

On Quality

(A critical reading of Robert M. Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila*)

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Abstract

This thesis offers a critical discussion of Robert M. Pirsig's 'metaphysics of Quality', based upon his two written works, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) and *Lila* (1991).

Discussion is pursued through a narrative style loosely modelled on Pirsig's literary contemplation of composition and Quality, but also with an emphasis on the form of a Platonic dialogue, albeit from a Postmodern perspective.

The issues raised in the thesis focus upon an examination of Pirsig's conception of Quality in the light of philosophical histories and Deconstruction and include a detailed discussion of whether all forms of writing are, by definition, both creative and rhetorical. Investigation is also made into elements of Zen Buddhism and Taoism in relation to Quality and Post-Structuralism. I analyse Pirsig's use of specific terms such as 'The Platypus' (that which challenges traditional categorisation); the 'Church of Reason' (a critique of a blind faith in logic), 'Care' (a term with close links to Heidegger's philosophy) and the 'ghost of rationality' (reality constructed upon the voices of the dead). I also examine Pirsig's attempts to disseminate binary oppositions such as Literature/Philosophy, Classic/Romantic and Subject/Object. The thesis concludes by discussing, with the personifications of the 'ghosts of rationality', the merits of Pirsig's suggestion that everything in the universe is an ethical activity.

"That literary genre we call 'philosophy'
- a genre founded by Plato."
Richard Rorty

Preamble

On one particularly sunny morning in the August of '95 I was scanning the shelves of Southampton University Library when I happened across a book entitled Pragmatic Philosophy: An Anthology, edited by Amelie Rorty. In one section of this book I discovered with interest an overview of Peirce's deliberation about the function of philosophy and the role of aesthetics. This piece not only contains a kinship to Pirsig's ideas within Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance and Lila, but also led me to scribble down my own rough and simplistic thoughts about philosophy, ethics and aesthetics, as an idea for an MPhil Thesis. My scribble went something like this:

The genuine philosopher through the tool of poetry shall construct the stage for the normative scientist; not by way of dialectic truth but as a consequence of rhetorical 'good.' The scientist's logic will provide the rules for valid thought within a self-corrective field of study. In addition, because science involves the self-discipline of thought this makes it a branch of ethics, in that it provides the rules for all habitual and controllable behaviour. In turn, ethics is a branch of aesthetics because the rules of ethics are directed towards intrinsic values and intrinsic values are comprehended aesthetically.

On reaching the final section of this thesis you will find a Revised Version of the above text, written in the light of my extensive post-structuralist readings. I hope this will help to indicate the changes within the course of my thinking journey."

I also trust that this will go some way towards explaining why I have chosen to write my treatise using a journey as a narrative device, in much the same way as Pirsig has done for both of his novels. I felt that a ramble along the edge of the winding stream of consciousness followed by a drink from the pub of Post-Modernism, best suited the Enlightening odyssey I travelled whilst

writing this thesis. I felt that as I travelled along this path I gained a whole new perspective upon the world and the human condition and my thesis is an attempt to illustrate this journey.

My meeting with post-structuralism has been a positive experience in that it has enabled me to be far more critical of claims to Truth, with a capital 'T', and values. Yet, most unexpectedly, from a personal point of view, it has also enhanced my interest in Zen Buddhism, which, like deconstruction, avoids using words and concepts as though they were expressions of some great beyond.

I feel that there are many similarities between post-structuralism, Pirsig and Zen Buddhism. Take for example the Zen Buddhist Koan, a sort of illogical riddle; many Zen Buddhists use these Koans to deconstruct painful emotional patterns of the mind, such as anger or loss, therefore highlighting the 'emptiness' and seizure one suffers within these emotional states. In a reflexive post-structuralist way, Zen Buddhists set about deconstructing static intellectual patterns such as 'emptiness' by highlighting that emptiness is itself a created concept to be used simply as a tool for deconstructing emotional seizure and then discarded like all other static patterns of the mind. In the ways of Zen Buddhism, emotional seizure and its parent, intellectual seizure can lead to the worst forms of suffering. Through reading Pirsig, Zen Buddhism and post-structuralism one begins to understand that there is no underpinning structure for any emotion, experience or intellectual viewpoint, and with nothing to seize the mind, it is set free.

Section One: Inventio

Finding or discovery, one of the three stages of classical rhetoric.

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Chapter One

Introductory conversation.

The Scene On The Bank Of The River Albion.

