

A Baedeker to the Fake & The Eight Veils of ‘Quality’

(A reading of Robert M. Pirsig’s Aesthetic)

Ian Hornsby

Department of English, Chichester Institute of H.E.

Abstract. *This paper offers an exploration and interpretation of Robert M. Pirsig’s key term ‘Quality’; the notion of a pre-intellectual moment that he suggests exists between the thing in itself and rationalisation. I have followed two traces of ‘Quality’ in search of a Pirsigian aesthetic. Firstly, a metaphysical trace, which investigates the pre-intellectual moment in relation to the writings of Plato, Schopenhauer, Schelling, Heidegger and Derrida. Secondly, I have pursued a mystical trace, which attempts to get back behind Maya (the illusion of reality) to the universal poetic energy or ‘Quality’ by dissolving the eight veils that obscure the work of art. Finally, I have put forward a concept of the Fake as a guard against the complete rejection of rationality that leads only to ignorance and credulousness. I suggest that through the Fake, it is possible to acknowledge rationally that which is beyond our rational capability.*

I

Pirsig’s pivotal question “What is ‘Quality’?” may at first appear to be an obtuse sphere of investigation, one that is hardly likely to reveal a connection between mysticism, metaphysics and Deconstruction. Yet, what Pirsig seeks in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and *Lila* is a discourse within which to articulate his findings. According to Pirsig, ‘Quality’ is not a thing it is an event. It is the point at which subject and object meet. He suggests that at the moment of pure ‘Quality’, there is no inside or outside, no individual or universal, no subject or object, there is only ‘Quality’; an event that will on reflection produce a later awareness of individuals and universals, insides and outsides, subjects and objects. All of these things at the moment or event of pure ‘Quality’ are not plural, or divided in any way they are identical. They are not Kantian *things-in-themselves* but closer to Schopenhauer’s *thing-in-itself*, his appallingly named *Will*.

Quality is shapeless, formless, and indestructible. To see shapes and forms is to intellectualise. Quality is independent of all such shapes and forms. The names the shapes and forms we give Quality depend only partly on the Quality. They also depend partly on the *a priori* images we have accumulated in our memory. Quality cannot be broken down into subjects and predicates, not because Quality is so mysterious but because Quality is so simple, immediate and

direct. We invent many marvellous analogues in response to our environment, earth and heavens, trees, stones and oceans, gods, music, arts and language, philosophy, engineering, civilisation and science. We call these analogues reality. And they are reality. Yet, to take that which has caused us to create the world and include it in the world we have created is clearly impossible. That is why Quality cannot be defined. If we do define it we are defining something less than Quality itself. (Pirsig, R. 1989. p. 252-254.)

So, if quality is not a thing but an event, what sort of event is ‘Quality’? Pirsig’s answer is that it is the pre-intellectual event of sense perception before our whole stock of reflective rational equipment is piled upon the ‘universal poetic energy’ or noumenal world.

The past exists only in our memories, the future only in our plans. The present is our only reality. The tree that you are aware of intellectually, because of the small time lag, is always in the past and therefore always unreal. *Any* intellectually conceived object is *always* in the past and therefore *unreal*. Reality is always the moment of vision *before* the intellectualisation takes place. *There is no other reality*. This pre-intellectual reality is what Phaedrus¹ felt that he had properly identified as Quality. Since all intellectually identifiable things must emerge *from* this pre-intellectual reality, Quality is the *parent*, the *source* of all subjects and objects. (Pirsig, R. 1989. p. 250)

This is Pirsig’s Copernican Revolution.

The sun of Quality does not revolve around the subjects and objects of our existence. It does not just passively illuminate them. It is not subordinate to them in any way. It has *created* them. They are subordinate to *it!* (Pirsig, R. 1989. p. 243)

All of our linguistic attempts to categorise, order, measure and control perception into the phenomenal world that we call reality, is a response to ‘Quality’, but cannot be used to define ‘Quality’ itself.

