**Experimental Beginnings of the Cyranoid:**

**Igniting our imaginations**

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This brief discussion includes sharing memories of Dr. Stanley Milgram our experimental social psychology professor during the early piloting (1981-1982) of the cyranoid illusion. Professor Milgram conceived the concept of “cyranoids” as fertile ground for social psychological inquiry. As doctoral students in his experimental social laboratory we were fiercely engaged in exploring the powerful illusion of social masks by testing perception of dyadic interaction in which one individual was essentially an automaton or “cyranoid” hollowly repeating words originating from another person behind a one-way mirror in this case Stanley Milgram through hidden radio transmission.

The experimental metaphor stems from 19th century French literature in which an eloquent and poetic Cyrano de Bergerac transmitted his stunning romantic prose by whispering it into the ear of a more dashing, but less intellectual or romantic suitor of Roxanne. The deception of another person being the authentic originator of the transmitter’s thoughts and words had tragic consequences for Cyrano in Edmond Rostand’s fictionalized version about an actual 17th century dramatist Cyrano de Bergerac. As a research paradigm Milgram intersects technology, nonverbal behavior theory, social perception and impression formation, plus existential personality theory and greater philosophical and sociocultural theory

This short Skype discussion will focus on rarely discussed details of the very beginnings of this illusory experimental phenomena and how Milgram provided the lens from which we recruited from the streets of NYC, the content for cyranic speech shadowing-- Dr. Milgram speaking about evolution through a cyranoid in the persona of a young shoe shine boy and how the illusion held.