



Transactional Musings

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The Image and “Persona” of NSA Have Changed

Like it or not the image and **persona** of the National Security Agency have changed. Their deceptions, lies, coercion, fraud, theft, excuses, justification, self-rekidding, carefully crafted cover stories have been blown. And they are out to get the SOB “responsible.”

Responsible? How about holding NSA et al accountable for their systemic transgressions, actions. Eavesdropping? Trespassing? Peeping?

The culture within NSA has been exposed; decades of secrecy and mythology (about NSA) have been revealed to be true. The people whom they supposedly serve, the people of the United States of America, ARE NOT paranoid. The NSA (et al) threat is real.

Persona

Dr. Eric Berne writes about **persona** in several places in his book “The Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups.”

On page 13 “... Skillfully using a combination of drama and seductiveness to appeal to the archaic aspects of the personality, Mr. Mead characterized himself as a prodigy, from childhood on the instrument of supernatural forces that endowed him with magic

powers, thus rendering him (he hinted) indefatigable, incorruptible, omnipotent, omniscient, immortal, fearless and invulnerable. He held out to the members the hope that they too could attain some measure of these qualities through him, if they put themselves at the disposal of the primal forces which he represented and adhered to a special canon of feeling and behavior. After he had finished outlining this self-presentation or **persona**, Mrs. Mead drew the curtain. This was the signal that the function of establishing the leadership was completed and that the group activity was about to begin.”

On page 15 “The Leader’s Personality - It was interesting to observe the series of **personas** presented by Mr. Mead. First there was the rational, sophisticated adult who gave a brief explanation of the principles of spiritualism; this was Mr. Mead himself. Then came the sensitive, obsequious, innocent child Ruby, followed by the clownish adolescent Sambo. These all paved the way for Dr. Murgatroyd, the principal figure of the evening, who was “materialized” by Mr. Mead in the fatherly role of a wise old

teacher, whose pleasure it was to “enlighten those that are seeking for the truth.” These components are illustrated in the diagram in Fig. 6 [page 16].

This personality diagram is no different from that of any other leader. Shifts between rational, childlike, adolescent and fatherly behavior are frequently described in the biographies of heads of states. As parental figures, some were stern and some benevolent; in playful mood, some behaved amicably and some execrably. Some have been more notorious than others for shifting from one state of mind to another. To make acceptable **personas** out of such psychological realities is a work of art that is divided between the leader himself and the morale branch of his internal group apparatus.

The deepest qualities of leadership depend on certain irrational aspects of the relationship between the leader and the members. The effective leadership of a group may include a number of individuals, sometimes a very large number, who see that things get done. The psychological leader is the individual who, in the minds of the members, is most highly endowed with superior -

The players of war games are at times callous and brutal. And their priorities sometimes become confused: persona, objective, feelings. George Washington chided his officers about this.

Persona is even a factor in “Currency Wars.”

The persona of the players in the story “Casablanca” are memorable. For Rick, the owner of Café Americain, “he must decide what’s more important - his own happiness or the countless lives that hang in the balance.”

“Here’s lookin at you kid.”

“Play it again Sam.” (As Time Goes By)

Special points of Interest:

“Skillfully using a combination of drama and seductiveness to appeal to the archaic aspects of the personality, Mr. Mead characterized himself as a prodigy, from childhood on the instrument of supernatural forces that endowed him with magic powers.”

“Secret societies, primitive or otherwise, with their elaborate concern over dignity, are good examples to consider. They are boring to many people because they have so much etiquette and so little character; i.e., everyone has to take everyone else very seriously. But in many of them, if a member breaks a rule, it is legitimate to attack him, and this is where the character comes out and the fun begins.”

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usually superhuman - characteristics. The special qualities that are attributed to him explicitly or, in the case of a democracy, unconsciously, may be similar to the charisms mentioned in the Bible, such as wisdom, the working of miracles, prophecy and the discerning of spirits. These are the same qualities hinted at by Mr. Mead in his preliminary talk - omniscience, immortality, invulnerability, indefatigability and prodigality. Such attributes make up the mystique of leadership, which is preserved in the myths of classical heroes and the legends concerning medieval kings."