Hannah meets Martin who is sitting on the bank of the river Albion. Martin is watching the flames from a bonfire on the opposite bank, which are stretching and grasping upwards for air. Martin has spent the whole morning re-reading and studying a book entitled Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by the American writer Robert Maynard Pirsig. Hannah expresses great interest in the novel and is told by Martin that she may well do so, for its topic is the re-unification of the human condition, the (re)integration of body and mind or extension and spirit. Martin also informs Hannah that the book is written in the form of a Chautauqua, a word and concept which has dropped out of favour in our modern multimedia world. A Chautauqua was a travelling 'tent-show' of popular talks intended to edify and entertain, improve the mind and bring culture and enlightenment to the ears and thoughts of the listener.(1) Martin entreated to summarise the discourse, professes his inability to do so; however, after some persuading he

eventually agrees to read from the notebooks that he carries everywhere with him in a bulky green backpack.

Martin leans back and stretches out a leg to tighten his bootlace. Snap! He looks down at the frayed piece of material in his fingers and curses his rotten luck; then, just as he is about to discard this dysfunctional object he suddenly and surprisingly becomes alive to the delicate weave of the fabric. Martin loosens his grip on the lace and lets it fall into the palm of his hand. He'd always thought that the lace was brown in colour but at this moment he appreciates that the material appears to contain every shade, hue and tincture he'd ever tasted, smelt, heard or touched. In this synaesthetic instant he begins, for some reason unbeknown to his conscious self, to repeat the word brown over and over in his mind until it sounds completely unfamiliar and loses any physical contact, or practical sense of meaning, that it might once have contained.

Martin's eyes fix and widen under the impression of witnessing movement from the object in his hand. He twists his neck and looks sideways at the 'earth worm' that twists in the final moments of this life along the intricate groves of his skin. His mind begins to float and suddenly he understands that this gnarled black root of an ancient yew tree is implanting itself into the flesh of his right hand and is feeding from his sanguine fluid. Then just as the last vital drops of life's blood are extracted from Martin's body the root elapses and so too the boot, the worm, and even the palm of the hand, all vanish. The undulation of the land that Martin is no longer sitting on rises and falls and rises up again as armies of species embrace one another with ferocity in front of the eyes he no longer sees out of. Even the hands that gauge infinite distance and duration fluctuate because there is nowhere left in which to stand and all that remains is a tepid glow of massless singularity.

This no-thing is all that prevails of the entire known universe, and if Quality is of no value then the world will be, like, over. The no-thing begins to 'sing' in a silent scream emitting as it does electromagnetic vibrations like a miniature radio transmitter. This choice of action creates a string of jiggling molecules and as the silent voice grows it evolves into song curling back all six dimensions to leave but four. Energy begins to pump through this newly formed system and the jiggling becomes an abstract dance of merging and over-lapping particles. Before long the dance is in harmonic unison with the voice and the first static particles of low-grade conscious inorganic matter begin to triumph, via the moral laws of nature, over non-existence.

As more and more energy pumps through the system a condensed state of unity changes the particles into waves and back into particles, then into strings and super-strings. . . The undulating hills begin to return and stabilise within a wasteland out of which jut two uneven lengths of iron appearing like upturned swords. Complex organic structures begin to develop into biological patterns in open defiance of the inorganic forces of starvation and death; and the earth heaves and coughs and spits out green phlegm.

The system now pulsates with rich dynamic energy and virtual mutation spawns the recognition of self-reflection and relinquishes its ability for easy respiration in favour of a symbolic growl. The social patterns of morality find the counterweight to balance the scales of injustice and the stage is set for a century of conflict with the intellect versus Goliath. And the air becomes thick with the scent of scorched words. Snap!

Hannah: How did the fire start, Martin?

Martin: Sorry? Oh! All right Hannah, what d'ya say?

Hannah: I just asked how the fire started?

Martin: Oh right! Just a bunch of little kids with a magnifying glass and a few pages from a school history book, about the Ancient Greeks I think they said it was. It's made me think how much I like the scent of burning books, which is somewhat worrying.

Hannah: How long have you been here, not all morning?

Martin: No! Only about half an hour. (He looks at his watch) Wow! I've been here for hours. I needed to get out for a while, clear my head, you know. So I planned to go for a walk across the 'South Downs' but I got stuck here. I've just finished my notes and preparation for the thesis I'm writing on Robert M. Pirsig. I've told you about it before, haven't I?

Hannah: No, not really, you've hinted at it a couple of times but you've never actually explained anything in detail. Why not explain it to me now? It'll do you good to discuss it with someone other than that dummy of yours. I guess you've got it with you.

Martin: Of course, he's in my backpack; would you like to speak with him?

Hannah: No! It's OK, I'll make do with an explanation of your thesis, thanks.

Martin: There's no way that I can explain it to you in just a few minutes; well I could, but I wouldn't do it justice.

Hannah: Come on Martin, aren't you aware that we live in the era of information by sound byte and MTV? You have to be able to summarise everything from the microcosm to the macrocosm in less than three short sentences.

