



BULLETIN

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Ride to Show or ride to Know? On Image

by Paolo Volpara OMM 2008

Roland Barthes once said "What the public wants is the image of passion, not passion itself" and, during a recent ride, I considered how true it is for the motorcyclist.

"What most of the bikers want is the image of biking, not biking itself"

A nice introduction to the new sphere of "Image".

It is real and inescapable that we act following the image that we have in our mind: we do not see the reality as it is (maybe there is no reality-as-it-is) but we see reality as we are. And in biking there are many images that we are called to follow, by advertising, by books and movies, by sport heroes, by fashion and by mythology.

They were coming in my rear mirrors from the top of the hills that from Fethiye takes to the splendid bay of Katranci: two adventures bikes with full high beam asking for road. "Surely coming from India and on their way to Europe at the end of summer, just before the high passes of close down by snow I thought within my helmet- Let give way and meet them"

Surprise, surprise the two bikes, with three aluminum panniers and yellow waterproof bags strapped on top of them, with extra lights and Touratech-accessories had a Turkish plate 06 coming from Ankara: and when we stopped to talk I discovered that the two riders and two passengers were heading for Bodrum in a ride of 700K wisely split along two days. But the image was there: it was Thelongwayaround, 2 men, 2 women, 2 bikes and 1500K Ewan-and-Charley style.

And why not: dreams are so few and between than a bike can make them real for a portion of the costs of air ticket for four around the world. The smile and the satisfaction in the riders and co-riders faces show that the "adventure2 was truly and deeply enjoyed.

My newly found friends were not the only ones to chase an image: we all do it. We chase an image knowing it and even without knowing it.



I have been chasing Ogrin image for years always restrained by my own limits: lack of pub knowledge, lack of wings on the helmet, lack of mechanical skills, lack of companions as Kickstart and Mitzi.

I have friend chasing Barry Sheene or Valentino Rossi images, I have companions of rides chasing "Easy Riders" and "The Rebel", I have in my mind one, none and thousands of images changing continuously during a single ride.

I have been all of them and none of them. You buy a bike with the guts, the soul not with the cold reasoning. The sphere of Image is the largest and the nicest of all.

It is also a nice trap: we can get stuck in this splendid sphere and spoil the

whole approach to biking.

Image is fun and it should not be taken seriously: it must be a way to be 100% self, a way to express what we are deeply insight, a way to become aware of limits and be pushed toward excellence. Unfortunately the image becomes often a tool of self satisfaction, a way to cover laziness toward change, an obsession that cut us from the reality.

And here we have, the production of mono-image bikers: the ones who consider just one of the thousand images the right and the holy one. From light form of the disease (Only HD or BMW or Ducati are the real bikes) to more serious pathologies this syndrome persecute bikers everywhere. The boy-scouts image only ride "safely" bagged inside layers of body-protections. The Dakar image pushes bikes where no logic will even accept humans, dragging two wheels in-and-out deep mud-sand being the fun, The speed-is my-kingdom image rides a street bikes around and around boring circuits or around and around the same stretch of well known roads. The iron-butt image never stops not even to contemplate the Parthenon because the fun is in-keeping-going. The rally image always ride in convoy, always stop for bodily pleasure and always report on pantagruelic lunches-dinners-teas. And so on with the technomec image spending more time in polishing, accessorizing and fiddling with the bike than riding it, the sex image, the look-at-me-I-am-rich image, the (create your definition here).

How can we use the image sphere to our advantage? Quite simple: let the fantasy go and create and live the images that you like. Keep them under the control of self-awareness, under the strict discipline of humility. Play with the images as games decorating a real you that is at the center of your attention and work. Use irony as a powerful whip&spur on you and do not lock yourself in something that it is not so serious. Then the image will become a good companion, a curious friend exploring the different (and all valid) faces of motorcycling.

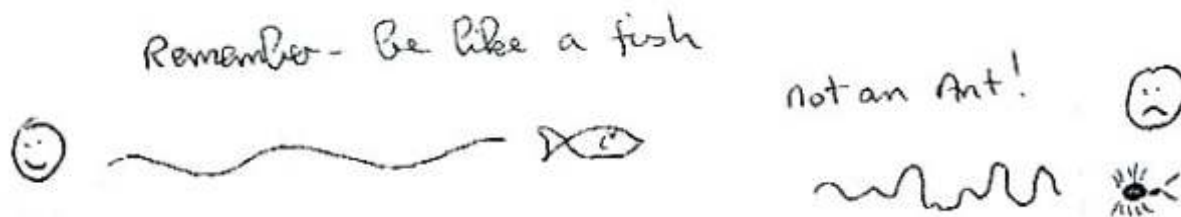
"Before you do anything, think. If you do something to try and impress someone, to be loved, accepted or even to get someone's attention, stop and think. So many people are busy trying to create an image, they die in the process" (Salma Hayek)



Be a Fish.. Not an Ant..

from OMM April 2000

The first Turkish Course in co-operation with Mick Wheeler (Advanced Riding Techniques) took place in May 1999 and a lot of good riding has gone under the wheel since. This article summarizes the learning of this first workshop on advanced Riding, introducing to Turkey the RoadCraft System. It was the very beginning of OMM and ARA program and for most of us "Be a Fish" has become a regular mantra.