"In any well-run group, an appearance of the psychological leader is preceded by a build-up."

On page 30: "The Public Structure - Some knowledge of the public structure is necessary if one is to understand almost anything that goes on in a group. It would be meaningless to ask out of context: 'What do you think of this - one man said to another: 'Why don't you go away and let Ruby come back?' " A seating diagram supplies much of the context and answers many of the questions which would immediately come to the mind of anyone presented with this problem.

Such a diagram (see Fig. 3) [on page 30] gives in a conveniently condensed form nearly all the information that might be contained in a more formal analysis of the public structure, and a great deal besides. A formal analysis would require a number of separate diagrams: for example, a manning table and an organization chart for the organizational structure, and a roster of members and a personnel chart for the individual structure. The Manning Table

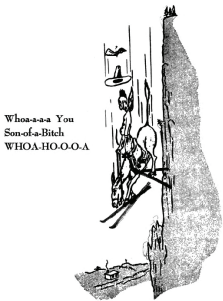
(Table 2) for the spiritualist group calls for: Leaders, 1; External Apparatus, 1; Internal Apparatus, 1; Members, 10. Each of these special designations may be called a role. Thus, there are four roles in the Manning Table. The Organization Chart (Fig. 11) shows the arrangement of these roles in the public structure. The roster of members, most of whom the reader has become familiar with as the proceedings were described, is given in Table 3; their arrangement as they fitted into the individual structure of the group is shown in the Personnel Chart (Table 4). Each person on the roster presented himself in a certain way when filling his role: as an authoritative person, a humble person, a superior person, an objective person, and so forth. This typical behavior of each individual constituted his **persona**, which he exerted considerable effort to maintain."

On page 38: "The Private Structure - The organizational structure prescribes for each person a role - the way in which he is supposed to be seen; the individual structure allows him to exhibit his **persona** - the way in which he wants to be seen; the private structure puts him into a slot - the way in which he is seen. The private structure, as represented in the group imagoes of the members, was different for different people and varied with the same person from time to time according to his emotional attitude of the moment (Fig. 14) [pg 37]. With certain people or at certain times it corresponded very closely to the public structure; for other people or at other times it was quite different. The group imago is formed as follows. The members are distributed among previously prepared slots according to their

"real" personalities; that is, according to the way the individual actually perceives them at the moment, regardless of how he is supposed to see them (roles) or how they want him to see them (**personas**). These slots are emotionally charged in accordance with the past experiences of the individual; such charges of psychic energy are well known in other connections under the name of cathexis.

Figure 14 represents Dr. Q's group imago during three different phases of the proceedings. Mr. Mead occupied the major slot while he had the floor because Dr. Q accepted his experienced leadership at that point; he was also prepared to accept the authority which Mr. Mead delegated to Mr. Wood and Mrs. Mead. His imago at that time (Figure 14A) corresponded very closely to the public structure, except for certain personal features in the minor structure of his imago. He regarded Dr. Bell and Dr. Cuppy with equal amiability; yet his relationship with each of them was different enough so that each occupied a separate slot. As for the remaining members, he did not know much about any of them, and his relationship with all of them was superficial; therefore, he unconsciously lumped them together in one undifferentiated slot.

In Figure 14B, his imago was again adapted to the public structure. But at that time he was so interested in what Ruby did that he was no longer aware of Dr. Bell and Dr. Cuppy as people with a special relationship to himself, and he lumped them with the undifferentiated members. However, he did have a special awareness of Mr. Wood and Mrs. Mead no longer as authority figures, but as interesting, well-differentiated people who sat in the group on the same level



Whoaaa You
See-a-Rich
WHOA-HO.O.O.A

as himself. Others may have felt differently about Mrs. Mead's role at that time, but Figure 14B represents the way Dr. Q felt about it.