Martin: Which is why I'm writing an 'academic' thesis; it seems to be about the only place left where you can literally say something in depth.

Hannah: But who's going to read it, let alone understand it? Most academic writing is self-indulgent intellectual snobbery, which, once written, is forever consigned to the wasteland of the great unread. Anyway, I didn't really mean I wanted an explanation in a few minutes; I've got the rest of the day to myself with nothing to do, so you can explain it to me now. You don't look very busy and if it's going to take any longer than a day to explain, then I suggest you make it interesting so that I can't wait to come back and hear more.

Martin: In fact, Hannah, my thesis deals with a topic that I'm sure will interest you; I'm examining Pirsig's novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* from a perspective that attempts to define its central theme as a guide to the re-unification of the human condition.

Hannah: What does that mean?

(Martin stands up and stretches.)

Martin: The fire's going out!

(Hannah nods)

Hannah: But what do you mean by the re-unification of the human condition?

Martin: You said you had the rest of the day to yourself, right?

(Again Hannah nods)

Martin: Well, I'm off for the walk along the South Downs. If you want to come with me, we could talk on the way.

Hannah: Will you explain your thesis to me? We're wasting time and I can tell that you've got your notes with you. Explain your research and I'll come.

Martin: We'll start walking and see how it goes, shall we?

(Hannah gets to her feet and they both begin to walk along the bank of the river Albion.)

Martin: Have I already explained to you how Pirsig has written much of his work in a style he calls the 'Chautauqua'; a method that proves ideal for presenting complex philosophical problems to readers without any formal training in philosophy? In other words it attempts to avoid the intellectual snobbery that you mocked earlier.

Hannah: You still haven't explained to me what you mean by the re-unification of the human condition?

Martin: I'll be glad to do as you ask Hannah; only don't expect too much too soon. There are many layers of past, present, ignored and forgotten thought at play in Pirsig's two novels and I want to show, from both inside and outside the text, that the overall composition of these ideas binds consciousness inseparably with our bodies. I see these ideas, perhaps controversially from a post-structuralist perspective,(2) as not being completely dependent upon the words and letters of the book in isolation, but as caught up in what I have termed the 'intuitive moment'; those occasions where the slightest amount of meditation eradicates a multi-faceted, and at times paradoxically impromptu, realisation of a thing, idea or situation, by fixing it to a single, uncomplicated 'truism'. An everyday example of this can be seen in the humour created from the telling of a joke. 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 contemplated or examined it will lose its spontaneity, wit and humour, the elements which 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. The 'intuitive moment' is, therefore, created in the link between the reader and the text. This link takes place within the attempt of each to reach out and find a universal and particular element of Quality within itself and within its other, an other which will become itself in the 'intuitive moment'. It is as a result of this union between subject and object that an 'event'(3) as it is in itself, which can often seem indefinable and unknowable, becomes present in the spirituality or spontaneity of the moment; yet its multi-faceted character excludes it from rational explanation.

Hannah: You say that this 'intuitive moment' is created in the interaction between the reader and the words of the book?

Martin: Yeah, I would suggest that it is in some ways equivalent to Wordsworth's 'spots of time' which he refers to in *The Prelude*;(4) or James Joyce's term 'epiphany',(5) by which he implies that a sudden spiritual manifestation can envelop an individual and cause them to experience an

everyday object or situation in an unfamiliar and enlightening way which reveals something of the radiance of existence.

Hannah: So, is this indefinable 'event', as Pirsig calls it, also created through the interaction of the book and the reader?

Martin: No, absolutely not, because, as I'll try to make clear within this thesis, the 'event' is prior to first thought. It's the pre-intellectual reality in which we perceive all of existence as it is at that moment, in its basic, fundamental state, without the names, definitions and descriptions, etc., which we have adopted from traditional reason. The 'event' is the undivided mind (spirit) and matter (physicality), it isn't created between anything, it's above and beyond the book and the reader; because both the language and the interpreter are reaching outwards for an understanding of this 'event'. An 'event' which Pirsig terms 'the moment of pure Quality,'(6) the indefinable instant which may be glimpsed in the immediacy of the 'intuitive moment'.

Hannah: The word moment would seem to indicate time and hence space; so where does this so-called moment exist?