The beauty and perfection of competent riding resides in knowing that learning never stops: how many times we got from Riders the cold shoulders when speaking about training. "I do not need- they say- any of your training courses. I have been on the bike for years and I know..."

"The difference between "using the bike" and "biking" is in the learning attitude" the opening of Mick's course was clearly on this subject. "Biking is receiving information: searching, processing, evaluating them as the base for action... You have to put yourself in conditions (mentally and physically) to receive the maximum amount of information. Partial information is better than no information at all".

For this "information search" two elements (beside a good sight and a clean visor) are essential:

- * Continuous scanning at 360 degrees
- * Good position on the road offering maximum visibility.

On scanning Mick left as a memory aid a short note: "Move the head! Obtain cross view when approaching bends, corners and junctions: it will give early opportunity to position for the next bend. It gives warning of impending problems, approaching vehicles and hazards. As we move through junctions check that nothing is coming. Because we have done this and we are in the correct position we may be able to avoid a collision when it will be us getting hurt"

It was then time to learn how to evaluate information: for this, on the class blackboard, Mick wrote a surprising phrase "How can I get hurt here?"

Evaluating the information in our possession must be done with safety in the first and foremost place. Where the danger will come from? How serious is the menace? What is involved in the threat? What kind of development can I expect from the situation and from the information acquired?

This process is not so difficult when done in the comfort of an armchair but it becomes tricky when information's analysis takes place in a bike moving at

high speed.

Nick told us as research proved that Formula One Driver can divide a cent of a second in ten parts and use them to take decision at differed time. We are not at that level but we have to learn how to rapidly and effectively process the constant flow of information.

If "*the past is the best predictor of the future*" the personal cumulative experience combined with the experience of fellow riders is the sure base for evaluating a dangerous situation (by the way... all situations are potentially dangerous).

* Reading signs on the road, colours, movement of the surface, liquid spills, traces left by other users.

* Reading the surrounding areas of the road, electric poles, trees, fences.

* Reading hints: a kid follows a ball crossing the road, a taxi empty will stop for passengers, mud traces may indicate tractors on the road.

* Reading the mind of the road users by always try to get eyes contact. That driver in front with the rear mirror wrongly placed will not see us when turning left.

In this area the key point to remember is Mick advice to gain time for evaluation by reducing speed well in advance of the event.

On his words "*You want to be a spectator of an event not a part of it*". If the information acquired rings an alarm bell it is always appropriate to reduce speed in order to gain time for evaluation. New riders should do this well in advance: their attention is still focusing mainly on machine controls and they need more time to process the incoming information.

Acquisition - Evaluation and then Action. Once the situation has been assessed and the danger identified it is time to take the appropriate speed, the adequate gear and the right position. For this the groups of students took the road and the road joined Mick in the teacher podium.

The system is the one of a scout ahead of the group, while one rider goes under Mick tuition for 20 minutes. During this time Mick sometime stays in front of the student, sometime follows him closely: then the entire group stop and Mick comments on the riding section.

It is tough going with mud lurking on the borders, with long stretches of wet surface and with the usual difficulties of Turkish road conditions. The attention goes to the "road camber" a subject maybe marginal in Europe but crucial in this Country. The cambers, here, are not always positive or constant in the corners and on straight road the camber can arch quite considerably. This road inclination generates sliding reactions on the bike and we learn pretty fast to add this piece of information in our repertoire.

"The position -Mick said - should take into consideration three factors in order of importance. First Safety, second Traction, third Visibility" Turkish



road are good teachers of this order of importance. If, to gain traction or visibility, you place yourself in a risky position marginally at the centre of an approaching blind corner chances are that an incoming driver will impart a hard lesson on body and machine. If, to gain visibility, you place the bike in a spot with troublesome traction (mud/gravel on the road. slippery surface, negative camber, tarmac joints) the last think you may see could be your bike skidding "over the asphalt-ocean like a stone".

In conclusion reaching the maximum visibility by positioning the bike in the right spot cannot be done at the expenses of safety and traction.

Another common theme was the "Whhooshss Style".

"Be a fish" Mick repeated "not ant! To close too quickly behind vehicles when overtaking is not the right movement: it makes us poking nose out and having to dive back-in again. If the vehicle in front brakes or even slows down we are in trouble! Don't rush, keep it easy by positioning yourself further back for view and safety. When the overtaking opportunity comes, glide past the vehicle like a fish. Do not zoom in and out to ride around them!"

