

# Secret Intelligence Service

## Room No. 15

### Useful References

#### An Additional Note on Interrogation

The extent of manipulation during interrogation of an individual can vary from subtle blackmail threat to more obviously coercive and even violent measures. The element of control in intelligence operations is directly related to suspicion. Suspicion is a professional virtue for Intelligence Officers, especially for those who work in security and counter-intelligence, since in theory anyone thought to be trustworthy may in fact be secretly serving the enemy.

The practice of interrogation is a significant component of intelligence work, but also illustrates manipulation in its most raw form.

#### The ethical / moral risks

Interrogation is a troublesome procedure; it should only be practiced by those of exemplary character and which means anyone with a sadistic tendency should NOT interrogate, nor be in the profession.

As we know, but it is appropriate to be reminded of the ease with which those deemed 'ordinary people' can morph into rationalizing insensitivity and cruelty while dealing with perceived enemies. Given what is the natural human proclivity (instinct) toward aggression, combined with a good fit of whatever biases, incentives and peer pressures, many 'ordinarily decent people' can succumb to sadism, and it does not stop there.

The dichotomy between interrogation and torture is extremely narrow.

So what is it regarding interrogation that is troublesome? The presence of inflicted physical pain, we must regard as a fundamental axiom, to be not only morally questionable, but also counter-productive.

Physical pain is NOT relevant in interrogation. However, anxiety, humiliation, aloneness and self-esteem, are another story. Any individual who enjoys hurting is a useless interrogator in even the most human situation. In addition, the 'humane person' who shies from manipulating her/his subject is also a terrible interrogator.

The interrogator must have a talent for stepping into the life world of another, a personal need to communicate with others (as stated before), a demonstrable concern for what makes other people who and what they are - even while she/he is putting maximum emotional pressure on them.

In moral phraseology, empathy is related to compassion. Knowing one's enemy in this role implies understanding the other, as said, but not in the interest of enhancing her or his freedom or well-being; on the contrary, empathy becomes a manipulative tool. This altered meaning of empathy holds true beyond the practice of interrogation. It also characterizes a significant part of the professional skill involved in recruiting and handling agents, whose trust is often essential to gaining their control. Not to forget that empathy is also desired in the creation of propaganda, simply because the power of propaganda in the influencing of an intended target audience is largely dependent upon how well it is crafted to address that audience's peculiar cultural milieu, and so on.

See the references below.

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Adversitate. Custodi. Per Verum