Martin: At the cutting edge of time before either subject or object can be distinguished. What I have termed the 'intuitive moment' is part of our pre-intellectual perception. This is what Pirsig calls the 'awareness of Quality', the realisation that this pre-rational condition is inexpressible in propositions but remains the parent and the source of all subjects and objects. Allow me to read you something of what Pirsig himself writes:

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, 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.(7)

Taking a lead, perhaps, from an influential essay by Alan Watts entitled Beat Zen Square Zen (8) Pirsig writes:

When you subtract Quality you get squareness, the absence of quality is the essence of squareness(9) This squareness may be succinctly and yet thoroughly defined as an inability to see quality before it has been intellectually defined, that is, before it gets all chopped up into words.(10)

As his narrator says about a character in the novel named Sylvia Sutherland, "She understands a peculiar language which has nothing to do with what you are saying. A daughter"(11) This last comment 'A daughter' I find to be quite enigmatic, as Sylvia is not a blood relative of the narrator. Pirsig also describes a situation between the narrator and the narrator's son:

I wish I knew what to say to him. Or what to ask. He seems so close at times, and yet the closeness has nothing to do with what is asked or said.(12)

What Pirsig appears to be implying in these sections, and throughout the work, is that the overall idea or spirit of a discourse is greater than the parts that make it up. Perhaps then, Hannah, when the so-called spirit of the 'intuitive moment' is re-unified with the words of the book and the reader, then, and perhaps only then, in a realm conjured up through words yet beyond words, we may have an answer to the question concerning the meaning behind the term 'the re-unification of the human condition'.

Hannah: In a way I understand what Pirsig is saying, although I'm slightly dubious of his contradictory claims to immediate mediation. However, I can remember many occasions when I've had abstract and in-depth conversations with groups of friends and it seems as if you begin to realise something far more profound than anything any of you've actually said. Yet if you attempt to define the essence of the conversation, it remains elusive and refuses to be fixed down so passively. It loses its beauty somehow, I suppose, because when it's all chopped up into the form of words it becomes less than it actually is. And the next day you just can't seem to explain it to anyone else. It's as if they had to be there to experience the full realisation of the event. Do you know what I mean?

Martin: I do indeed, I've had many similar experiences myself and anyway 'you can sort of tell these things'.⁽¹³⁾ However, in answer to your doubts about 'immediate mediation', I think that during the conversation that you've just described to me, a veil has subconsciously begun to lift from your common perception of the world and in this moment, which can't be defined without becoming something less than it is, a strange unknowing awareness becomes present. You have in a sense inflicted a process of defamiliarisation upon your static worldview and have begun to experience existence in a raw state with fewer restrictions in those fragmentary moments.

Hannah: What would you say to the claim, then, that you're simply attempting to create a logical structure within a chaotic universe that you can never hope to know as it is, only as you choose to perceive it. Are you perhaps, by using the power of your will, attempting to claim a false understanding of the universe in order to gain control of your own existential anxieties?

Well said! (Says a muffled little voice from inside martin's backpack)

Hannah: I don't need you to agree with me, thanks very much.

Martin: Keep your words to yourself.

Voice from the backpack: Only if you let me out.

Martin: Not yet. Where was I? Oh yeah, I don't see the 'Quality experience', for want of a better expression, as merely a desire to control a chaotic universe. In the fragmentary moments of a pre-intellectual awareness, a chaotic world would appear as it is for what it is something that you are universally and particularly of, and which is particularly and universally you. Therefore, any attempt to claim a particular truth or understanding of a momentary experience which exists both inside and outside of any single being, would seem to me to be a contradiction of what the experience is. I must admit that I also have a problem with the word 'chaos' for it has gained cultural overtones of negativity simply because an unstructured existence is almost unthinkable in our present way of life. To ignore chaos, to fear it, is a negative value judgement central to a static, logical existence.

Hannah: Perhaps you could present an initial sketch of what you are trying to indicate through the use of the term 'the re-unification of the human condition' before you move on much further?

Voice from the backpack: This should be amusing.

Martin: Our current 'historical' discourse tells the story of an evolving species called Homo-Sapiens, which in its glorious wisdom has created a rational form of knowledge it calls reason. With this system of reason, Homo-sapiens is able to make sense of its infinitely complex universe. Reason is an invaluable tool that creates logic, a static belief system based upon the 'scientific' findings of cause and effect. This system of logical reasoning has enabled a relatively frail species to survive in a hostile universe and helped to produce what one might call a human friendly environment within which to live. However, logic, this prerequisite for human knowledge, has become the great subjugator and along with its positive effects, we, as human beings, cannot ignore the negative side effects it inevitably brings with it. Wherever logic is employed, it has a tendency to compare, measure, discriminate, categorise, and to divide its answers into manageable binary opposites. These oppositions, which can only ever exist in relation to each other, are considered to be true or truly false, depending upon which way one chooses to look at the evidence or phrase the question. These oppositions (which include the general divisions between subject and object, truth and fiction, as well as the particular divisions between good and bad, mind and body) always seem irreconcilable, they appear totally at odds with one another. What Pirsig attempts to highlight in his writing is that these divisions are only a particular way of looking and classifying existence; a way of examining and ordering our perceived universe, which is created and restricted by our compulsion to close off knowledge by way of logical scientific reasoning, or as Pirsig's narrator calls this, 'the church of reason'.(14)

Hannah: Haven't you just fallen into the trap of using binary opposites yourself by balancing creation on the one side and restriction on the other?