II

In the final section of this paper I shall indicate how it is possible, basing my arguments on ideas taken from Pirsig’s work, to move behind reflection towards an appreciation of the universal poetic energy by dissolving the eight veils of Maya which obscure the work of art.

Firstly, however, I’d like to investigate Pirsig’s use of several terms and phrases that I feel will help to clarify several areas of his work and illuminate the aesthetic journey through the eighth veil. I’m especially

¹ Phaedrus is the pseudonym Pirsig uses in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* to identify the earlier personality of his narrating character, before he slipped into insanity and had his memory erased through Electric Shock Therapy.

interested in the way that Pirsig's ideas engage with both ancient Greek and twentieth century thought in its search for a language within which to explore 'Quality'.

Pirsig uses the phrase 'the ghost of rationality' in his attempt to indicate how rationality exists *only* in the mind; with this phrase, Pirsig is suggesting that scientific logic and rationality are our modern apparitions. We patronisingly dismiss other cultures' ghosts and phantoms as primitive childishness but choose to be ignorant of our own modern myth which believes that our culture of science has eradicated all myths, forgetting that science itself is our own all encompassing mythology. Science is able to justify its own *superiority* because justification is part of its own discourse. This enables scientific logic and rationality to set about the destruction of all other discourses from within its own boundaries. How are things outside of science to be judged in terms of scientific discourse; it's like judging an apple for the Booker prize.

Pirsig playfully illuminates how the laws of physics and logic are ghosts of rationality by illustrating how the laws of physics and gravity, which cannot be detected empirically, appear real within our cultural dependence upon scientific discourse because we believe in them so thoroughly. Pirsig exposes the same inconsistency in many of our modern beliefs including causality, substance and the distinction between mind and matter.²

A similar argument would be to ask whether the laws of relativity only came into existence at the beginning of the twentieth century or have these laws always described the way of the universe? The only answer is that the laws of relativity only came into existence with the theories of Albert Einstein at the beginning of the twentieth century. If these laws existed before anyone knew about them, before it was in anyone's mind, then we're confronted with the problem of what something has to do to be non-existent.

Everything in the world is a ghost; our understanding of the world is, as Kant points out, phenomenal, yet Pirsig also suggests that time, space and causality are also ghosts. Things only exist in the mind, but it is the word, 'only' in this sense, which is misleading because everything we know and experience exists only in the mind. It is through the mind, that we have created the category of mind and been able to reflect upon the underlying primal reality of the universe. It is also through the mind that we have been able to create a sense of homogeneity within which to co-exist on the phenomenological level as individuals.

III

² Pirsig's critique of causality, substance and binary oppositions such as mind matter can be found between p. 125–130 of *Lila*, 1991.

Pirsig is not attempting to eliminate reason and rationality; for it is these 'ghosts' of the mind that provide the means for the building of platforms upon which interaction and communication take place. What Pirsig is emphasising is that the categories of reason have become something of a sacred doctrine to those who have a personal stake in upholding these 'ghosts of rationality'. He illustrates how reason and logic have become idols, and that any attempt to question these eternal Truths are treated as heresy, and the perpetrators of such lies are silenced through accusations of irrationality and insanity. Reason, rationality and logic have become sacrosanct in the sense that they are considered beyond reproach. It is towards this arrogance and obstinacy on the part of those in control of rationality that Pirsig uses the phrase the 'Church of Reason',³ a term that refers to the network of institutions that uphold this religious adherence to fixed rationality.

The institutions of education, law and medical psychology hold on so tightly to the Church of Reason that when a contradiction appears these flaws are disguised in absurd ways. A prime example of this attitude can be found in what Pirsig terms the 'Platypus effect'. The duck billed-platypus is an animal that defies the rational laws of evolution in that it appears to have evolved independently. This animal with broad webbed feet and a duckbill both lays eggs and suckles its young. Following this 'strange' discovery, zoologists considered the platypus, a paradox of nature, an enigma. They could not classify it as either a mammal or a reptile, because it both laid eggs, like a member of the reptilian animal classification and suckled its young, like a member of the mammalia category of animal. How could this be, questioned zoologists? Yet, what Pirsig points out is that the platypus is not at fault. How can it be, when it has lived like this for millions of years, laying eggs and suckling its young without the problem of cross-classification ever bothering it at all. Pirsig insists that the problem is inherent with our rational system of classification. The Platypus is not a paradox of nature, our classifications are. The Platypus has unwittingly destabilised not only the substructure of zoological classification, but also the foundations of the Church of Reason itself, by highlighting the ghost of rationality.

