology do not know how to open the bean-bag. They are still gazing at billiard-ball atoms of long ago.

When we think, we cannot avoid running the so-called "real" threads of our proud egocentric perceptions through a complex of harpies such as Monroe and their associated leading buzz-words such as "nuclear" which makes heads turn just as much as does a photo of Paris Hilton. This is the way human communities and cultures have always worked, and always will. Despite this, iron-age scientists of the old school claim they are being "objective" when they talk of "getting rid of noise in the system."

As Marshall McLuhan once said, he who denies being an image, a product, a personality and a performer, is a liar.

This is what is meant by "mythology in action" as represented by the SERPO and CHAD phenomenon.

Prime Time in the Engine-room: What is Real?

Particular methods of analysis are formed by particular cultures. The UFO case-history is a functional mode of cultural perception. In isolation, without framework of stories, it means nothing. The Victorian Station Masters of Old Ufology, caught in the cultural trap of trying to decide whether a particular sighting of a UFO is "real," waste an enormous amount of time and energy in trying to isolate experience from every single thing that feeds it. The result has been a collection of pan-fried case histories stretching beyond the sun and moon. Old engine-room Ufology, with its thousands of stoking filing-clerks, its pre-quantum, pre-relativistic science, and pre-Post-modern view, has been in intellectual stasis for generations. Its main researchers (non of whom have had a UFO experience!) gripped by the philosophies of the "polytech" garage-universities of the 1960s, worship at that deserted Mayan temple called the database, whose steps lead nowhere but into empty sky. Future generations will look up at such steps and will form all kinds of theories as to why the construction work faltered and stopped.

The future will ask did the builders of data-bases fall out of favour with the gods? This is a good attempt at explanation as assuming that just like the Mayans, the data-base culture ran out of time, money, resources, and (more important) vision and imagination. This adamant refusal of Old Ufology to even consider any kind of new idea is the reason for its absolute and total isolation from the broad stream of bourgeois culture.

Warring Information Systems

In a Web and Media age, the idea of "facts" should be replaced by the idea of warring information systems battling for Prime Time. In the MUFON sense, calling the generators of such things as SERPO or CHAD impostors, hoaxers and liars does not mean much. Those terms relate to the hard definitions of a pre-cyber world in which one meta-industrial and technological process could be separated from another. SERPO and CHAD are examples of products of the first generation of ruthless cyber mythologists. They are both performance memes. Using such elements Web technology has now reached a state where it is possible to create a wholly new and very different kind of politics. This view represents the modelling and application of many different kinds of belief-manipulation systems in terms of control of different kinds of operational mythologies. These are somewhat plastic entities, just like CHAD and SERPO. As in molecular biology, mythologies can be designed and constructed as experimental platforms for all kinds of purposes. As such, they can be developed, applied, and managed as regards the design of any particular manipulation, the result being a world almost complete in itself. To say that the CHAD game is "phoney" is true, but that is to totally misunderstand the game that is being played. As the Alchemist said to his Apprentice, "the game may be fixed, but it is the only game in town."

In the case of SERPO and CHAD the purpose is to test belief systems as one would test an electronic circuit. In the previous literary world (now gone from us as Nineveh and Tyre) before cyber, this kind of thing was known as "faction." Given Web power, this has now become mythological engineering of a kind we have not seen before. The designers are interested in launching a Matrix-style information meme in order to form new patterns and programmes of belief-manipulation gaming. We should not be deceived; SERPO was a very crude prototype, CHAD, by comparison is a very advanced multi-media operation, and it is highly probable that there is much more of this kind of thing to come.

Techgnosis: the Politics of Story Technology

Story-technology is a technique which lends itself perfectly to cyber operations such as CHAD and SERPO. The popular TV soaps are cheap and cheerful repetitions of artificially-processed story-chains which go into the mental gut just as consumerism manufactures attitudes of consent towards ranges of images, symbols and metaphors, resulting finally in the purchase of "hard" tins of Celebrity Pork Roll. Like all TV, soaps are for simple-minded non-cerebral folk, and their mythology is easily absorbed into the mental gut.