The low speed maneuvering session was a good opportunity for all riders to refresh elegant and safe movements. *"Forget, the front brake, take your fingers away from it! Rear foot brake only as for final stopping. Keep it smart and tidy with no legs paddling around (if you want to paddle go to the beach!). Make yourself practice slow speed work at every opportunity and do not take the easy way"* Exercises at low speed involved stop-and-go, full-lock-turning" and emergency braking.

Mick continued in patiently instructing all riders to the best line across corners. Keeping the left of the road lane for maximum visibility when turning right and vice-versa we learned to "go wide, go late" in the corners using the theoretically difficult but practically natural counter-steering technique. *"Why twist and turn with the road when maybe we can go straight down the middle? (Only if it is safe). Why pull into the right after overtaking when perhaps we can flow smoothly into position with no abrupt or sudden movements of the bike that wastes time and it slows you down?"* Finally, Mick left us with further advises: *"Better late in this world than early in the next. Changing lane at high speed in motorway while filtering is a death sentence. The car drivers will not always see you. As you swoop into a gap a car may be entering on the other side. If traffic is moving at good speed why not flow with it? How much time we really safe by zooming close between those vehicles?"* . *"The indicators are too frequently left on for too long too often by too many! Why use indicators if nobody behind? Constantly check if the indicators are left on...make it a habit. One day one accident will happen because we gave the wrong indication from a left on signal."*



■ Donald Duck was in Turkey

Probably one of the most popular characters and known avatars in the Turkish motorcycle forums, Donald Duck (Mr. Resat Arbas) was in Turkey last month, and met his virtual friends in two different occasions organized by "RideTurkey" Team in Izmir and Istanbul chapters.

He was in Turkey to spend two weeks vacation. On the 3rd of September, arriving at the "Selcuk Steam Engines Museum" with his wife Mrs. Asuman Arbas, was met by OMM Izmir community. After a light lunch in one of the hottest days of the summer, the party also viewed the 40 steam locomotives exhibited in the garden of the museum. Everybody, including Donald Duck admitted the joy of meeting virtual friends lasting since many years on different internet forums, and the party exchanged their ideas and experiences on riding, this time face to face. The subject was always motorcycles and riding, especially safe riding. Spending almost all afternoon together, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Duck left to continue their vacations.

A week later, on the 8th of September night, this was Istanbul's turn to meet this lovely guy, at "True Blue" in Fenerbahce. On his very last day in Turkey, just before he flew back to NY, DD was accompanied by International rally pilot Kemal Merkit. As known by many riders following the exciting rally raids in the internet, DD is the primary media sponsor of Mr Merkit. This time a larger group of motorcyclists from Istanbul were joining the party that lasted till late hours.

Donald Duck told his experiences about riding in USA and his stories with AdvRiders where he is again a very popular contributor. Also Merkit shared his rally experiences with the participants of the evening. DD said *"It's been almost 10 years I couldn't visit Turkey and this vacation was perfect timing for me to meet my virtual friends in flesh after all of these years of "keyboard friendship". Internet shook and changed the world from the roots and aftershocks will continue many more years to come. No one would imagine some 15 years ago more than 50 individual guys, I never met before, would offer his own hard earned motorcycle for a week or more for with no questions asked. How and on what base these relationships started and came this point it's beyond me. It just happened, and it is snowballing..."*

"I'm a happy camper. Everything is growing in Turkey in neck breaking speed, and motorcycling is one them. To build safe and all type recreational or sport riding culture needs knowledge, patience, and holding the hands of newcomers; leading them to right steps. We are all responsible to the spread the consciousness of the proficient riding culture, which is a newborn baby in Turkey. I just get a happy giggle from the cradle on my last visit, and it was unforgettable experience for me. Thanks to all organizers"



Every year OMM assist hundreds of bikers planning to visit Turkey, riding in Turkey or just crossing the Country along the Road to East. The most frequent of the requests can be classified as "designing itineraries" but we share our experience in situations like recovering the bike, shipping the bike back home, servicing the bike, buying and delivering parts or tires. In most cases is just a request to meet fellow riders and, when possible, we meet them on the south coast or in Istanbul: dispelling doubts about the road conditions, the availability of petrol and oils, general safety and security doubts or simple questions on what to do and see. In the first 10 months of 2008 we directly handled more than 280 requests (on top of being part of the Horizonsunlimited communities not very active this year). All this pro-bono activity is part of our mission to share the joy and the experience of riding in Turkey trying, in our small capacity, to promote the discovery of the Cradle of Civilizations. We always receive nice thanks note for our efforts and the one reported below is just an example of the kind of relationship we establish over the net with new friends of Turkey: Giovanni (AKA El Jon) and Alessandra were riding in Turkey this summer and we tried to help them with some suggestions and some ideas.