A new animal classification has been created by Zoologists to account for the duckbilled Platypus. It is called the Monotremata and includes only one other animal species besides the Platypus, the Spiny Anteater. Zoologists marvel at both of these creatures and each are considered different, when actually they're only difference lies in the minds of Zoologists themselves. Their only difference consists in the notion that they do not conform to human classifications. Indeed Pirsig notes that, 'The real mystery, the

³ In many respects there is a strong parallel between the 'Church of Reason' and Louis Althusser's 'ideological state apparatuses.' The insidious institutions of society, such as the education system, the law and medical psychology, which instil rationality at every level of life so that it functions upon us all on unconscious level. It is through the 'ideological state apparatuses' that the individual passively and unconsciously conforms to a social system that is able to function best for those with their hands on the levers of power. In this sense, Pirsig is also close to the ideas of Althusser's pupil, Michel Foucault, who suggests that through the delusion of liberal rationality we are inevitably responsible for our own Subjectification within the confines of the state apparatus.

real enigma, is how mature, objective, trained scientific observers can blame their own goof on a poor innocent Platypus.’ (Pirsig R. 1991. p. 124)

Pirsig claims that the subject-object classification of the world places ‘Quality’ in the same situation as the Platypus. Because ‘Quality’ cannot be defined or classified, it is seen in a world divided exclusively between subjects and objects, as a ‘problem’. Pirsig calls this the ‘value Platypus’ and uses a jigsaw analogy to explain the vast amount of information that we receive from the world around us. He suggests that we attempt to place these intricate pieces together in order to create some form of order and meaning.

There are always some pieces like Platypi that don’t fit and we can either ignore these pieces or we can give them silly explanations or we can take the whole puzzle apart and try other ways of assembling it that will include more of them. When one takes the whole ill-shaped, misfitting structure of a subject-object explained universe apart and puts it back together in a value centred metaphysics, all kinds of orphaned puzzle pieces fit beautifully that never fit before.

(Pirsig, R. 1991. p. 125)

IV

Alfred North Whitehead once wrote that, “the safest general characterisation of the whole Western philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato”; this could also be said of the Church of Reason. Pirsig gives us a detailed description of the way in which Plato positions reason as the single most important path towards the appreciation of the ideal forms. Pirsig shows how Plato achieves this goal by dismissing the work of the Sophists, those itinerant teacher and orators of ancient Greece, who sought what was best or good within each situation rather than a single unquestionable Truth. Plato’s intention was to give mankind the tool of reason so that we may advance beyond mere mythology and relativity as a way of reflecting upon the world and initiate a contemplation of the higher realm of forms and ideas. Pirsig suggests in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, that in doing this Plato destroyed the rhetorical practices of the Sophists in favour of the Socratic dialogue. In affect by placing reason as the highest form of all, Plato destroyed our link to ‘Quality’. Man was no longer the measure of all things phenomenal, the measure of all things became reason, which was constantly attempting to get back to a knowledge of the ideal forms which had been forgotten since our fall from these forms, back to earth with our birth.

Plato places knowledge over opinion, yet it is unclear as to how Plato’s opinions become knowledge if it is not through his own rhetorical discourse. Paradoxically, Plato constantly denigrates fictional

presentations within his own fictional dialogues. His literature claims to exchange myths for the rational search for truth and knowledge, yet his own work contains many figurative tropes and a multitude of narrative structures. In such texts as the *Phaedrus* and *The Republic*, Plato attacks the artists use of what he terms a ‘third rate’ methods of mimetic illusion. This attack seems doubly strange when we consider that Plato is justifiably regarded as one of the finest literary exponents of any age or genre.