Martin: Possibly, and the fact that I was unaware of using terms in opposition goes to show how deeply entrenched this all prevailing form of reason has become.

I think that it is worth bearing in mind however, that Pirsig doesn't suggest that we dispense entirely with this 'church of reason'. We must not assume that simply because the tool is misused that it is necessarily unsound. Instead, Pirsig implies that we may find it more useful to appreciate understanding and knowledge, which by its very condition is generated through extreme contradictions and oppositions, as simply a 'hand full of sand [seized] from the endless landscape of awareness around us. . .[We] call this hand full of sand the world. . .it looks uniform at first, but the longer we look at it the more diverse we find it to be. . .[Then through a] process of discrimination. . .we divide the sand into parts. This and that. Here and there. Black and white. Now and then. The discrimination is the division of the conscious universe into parts.'(15)

Hannah: So is Pirsig arguing that these binary oppositions only exist because of the way we interpret the evidence? That through this form of reason we find opposites because they are the simplest way for us to make sense of a universe that we can never fully hope to understand as it actually is in itself.

Martin: Provisionally I would agree with you but I should also like to guard against a purely subjective interpretation of existence which I believe would eventually lead to relativism without even the subtlest form of self-discipline and order. My reading of Pirsig's work is that he is attempting to highlight the false foundation upon which Western metaphysics prides itself on having being built. Along with many 'post-structuralists' Pirsig is indicating that the groundwork of western metaphysics is not transcendental or supernatural but is rather a human creation and as such can never reveal the truth of the universe as it is in itself. The implication of this is that we

have sought, consciously or otherwise, to create conflicting dualities because our human reason needs the binary oppositions (true and false etc..) in order for it to be able to say anything that it will consider valuable. The 'church of reason' demands that every thesis have an anti-thesis to produce its synthesis. This is the very essence of scientific reason, recreating through conflict.

What Pirsig is attempting in ZMM, and what I see as the meaning behind the expression 'the reunification of the human condition', is a holistic way of looking beyond the logical scientific form of reason, which by itself creates insurmountable and conflicting dualities, and moving towards a way of experiencing the world which seeks out solidarity by finding a oneness in the disparate elements of existence.

Backpack: I told you that this would be amusing; how much of a contradiction was all of that? First, you say Western metaphysical thought is misguided in its attempt to seek out a synthesis through balancing oppositions and then you talk of solidarity and oneness yourself.

Martin: Right, that's it, you're not coming out of the backpack today.

Backpack: Fascist! One minute you speak of solidarity the next you restrict the freedom of speech, typical!

Martin: As I was saying, the purpose of finding a oneness to existence is to dissolve the barriers between subject and object, mind and body. This is best achieved by highlighting the inter-relatedness within the created differences of subject and object etc. Pirsig attempts to show how values (which he doesn't see as existing in the gap between language and meaning but as actually creating both) are in fact the primary condition of all existence.

Quality or its absence, doesn't reside in either the subject or object; at the moment of pure Quality, there is no subject and there is no object. There is only a sense of Quality that produces a later awareness of subjects and objects. At the moment of pure Quality, subjects and objects are identical.(16)

Pirsig proposes that philosophy, especially since Descartes, has been incapable of transmitting what ought to be chosen in the realm of values. He suggests that this is mainly because modern philosophy has constantly failed to see values as a separate category from either subject or object. Therefore, by assigning values to subjects and objects modern philosophy has diminished the act of choosing in favour of subjectively justifying those choices after they have been made.(17) This would seem to indicate that if a subject or object only has value because it happens to be the one that was chosen, then everything is of absolutely no consequence and nihilism is the only reality. I consider that this not only shows arrogance for the supposed importance and separateness of humanity from the rest of existence, but also goes a long way towards explaining our modern state of existential anxiety. We have an infinite amount of choices but no personal way of evaluating those choices. In both ZMM, and Lila, Pirsig seeks not to confront these views but searches, via the pathway of Quality, for co-operation by asking the simple question 'what is best?'(18)

Hannah: I must admit that this whole 'Quality' thing is beginning to make a lot more sense to me now.

Martin: That's great!

(Martin pulls a small book out from his backpack)

Martin: I feel that Natalie Goldberg addresses many of the issues that I have tried to convey, in her book about creative writing entitled *Writing Down The Bones*, she writes:

Turn off your logical brain that says that $1 + 1 = 2$. Open up your mind to the possibility that $1 + 1$ can equal 48, a Mercedes Benz, an apple pie, a blue horse. Forget yourself. Disappear into everything you look at, a street, a glass of water, a cornfield. Everything you feel become totally that feeling, burn all of yourself with it. Don't worry your ego will quickly become nervous and stop such ecstasy. But if you can catch that feeling or smell or sight the moment you are one with it, you will probably have a great poem.(19)

Hannah: Can we stop for a little while, so that I can just listen while you start right from the beginning?