In Figure 14C, his feelings had changed. Now he saw himself as up in the major slot on the same level as Dr. Murgatroyd; the other members were all lumped together in his mind as Dr. Murgatroyd's supporters, whom he had to contend with.

Dr. Q's slots, like those of the others present, already were charged with feelings before he came to the meeting. Like a casting director, he had only to find the most likely candidate among the members to fill each slot. Figure 14 is intended to illustrate that in his case past experience had prepared slots charged with respect, curiosity and skepticism. He was accustomed to respecting legitimate authority, being curious about children and confronting people whom he thought presumptuous. These three slots were filled by Mr. Mead, Ruby and Dr. Murgatroyd, respectively, each slot being activated at a different stage of the proceedings.

On the other hand, it was evident that his own position in the imagoes of some of the others changed from time to time. For example, at first he was accepted by Mr. Wood as an interested visitor; then he was resented as a rude agitator; and, at the end, when he took the group's side against the police, Mr. Wood seemed to have a friendly feeling for him as an equal. Dr. Bell and Dr. Cuppy had already established Dr. Q in their "big brother" slots, and he occupied the same position after the meeting was over, as their subsequent behavior showed."

On page 110: "The Group Culture - For a practical understanding of organizations and groups it is necessary to have a workable theory of

group culture, since the culture influences almost everything that happens in a social aggregation. The following approach, based on the personality structure outlined in Part III, has been found to be the most useful in dealing with ailing groups.

Culture is divided into three segments - technical culture, group etiquette and group character. The technical culture is used principally in the work and the combat groups and includes all sorts of useful (and decorative) artifacts, from quartz chips to space ships; all sorts of practical technics for changing the environment, from daubing pigments to making plutonium; as well as all sorts of practical intellectual operations, from counting reindeer to programming computers. It includes those aspects of culture that require the use of a logical mind directed toward reality, that part of the personality which later will be called the Adult.

The group etiquette is based on the general social etiquette and includes all items of etiquette which are different from the general etiquette but are acceptable in the given group. Etiquette deals with standards of behavior and ways of presenting an acceptable **persona** or of reinforcing or guiding the **personas** of others. What makes people comfortable socially is to feel that other people see them as they want to be seen. Most people want to be seen as generous, intelligent, courageous, sincere and loyal - in general, acceptable according to the standards of the group. Each group has its own special standards and its own favored ways of presenting or reinforcing a **persona**. There is a different standard and a different approach for presenting oneself as courageous at a scientific meeting, at a revival meet-

ing or in a group of skin-divers. And there is a different etiquette for acknowledging courage in each of these situations. Etiquette is usually traditional and in most cases only changes slowly or under special conditions. This part of the group culture originates from that aspect of the personality which later will be called the Parent.

The group character includes departures from the social contract which are established as legitimate in a particular group through relaxations of the group etiquette. Sometimes these freedoms are surprising to outsiders."

"Character is more "primitive" than etiquette. Etiquette requires a restraint, an understanding and a knowledge of social behavior that an infant, for example, does not have. Character is a more direct expression of instinctual life. It includes many things that infants can do, such as laughing, singing and weeping. The group character is chiefly an expression of that aspect of the personality which later will be called the Child.

The usefulness of this three-pronged view of culture can be illustrated by analyzing some items of group behavior which are often thought of as typically "cultural."

1. Circumcision may be regarded as **an initiation rite**, i.e., a constitutional requirement for membership. When the constitution is a written one, as in the Old Testament, for example, the primal canon can be found in its original form. **Rituals** surrounding the operation then would be part of the group etiquette - the etiquette of circumcision. In many localities the ceremonies include a feast where more relaxed expressions of feeling are permissible as part of the group character.

In his book "**The Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups**" Berne writes a summary regarding Group Authority.