In a clear attack upon the Sophists Plato suggests that, ‘What a budding orator needs to know is not what is really right, but what is likely to seem right in the eyes of the mass of people who are going to pass judgement; not what is really good or fine but what will seem so.’⁴ However, this begs the obvious question of how can you indisputably know what is ‘really right?’ Can you literally know what is right; or merely know what is right literally?

V

The thinker whose work in the early part of the twentieth century deals with questions of language and being, and has been an undoubted influence upon Pirsig and his writing, is Martin Heidegger. In many ways Pirsig’s work carries the ideas of early Heideggerian thinking into the later part of the twentieth century; where, unlike Heidegger, Pirsig attempts to show how we can live with and come to terms with technology. A prime example of the closeness of their thinking as well as their obvious difference can be seen through a comparison of Heidegger’s ‘Being’ with Pirsig’s ‘Quality’.

Heidegger uses the term ‘Care’ as a unifying concept for Dasein (*Da*-there, *Sein*-being, there being or being the there, which denotes the type of being we call human being, whose essential mode of existence is the inquiry into its own existence and into the primordial ground of Being itself.) When Dasein becomes fully involved in the task at hand, it shifts into a condition of ‘care’.⁵ For Heidegger the condition of caring affirms an internal relation between ‘human being’ and ‘world’. Pirsig attempts to “tie the concept of care to ‘Quality’ by pointing out that care and ‘Quality’ are internal and external aspects of the same thing. A person who sees ‘Quality’ and feels it as he works is a person who cares. A person who cares about what he sees and does is a person who is bound to have some characteristics of ‘Quality’.”⁶

Heidegger suggests that before any knowledge, thing or event, Being exists, that there is Being rather than nothing. It is interesting to note that Pirsig makes the same claim for ‘Quality’. For Heidegger,

⁴Plato *Phaedrus* Trans. Hamilton W. 1973. p. 71.

⁵ Heidegger M. *Being and Time* trans. Macquarrie J. and Robinson E. Basil Blackwell Oxford: 1962. Sect 39-42 & 56-68.

⁶ Pirsig R. 1974. p. 279.

between these two possibilities, Being and nothingness, exist beings, such things as animals and plants which come into Being and end up in a state of nothingness. However, the human being is unique in that it has the ability to inquire and reflect upon Being and recognise that before anything else it exists, it is there. The human is able to perceive that it is a being-in-the-world before it is conscious of the world. It is this mode of existence, which Heidegger refers to as 'Dasein'.

There seems to be a revision of Phenomenology at work here by way of a movement away from the epistemological question of - what it means to know - towards the ontological question of - what it means to be. In effect, Heidegger reverses Descartes' Cogito by implying that "I am, therefore I think"; because our existence operates at the basic level of Dasein, our existence determines our capacity for knowledge.

Heidegger turns away from technology because he feels that it moves being away from an appreciation of Being. Pirsig on the other hand, feels that it is through an appreciation of technology rather than a fear of it that we can seek 'Quality'. The rejection of technology is a rejection of an essential quality of Dasein.

VI

One of the main criticisms of philosophical terms like Being, Care, and 'Quality' is that they can be used to justify whatever you like. However, Pirsig is angered by the suggestion that 'Quality' is just whatever you like, 'Why should 'Quality' be *just* what you like? Why should what you like be just? What does 'just' *mean* in this case?' Pirsig suggests that the word 'just' in this situation achieves nothing.

'It's a purely irreverent term, whose logical contribution to the sentence is nil. With the word removed, the sentence becomes "'Quality' is what you like,' its meaning becomes an innocuous truism. Perhaps what is really meant by saying that "'Quality' is just whatever you like' is that what you like is bad, or at least inconsequential. Little children are trained not to do just what they like, but what *others* like. And which others? Parents, teachers, supervisors, policeman, judges, officials, kings, dictators. All authorities. When you are trained to despise 'just what you like' then, of course, you become a much more obedient servant of others - *a good slave*. But suppose you do just as you like? Does this mean you're going to go out and shoot heroin, rob banks, rape old ladies? The person who is counselling you not to do 'just what you like' is making some remarkable presumptions as to what is likeable.⁷