But CHAD is not, as some have suggested, pre-publicity for a coming CD game. Its focus is limited, much more narrowly specialised, and it represents a political programme of an entirely new type, meant to appeal almost exclusively to thinking folk. As such, it is structured, and it does not align itself with those things which most thinkers pretend they despise: non-cerebral mass media, pop culture, and consumerism. Despite being almost extinct as a lost tribe, no culture, society or indeed time itself can move forward without thinkers. Without the much-abused intellectuals, we would have a two-dimensional tapestry world, a medieval wall-painting showing the entire world to be a billion Simpson characters frozen in media time.

Therefore, in the case of CHAD, what few brains are left in the world are a main target. Given the cheapness and general availability of powerful computers, it is now possible to produce very quickly programmes which can create and "run" complete belief-systems within a designed world-model. In the case of both the prototypal SERPO and the more advanced CHAD, the objectives are most certainly the thinkers, and the programme is as follows.

The CHAD Programme

(1) Measurement of how wide and deep is the penetration caused by a single staged drama of a particular psycho-social construction. As far as CHAD is concerned, any and every kind of seed-pod theory is now spreading throughout the Web with a speed only modern computers can manage.

(2) Measurement of the "quality" of this penetration in terms of the reactions to it. People of very high IQ listen to "alternative" radio and UFO and related sites. As a minority target-group they are perfect for hi-tech speculations of all kinds. On the Coast-to-Coast list alone there are scores of scientists and writers of significance. Making them listen despite themselves is one of the psychological aims of CHAD. The reactions of these high-level cultural structures are significant in the sense that if the manipulators can analyze and predict the reactions of the bourgeois intelligentsia, then such can be fed and controlled by episodic injections of the tale. By comparison the proles of 2007 are easy meat if only that they absorb TV without limit and offer no kind of hard socio-political resistance compared to half a century ago. The intellectuals are different. Most do not watch TV. As such they need more complex and highly-wrought means of penetration. This is where both SERPO and CHAD come in.

(3) Assessment of just how much "fantasy" can be engineered into the suggestion. SERPO as prototype was over the top achieving about 1% on the Fortean scale. As distinct from SERPO, CHAD is a very subtle high-level multi-media operation with better internal balance, backed up by a massive and well-financed support base. It applies just a little fantasy, not too much, something only a few moves away from the supposed real. Then it adds something of the perceived contemporary real. When looked at closely, this now-you-see-it now-you-don't flicker-technique produces raw intellectual eroticism of a superb variety. Many thinkers fall for the glamour, mystery, and intrigue of CHAD and its technical interest. Other thinkers such try to solve the problem of the "reality" of CHAD in the good old-fashioned Agatha Christie sense with clues and "explanations" found in the potting shed. Such are the Pied Piper tales of both SERPO and CHAD.

(4) Learning how to make sure that the level of the CHAD story is just above that of schlock fiction, adjusted so that it whets credible appetites and is quickly absorbed. CHAD represents nothing less than the launch of the cutting edge of prototypal Matrix politics. It is far more dangerous than memes of Icke or Hoagland because its agenda is directed at high IQ levels, and its Fortean percentages of "reasonableness" are much more carefully managed.

(5) Measurement of the deterioration of the story, how long it lasts, which parts last the longer. Judging how the percentages of the real are managed rather like plant-cultivation. As a liminal structure, poised between percentages of fact and fiction, CHAD as a psycho-crop fits into the 30% "real" of the Fortean category.

(6) The design of the bait. A study of the type of acceptance and the type of rejection of the bait. The grounds of rejection and by whom: social class, education, race, etc; the kind and level of discussion and analysis of the "bait" pictures.

The SERPO story being blown, we now all wait for the appearance of the inevitable updates to CHAD!

Part 2 of this article will be available in the August 2007 issue of UFO magazine.

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www.combat-diaries.co.uk