The following hypotheses are offered:

1. The proceedings of any group are regulated by two authorities: the leadership and the group canon.
2. There are three kinds of leadership: the responsible leader, the effective leader and the psychological leader.
3. The members demand certain absolute qualities of their leaders so that fundamentally every successful leader is a charismatic leader.
4. The culture of a group can be divided into three aspects: the technical culture, the group etiquette and the group character. The last two are based on an implicit contract that the members will respect each others' personas. Each group evolves its own standards of behavior, its own ways of reinforcing the contract and its own ways of violating it in certain respects.
5. Each of the three aspects of a group culture is derived from a special aspect of the members' personalities: the technical culture from the realistic (adult) aspect; the group etiquette from the traditional (parental) aspect; and the group character from the emotional (archaic) aspect.



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"Mastery of the universe is proportional to the symbols man has by which to represent his universe."

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2. The **organizational structure** of the United States of America provides a slot for the Presidency. The man who occupies this slot is known officially as the President or Mr. President, and unofficially by his surname and nickname. As the President, his role cannot be attacked, under the constitutional contract, except by constitutional means. If there are changes to be made in the manner of his election or the maximal number of terms that he can serve, this must be done by due process, and the changes then apply not to any specific individual but to whoever fills the Presidency slot in the role of President.

However, the incumbent at any moment presents himself as an acceptable person with a certain kind of courage, generosity, sincerity and loyalty in regard to certain specific problems, such as racial integration and interstate commerce. Mr. President can be attacked on the floor by marshalling facts against his viewpoint, but these facts must relate to the matter in hand, and the personality of the President must not be brought into the argument; his deeds can be scrutinized courteously, but his **persona** must not be questioned, as this would be considered a breach of etiquette. Thus, it was regarded as rude when, several years ago, the head of another state referred to Mr. Eisenhower as insincere. One of the official manuals for this etiquette is Robert's Rules of Order. In unofficial reports, the President's title is replaced by his surname, which belongs to the individual structure.

However, in accordance with the American group character, like the personality could be teased in a decent way about his golfing and criticized for some of his friendships. But there were definite limits as to how far this could go publicly, and to transgress them was an insult. These aspects of the canon relating to the Presidency are shown in Table 8 [pg 112].

While there is often a manual or authority concerning a group's etiquette, the character comes so naturally and is so plastic that it is difficult to pin down or formulate in words. The political cartoonist carries his Rules of Satirical Order mostly in his head. The distinction between rudeness and insult should be noted. Rudeness is a mere neglect of etiquette or an exhibition of character ("familiarity") when etiquette is called for. An insult goes beyond even the latitude allowed by the group character.

3. **Secret societies**, primitive or otherwise, with their elaborate concern over dignity, are good examples to consider. They are boring to many people because they have so much etiquette and so little character; i.e., everyone has to take everyone else very seriously. But in many of them, if a member breaks a rule, it is legitimate to attack him, and this is where the character comes out and the fun begins. For example, some American service clubs derive much of their fun from fining members 10 cents each time they use a swear word.

The psychological aspects of culture as outlined here may be summarized as follows. The technical

culture, what one has to do, is based on an objective, realistic, "adult" approach to the environment. The group etiquette, what one is supposed to do, is a matter of tradition, dealing with behavior standards and their maintenance, and is passed down from one generation to another, being learned from the parents, as it were. The group character deals with what one might like to do, and, with proper restraint, allows the expression of more archaic aspects of the personality. The culture of clothes in our society illustrates the integration of these three aspects. Women wear clothes to protect themselves from the weather, which is a rational or Adult view; for reasons of modesty, which is a traditional or Parental view; and to decorate themselves and make themselves appear more interesting and sometimes provocative. Thus, clothes are a part of the technical culture in being useful, part of the etiquette in being modest, and part of the character in allowing self-expression even when this conflicts with the **persona** of modesty. From the organizational point of view clothes are also worn for constitutional reasons; i.e., in most places they are required by law.

This approach to culture has two advantages. On the one hand it is based on the personality of the individual, and on the other it fits into the dynamics of the group as a whole. Thus, it has a natural place in the consideration of what happens between specific individuals in any particular group.

To be continued