In *Lila* Pirsig attempts an explanation of the existence of 'Quality'; and perhaps because it is a concept that cannot be defined or described in rational terms, Pirsig begins in reverse by asking what a world would be like without 'Quality'. His conclusion is that a world subtracted of 'Quality' would be devoid of

⁷ This whole section is a re-wording of Robert Pirsig's ideas expressed on pages 235-236. 1974.

everything except rationality. There would be no art because art seldom makes sense or has a practical purpose and if you can't distinguish between good and bad art, a bare wall is as good as a painting. Sport would disappear because scores would no longer be measurable. The world would exist without 'Quality' but it would be very different. Pirsig's explanation of a world without 'Quality' is far too long to go into in any detail here but what I hope to have hinted at is that if a world would be different without 'Quality', although it cannot be defined, 'Quality' must exist in some way.

Secondly, Pirsig explores what I have termed the 'Hot Stove analogy' as a way of hinting at the existence of 'Quality'. Pirsig shows how if we are sitting upon a hot stove and begin to feel pain we would jump off the stove not because we'd know that the stove is the cause of the pain but rather because we are in a low-quality situation. For all we know we might jump from the stove and still feel pain and need to perform another action to rid the low-quality situation we find ourselves in. We might have sat on a bee and need to remove the sting but we might still have jumped off of the stove as a reaction to the feeling of low quality. It is only after removing ourselves from a low quality situation that we make oaths not to sit on hot stoves or bees. What Pirsig is implying is that the low quality comes first and the intellectual activity follows.

We remove ourselves from the stove because of what Pirsig terms 'Dynamic Quality', the pre-intellectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new. Like Schopenhauer's 'Will, One or noumenal', 'Dynamic Quality' is the primal underlying reality of the universe before it is all divided up into static quality or phenomena, our fixed patterns of value.

VII

Our initial 'intense' response to a work of art, be it a painting, or an over head-volley, a well-tuned engine, or a piece of white paper is 'Dynamic Quality' responding to and shattering our static construction of reality. Yet, is it possible to experience this 'intensification' through the same something repeatedly or is it only the initial reaction that gives this response? By taking the humour created from the telling of a joke as an example, we can see that in its immediate form the realisation of a joke will often produce the response of unrestrained laughter in the listener. However, if the joke is reflected upon for any length of time it will lose its spontaneity, wit and humour the elements that caused it to be funny in the first place. Thus, the circumstances which contained the joke's impromptu response, its 'intuitive moment', will be lost in the secondary 'intellectual' contemplation or reflection. The more times the joke is heard the less

amusing it is likely to sound. Nevertheless, many people claim to get an intense response repeatedly whenever they see a particular painting or read a particular poem and although this has not been my own experience I do not doubt their sincerity. However, I would suggest that this repeated intensification is an intellectual response that takes place at the level of static quality. At the point of perception, at the moment of pure 'Dynamic Quality', we are unaware of the work's similarity or difference from any previously experienced work. At the pre-intellectual moment before reflection, the work is pure 'Quality' and in that moment, 'intensification' can be felt from the overall experience. After the pre-intellectual moment of reflection, I would be more inclined to suggest that feelings of intensification are related to feelings of nostalgia, comfort and safety bred from familiarity. In the pre-intellectual moment, we perceive 'Dynamic Quality' and in this state the world as 'Will' can be experienced prior to representation, before we have reflected upon it and divided it up into comfortable, manageable pieces. At the moment of 'Dynamic Quality', we are unaware that we are confronted by something that we have defined phenomenologically as a particular object in the past. At the point of 'Dynamic Quality', there is no awareness of the past, present or future. At the moment of intensification, we are confronted by the universal, by 'Quality', by own primal universal reality

Now I hear Deconstructionist scepticism ringing in my ears with accusation that 'Quality' is simply one more transcendental signifier within a tradition which has consumed Western thinking for three thousand years, a tradition which has sought to establish a 'metaphysics of presence' which presumes that whatever is present to us is immediately and completely comprehended in the pure act of intuition and as such has no dependence upon signs of any kind. The Deconstructionists claim that if presence precedes signification how can we be conscious of it, since consciousness relies upon signs to represent the physical world? There can be no such concept as immediate presence when we recognise that everything is caught up and traced through by everything else. Moreover, who is to say that a pure moment of vision is unambiguous, especially if we think about ambigrams and optical illusions such as the duck/rabbit picture that can be seen from one or other perspective but never both together.