(Martin drops his backpack on to the ground and sits down once more on the bank of the river. Hannah lays back and looks up at the sky.)

Chapter Two

Good as a Noun

I feel slightly apprehensive about discussing my thesis; it isn't that I don't know what I want to say, it's just that I feel slightly pretentious saying it. I look around at Hannah who's lying on her back looking up at the sky. She turns her head and looks at me; it's as if she's sensed that I'm looking at her; as if somehow my eyes have beamed out to her and she's responded. She smiles and then turns back to her sky. I unfasten my backpack and peer into the dark cave-like entrance and down into a world of ideas.

Opening my first book of notes, I slowly begin to read, changing words and ideas as I move through the text:

"Robert Pirsig's *Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance* published in 1974, has been noted to be, 'one of those rare intellectual products of the seventies that can be read and re-read with profit.'(20) The benefit gained from reading, and indeed re-reading, ZMM, in conjunction with Pirsig's other novel *Lila* (incidentally published seventeen years later), is, in today's so-called 'post-modern' world, of enormous interest. We live in an era where the political ideologies of Fascism and Nationalism, disguised as Communism, are slowly spiralling in ever decreasing waters towards the drain of political history. Both ZMM, and *Lila* support the reader in projecting from this past, a possible future, which is seemingly rushing up from behind us. Pirsig maps out from this equivocal past, which is silhouetted on to the cave wall in front of us, dominating everything we see, a future which isn't the hegemony of liberal, democratic, free market capitalism, as Francis Fukuyama(21) would suggest, but a new (or perhaps older) philosophy somewhere above, before and beyond both objectivity and subjectivity in a world guided by what he terms, 'Quality'."(22)

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 anyway. It has created them. They are subordinate to it!(23)

Hannah begins to make sounds of interruption, words broken off mid-way through, followed by a succession of 'ifs' and 'buts'. I glance over at her and can't fail to notice the questioning look upon her face. I eventually ask if there's a problem.

"Subjects, objects and Quality?" she inquires. "These intellectually ambiguous terms, especially subject and object, appear to be continually in a state of metamorphosis; with different theorists arguing wildly differing points for each term and sometime in complete opposition to one another. This sort of confusion tends to leave the dilettante wondering how such terms can constantly elude any clear signification. And as for Pirsig's elevated definition of the term Quality, which you've mentioned several times already, I have to admit I'm both intrigued and a little sceptical."

I ponder for a short while and then begin to explain. "I would suggest that most of the signs in any socially communicative system of language will include definitions and expressions which will be for the most part ambiguous. Without this ambiguity, systems of communication would lose their poetic richness, diversity, and freedom of expression. A language, and I use this term in its broadest sense, needs to contain elements of both recognisable signification for precise communication such as mathematics, instruction, law and medicine, but it also requires an allusive component for the artistic, dynamic and creative elements of life. I assume that a language also needs abstract words for concepts that appear just beyond the culture's present intellectual understanding.

As for my own interpretation of the terms 'subject' and 'object', let's take this book as an example. I hold out *Zen and the art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. In one way or another every person can sense the existence of this object. The vast majority of us in our culture perceives it in much the same way; i.e., as a rectangular collection of paper sheets, bound together for presenting some form of literary communication. However, the ideas that we receive from reading the type written text within the object don't exist in any place that we can physically grasp. Yet they still exist, they have an extraordinary reality beyond the sensory world of our experience in a realm of ideas, which has been traditionally associated with the subjective world.

These opposing, subjective/objective, positions only came into the common realm of knowledge and discourse with the 'methodological doubt'(24) of Rene Descartes, the seventeenth century scientist, mathematician and philosopher, whose sceptical meditations divided the known universe into two distinct substances of mind (subject) and matter (object)."

"However," says a little voice from the bottom of my backpack, "it could be claimed that this subject/object division grew steadily in ancient Greece from the concept of 'unchangeable being' developed by the pre-Socratic philosopher, Parmenides. Perhaps his celebrated dictum, 'nothing changes,' culminates approximately one hundred years later, in the idealist and materialist philosophies of Plato and Aristotle respectively?"

I reach down into my backpack and pull out the little grey haired ventriloquist's dummy with a permanent grin.