"Just a few words to thank you again for the valuable information you provided for our trip to Turkey. Alessandra and I thoroughly enjoyed Turkey and were overwhelmed by the hospitality; smiling faces and friendliness we encountered everywhere. On a couple of occasions as we pulled up at a service station covered in dust and were greeted with cups of tea in exchange for a little conversation! Where else can this possibly happen! We entered Turkey via Cesme and Izmir and proceeded speedily along to Pamukkale north of Denizli to enjoy the thermal springs there. Next the ride to Goreme and a few days visiting Cappadocia. This was followed by the long ride past Ankara all the way to Istanbul for a further stop of 3 days. Of course Istanbul is beautiful or at least Sultan Ahmet certainly was! The Blue Mosque and S.Sofia, Topkapi and the Cistern were astonishing to say the least. We chose to exit Istanbul via a ferry to Yalova and then proceed down to Assos on the Mediterranean coast just west of Balikesir and chill out on a beach for a while. This was without doubt the most relaxing part of our tour. Assos is a gem and the hills around this small quiet location make the scenery perfect. No overcrowding, beautiful clean water and fresh seafood every day. Unfortunately while still traveling through Greece my speedometer and odometer somehow stopped functioning and I am not sure how many km we rode. All together t I'm sure Alessandra and I totaled well over 3000 km most of which of course in Turkey. The KLX650 performed perfectly. Kawasaki makes a tough big bore 650 single that always keeps a smile on my face. They are fun to ride very reliable and with torque to sell. I can guarantee I certainly did not hold back and was even running at around 80Km/h two up on the white surfaces in a cloud of dust. I used new pair of very ordinary dual purpose Dunlop Trailmax tires which of course



are pretty much average for riding in a straight line on any surface. Things were a little tricky on deeper gravel and sandier intervals but I got away with no punctures at all. Riding with a pillion and speed was penalized on the motorways but at least we were never stopped by the police. The roads I encountered in Turkey were pretty much top class and compared very favorably if not even better to the surfaces I'm used to traveling on in Italy. Only occasionally did I encounter washboard rutty asphalt surfaces that forced me on the fast lane. As mentioned I even opted voluntarily at times to ride on the many white tops I found and still fortunately available to enjoy with an enduro. I would like to return to Turkey to ride more of the white tracks I came across last month. I also have ambitions of riding through Turkey on to Syria and Jordan even Egypt.

Thanks again, Ciao and best regards"

■ It has been Ten Years...

Busy as usual in riding and writing we almost forgot that 2008 celebrates the ten years of presence of OMM in Turkey.

Some friends sent notes asking for celebrations and, at the moment, we have no answer. Yes, ten years is quite a lot for a motorcycle club life... still a nothing in the flow of human history. Yes, we introduced advanced riding in Turkey, we opened the first web site for bikers, we wrote the first bulletin and organized the first on-road-workshops... still a nothing if you look at what other people or group have done in the same time.

So we are not so prone to celebrate, after all it only shows the age when you are looking back. If you have ideas or if you want to celebrate in writing, send a note to the OMM bulletin and we will take it from there.

Sinan Sezer, one of the founder of OMM and the creator of OMM original logo and web site sent a mail after taking a look at the newly organized web-site: *"It is a beautiful site. Layout and content reached*

Nirvana. I see that you have edited my report on the ironbutt ride a little bit to make it nicer. Interesting the reports on history-rides: that's what OMM is about. Not just riding but riding with a cultural target"

So if you have comments, ideas or suggestions (including complains) about 10 years of OMM existence... do not be shy.



■ OMM Events Ahead

	Ankara	Bursa	Istanbul	Izmir
20 Sep 08			Ara Road International	
21 Sep 08			Ara Road International	
22 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
23 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
24 Sep 08			IAM Membership Ride	
27 Sep 08		RoadCraft Ride		
28 Sep 08				
29 Sep 08	RoadCraft Ride			
04 Oct 08			Ara Control	
11 Oct 08			RoadCraft Ride	
18 Oct 08			Ara Road National	
19 Oct 08			Ara Road National	
22 Oct 08				ARA-Theory
26 Oct 08			I	RoadCraft Ride
29 Oct 08				Open Ride
15 Nov 08			RoadCraft Ride	
30 Nov 08		* * *	Opening of CAT 2009	* * *
13 to 14 Dec 09		* * *	OMM Rally for 2009 Plans	* * *

The OMM Calendar and list of activities is presented in www.ommriders.com and invitations are sent to the ARA Yahoo Group open to everybody who wants to sign up at <http://autos.groups.yahoo.com/group/AdvancedRidingAcademy>

OMM communities are riding in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Bursa.