However, where this Deconstructionist argument appears to be mistaken is within its endeavour to categorise 'Quality' as a term which freezes the play of 'differance'. 'Quality' isn't the central term within a binary opposition; it is (n)either subject (n)or object. And although it is perceived in the intuitive moment before intellectualisation and sense perception take place, when an attempt is made to understand 'Quality', it soon becomes clear that it is traced through the infinite web of signifiers and signifieds, so no attempt is made on its part to contain a fixed meaning. A strong component of 'Quality' is Mu: (n)either yes (n)or no. Perhaps the term 'Quality' would be best utilised if it were placed under erasure in much the same way that 'Being' and 'is' have been crossed through by Heidegger and Derrida respectively. One can indicate this concept in writing by drawing an 'X' through the word, thereby placing the word under erasure. The

purpose of 'sous rature' or erasure is to have both the word and the deletion on view to suggest that the word is essential but that the term is also inadequate in describing the more abstract and playfully ambiguous elements of the concept.

VIII

What is it that makes us explore the possibility of the pre-intellectual moment that Pirsig suggests exists between our phenomenal reflection and 'Dynamic Quality'? Why do we seek out the noumenal? Is it that we are interpretative beings, constantly attempting to and needing to interpret and reflect upon our surroundings? Is this what makes us Dasein? It seems that if we find a mystery, we seek it out like the apes confronted by the monolith in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. We set out on a journey of discovery whenever we confront a mystery. We even set out in search of mystery; we actively seek out things to seek for no other reason than filling time. The journey can be as short as a crossword puzzle or the interpretation of a sentence, or as long as the 'what is' questions of epistemology or the search into deep space. All have no objectively verifiable answer but their purpose is aimed at understanding 'Quality'.

Most journeys are an attempt to open up silence and the journey through the veils to uncover Maya is no exception. In what follows I have tried to explain the journey through each veil rather than look at a specific artwork. Not that the artwork is less important than the journey but because the choice of a particular artwork could be misleading and in fact one needn't use an artwork in the traditional sense at all. The use of the term art could incorporate anything from a street lamp or a motorbike, to a painting by Picasso or a poem by Mina Loy. So, here, in a very structured form, are the eight veils:

- **The Classical Veil** is where an in-depth exploration of the chosen work can be carried out. At this stage we can study the work, read about it, and analyse others' opinions of it. We are able to enjoy it, and let the work happen to us; we can intellectualise about it all we like. We can investigate the materials, the medium and the style, the history, the social and economic elements of the work and place it within a hierarchy of value. This Classical veil is the area of study for those who want to win a quiz or succeed in examinations. I'm not denigrating the classical veil but if this is the limit to which one engages with the work of art then a whole area of artistic achievement is missed out.

- **The Romantic Veil** is where we seek a personal interpretation of the work. This level is the site at which we are able to let the picture or poem happen to us and allow it to look back at us as though we were looking into mirror. The work is able to throw up images and we are able to make our own evaluations based upon our education and experiences. The author or artist's intention is of no value here; what we are seeking is an exploration of our own interpretation of the work.

- At the **Psychoanalytical Veil**, we can seek the source of our personal interpretation of the work. Why do we like or dislike an image or sentence, why are we repelled or engaged by the work of art? This is the site at which we can experience elements in the work that will have relevance for us because of something in our own lives. We can set about attempting to find this something and analyse it to reveal something deeper about ourselves.