"Your labelling of Plato and Aristotle are a little to simplistic and misleading, don't you think," I say. "Agreed," says the dummy rather flippantly, turning towards my walking companion. "Hello Hannah, did you know that It's believed that Parmenides came to Athens from Elea in southern Italy, around 500 BC, and once there, in this ancient city of intellectual inspiration, he is said to have put forward the concept of 'unchangeable being.' This he did in strong opposition to the concept of 'eternal becoming' advanced by his contemporary, Heraclitus from Ephesus in Asia Minor, who believed in a world of perpetual change. Heraclitus suggested that everything in the universe sprang from the dynamic and cyclical inter-play of opposites that would flow in a state of eternal becoming. An example of Heraclitus' oppositional inter-play would be to suggest that

without death one would not appreciate life. Yet more than this, he also believed that these opposites were indeed connected; both life and death inextricably combined, never fixed, or finished, but each permanently becoming, in spite of and perhaps because of, its opposite. This unity of opposites Heraclitus refers to as the Logos,(25) a physical definition, of this, he suggests is fire, its flames created or born out of the destruction or death of the material it consumes. Interestingly Heraclitus's ideas of 'becoming' would appear to resound, in a similar fashion, within the 'eternal recurrence' of one Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche,(26) over two thousand years later."

"So to recapitulate," I add, in an attempt to stop the dummy from digressing from the point of my thesis. "Heraclitus's doctrine of perpetual flux, rests upon the unity brought about by the logos (reason) through a combination of opposites."

"The effacement of this unity," continues the little guy, "begins with Parmenides, who states in his philosophical poem, entitled On Nature(27), that the basic principle, which he calls 'being', is both unique and invariable. He considers change to be impossible and proposes that the changes we perceive in nature are mere illusions of the senses."

"It would appear," I say, "that this argument foreshadows the dualism of Plato's metaphysics in that it produces a separation between spirit and matter."

"However, Plato, who was born more than fifty years after both Parmenides and Heraclitus had put forward their ideas, was concerned, among many things, with the relationship between what is eternal and unchanging on the one hand and that which flows on the other. Plato suggests that everything in our world flows, that all living creatures eventually die and that mountains and monuments erode over time. Plato, who ironically distrusted the artist,(28) uses a variety of beautifully written parables and myths in an attempt to portray his picture of human existence. In what is perhaps the most famous of these poetic allegories, 'The Simile of the Cave,'(29) Plato portrays the sun as a metaphor to represent his 'world of ideas' or 'theory of forms' which he describes as existing beyond appearance in a higher realm of spiritual reality. In this ideal(istic) realm, there is a timeless mould for everything from horses to beds and morals. Plato proposes that these 'ideas' or 'forms' are more real than the phenomena of nature. Firstly, there is the ideal bed, next the actual bed of the sensory world and lastly there is the artist's impression of the bed. Plato believed that his philosophical reasonings had uncovered the eternal order in a world of perpetual change; thus bringing together the opinions of both Heraclitus and Parmenides."

"Plato's aim in all of this," I continue, "is to suggest that we can never have true knowledge of anything that is in a constant state of change. We can only have opinions; and opinions, because they belong to the world of the senses, vary from person to person and can never, therefore, reveal true knowledge. However, in the world of ideas Plato believes that we can discover true knowledge through using our reason."

"Would I be right in thinking that Aristotle, unlike Plato, didn't turn his back, so readily, upon the sensory world?" asks Hannah.

"Indeed he didn't," replies the dummy, "Aristotle, in clear opposition to Plato his teacher and mentor, studied the sensory world in great depth. Aristotle used his senses to dispute Plato's 'theory of forms' suggesting that the form of an object, let us say a bed for instance, is made up from the characteristics common to all beds. In other words we form our idea of a bed after seeing a number of other beds." "Is he suggesting," asks Hannah, "that it is we who find a

common denominator within the objects we sense, which then allow us to form the concept and category of that object?"

"Quite so," replies the dummy, "because Aristotle is a sort of empiricist, in that he believes that nothing exists in consciousness that has not first been experienced by the senses."

"So this," I say, "is consequently the major difference between these two influential Greek thinkers. Plato believes that the highest order of reality is that which we meditate through our reason from the transcendental world of ideal forms; whereas Aristotle perceives reality as that which we rationally and empirically receive through our senses from within nature itself."

"And so begins the philosophical conflict that has seized Western philosophy within its paralysing grip for the past two and a half thousand years," remarks the dummy, "the constant conflict of oppositions."