- **The Ontological Veil** is where we can attempt to universalise the particular understandings that we arrived at, at the psychoanalytical veil. By investigating elements of ourselves as part of a larger understanding of Human Being or Dasein we are able to gain some appreciation of what it means to be by looking into the Being of beings.

- At the **Sublime Veil**, we begin to detach from the work as an artefact. We enter upon a journey of relaxation in front of the work and seek a peace of mind with our own existence with the work. At this level, we are capable of finding a mental, physical and value quietness. Eventually our connection to the work will no longer be invaded by wandering thoughts and desires about the work or our relationship to it.

- **The Veil of Emptiness** is where we begin to detach from the concept of the self via an intense meditation upon the work of art. This meditation can take many forms but an unforced even disinterested contemplation will allow us to appreciate the no-thingness of the work of art. Here we can begin to appreciate the implications of realising that the I is a construction of the phenomenological worldview.

- **The Veil of Being-absorbed-into**, is where a detachment towards the oneness of the pre-intellectual universe is taking place. At this level, the meditation into the work takes the form of a complete move away from reflection and intellectual thought.

- **The Veil of Being-lost-into**, is where a complete detachment from detachment itself takes place. This is a veil devoid of time, space, causality and all phenomenological concepts. When this veil is explored, subject and object become the event of 'Quality'. Unfortunately, no later reflection upon this

experience will reveal 'Quality' because the reflection of the experience is part of, and therefore less than, 'Quality' itself.

IX

It is the claim of many, that in order to move back behind the Veil of Maya, back to the pre-intellectual moment, we must throw off reflection and intellect because both reflection and intellect will only move us further away from the moment of presence. This mode of thinking, this rejection of reflection can only lead us back to an ignorance of our own existence and Being. This ignorance is of no value, what we need to do is move back behind the veil through knowledge and philosophical thought. We need to immerse ourselves in knowledge and reflection because this is what makes us Dasein and it is only by taking this path that we can appreciate and move beyond the illusion of reality towards 'Quality'. In a way, this takes us towards, what I can only term, the Fake. The situation of being aware that we are using knowledge and reflection, which would appear to move us away from 'Quality', in order to get closer to it. In this sense, the Fake is good. The concept of the Fake is a guard against the complete rejection of rationality, knowledge and reflection in some bazaar attempt to return to primitive enlightenment. This naïve movement away from reflection has itself become a 'Church of Irrationality' that can only lead to ignorance and credulousness. I suggest that through the Fake, it is possible to acknowledge rationally that which is beyond our rational capability, through the Fake it is possible to have a vague understanding of what a glimpse at 'Quality' must be like.

Imagine a situation in which you are faced by two characters, each of whom hold anarchistic beliefs. The first is ignorant of how he has come to these opinions and is unaware that others hold similar views. The second character is a recent convert to anarchism and she has reached her opinions via the path of knowledge. Now it would seem that the first character was a more authentic anarchist, because he has come to his beliefs via a route of his own choosing. A gut feeling for the ideas which make up anarchism. However, if we look at how the first character has come by his anarchism we know that it is through ideas picked up through society. When we realise this fact we can see that the first character is an anarchist through ignorance; he has ignored all other ideas rather than confront his opinions and challenge them. The second character on the other hand who appears to have read everything and come up with the best of someone else's ideas would appear to be a Fake anarchist. However, Fake in this sense is a positive, because to move through all the possible views, the 'ghosts of rationality' and then still believe in anarchism is a more authentic way to hold an opinion than sheer ignorance of everything else.

Therefore, it is through the Fake and by being Fake that we are able to glimpse what 'Quality' must be like.

Bibliography.

- Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, tr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1976).
- Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962).
- Pirsig, Robert M., *Lila (An Inquiry into Morals)*, (Black Swan, London, 1992).
- Pirsig, Robert M., *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance (An Inquiry into Values)*, (Vintage London 1989).
- Plato *Phaedrus*, tr. Walter Hamilton, (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973).
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm, *Idealism and the Philosophy of Nature*, tr. Joseph L. Esposito, (Associated University Press, 1977).
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. E. F. Payne, (Dover publications, 2 vols. 1969).