"Pirsig," I say, "puts forward the hypothesis which claims that 'Quality' has created both objectivity and subjectivity, a theory which attempts to defeat the ancient logical construct known as a 'dilemma', the Greek word for two premises. This type of argument, where the holder of a certain proposition is committed to accepting one of two propositions each of which contradicts his original position, has also been called the 'horned syllogism'(30) and the victim compared to a person certain to be impaled on at least one of the horns of an extremely angry bull. Pirsig avoids both the subjective and objective horns of the Western philosophical argument (which are so deeply entrenched one would be forgiven for believing them to be the only possible positions within philosophy), by implying that:

Quality is the point at which subject and object meet. It's not a thing; it's an event. Quality is the event at which awareness of both subject and object is made possible. This means that Quality is not just the result of a collision between subject and object. The very existence of subject and object themselves is deduced from the Quality event. The Quality event is the cause of the subject and object, which are then mistakenly presumed to be the cause of Quality.(31)

Pirsig goes on to write:

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 preintellectual reality is what Phaedrus [the pseudonym used by Pirsig's narrating character for his former self, before he slipped into insanity and had his memory erased through Electric Shock Therapy] felt he had properly identified as Quality. Since all intellectually identifiable things must emerge from this preintellectual reality, Quality is the parent, the source of all subjects and objects.(32)

Although this pivotal idea is much revised within the pages of Lila and the latter part of ZMM I believe that this is a reasonable sketch of Pirsig's early attempts at explaining what he means by the term Quality."

At this point Hannah becomes quite animated and begins to explain a rather bizarre situation that she had found herself in several days previously.

"I've just remembered something," She blurts out, " I don't quite know why and I'm not so sure that it's appropriate, but it somehow seems important. It happened a couple of days ago when I was in the library looking for a book to read. As soon as I walked in, I got side-tracked picking up a book which appeared to leap out at me. Before I knew it I was reading away and the time was ticking by. When I eventually came to my senses I remembered that I'd come to the library to find a certain book which I hadn't yet found. So, for some bizarre reason I put down the book I was reading and went to look for a book to read. I couldn't find one; I walked round and around but nothing seemed to grab my attention. Eventually I left the library dissatisfied and frustrated. Now, do you know, I can't quite remember for the life of me why I started to tell you the anecdote. I've got an idea, why don't I simply shut up and let you carry on with your thesis?"

Therefore, I did as Hannah requested.

"To begin on the most literal level, ZMM uses a narrative which is built around a trip across America, from Minnesota to California, on a motorcycle. The novel is divided up into four parts, the first of which, as you might imagine, introduces the main themes and characters of the piece. The first characters we meet are the narrator, an editor and author of engineering manuals, and his eleven-year-old son Chris. Next we meet a couple, John and Sylvia Sutherland, who ride with the narrator and his son on a second motorcycle and act as a commonsensical, person-in-the-street, point of view, in a dialectical exchange with the narrator's views about Quality. This exchange continues until John and Sylvia depart at the beginning of chapter fifteen."

"Whilst riding, the narrator delivers a series of discourses to the reader which cover topics as diverse as motorcycle maintenance (which, as the author tells us, quite humorously, in his notes at the beginning of the book, may not actually be very factual on motorcycles at all), an inquiry into moral 'values', and a philosophy which deals with the reconciliation between science, art and humanism. Pirsig's novel has, however, many other connecting levels and can also be seen as the story of the narrator's own confrontation with the 'ghost' of his former self; a chimera who uneasily re-emerges from the depths of the narrator's unconscious mind, after having been electrically suppressed by the psychiatric profession. The pseudonym that Pirsig's narrator gives to this older, darker, personality is 'Phaedrus'; a name taken from a character in Plato's dialogue of the same name. Pirsig's Phaedrus, who was once a brilliant thinker slowly, yet steadily, slipped into madness when he became unable to communicate his ideas to the world. He underwent shock therapy and 'died' only to return in the course of the novel; emerging like a shadow from the edges of the early pages, but growing ominously larger towards the book's conclusion. The narrator and his son must face the 'ghost' together as well as find a reconciliation to their fragile father / son relationship, a relationship which deteriorates as their journey across America together progresses."

"Why does Pirsig choose the name Phaedrus?" asks Hannah

"I'll endeavour to address the question surrounding Pirsig's use of the pseudonym Phaedrus a little later on, if I may?(33) However, for the time being I should like to continue with my exposition of the novel.

"As the odyssey begins, Pirsig establishes the style of the novel, it's an intimate, flowing, first person singular narrative, mildly reminiscent of the fifties 'beat generation' technique of seducing the reader into the authorial world, primarily through the looseness of the prose and its spontaneous self-expression. This approach is interspersed with the style the author calls 'a sort of Chautauqua'.(34) Pirsig uses this Chautauqua method to express some of his more original and challenging ideas and concepts in an absorbing and unique way.

In part one of the novel, Pirsig fertilises the mind of the reader by sowing and propagating the developing seeds of thought, using figurative language. He then leaves these ideas open, ready to be developed later when the nourishment offered in the subsequent chapters will nurture these concepts and help them to grow. This is why, I believe, Pirsig peppers both his novels with many stops for sustenance in cafés, restaurants and picnic areas. He wishes to highlight the 'food for thought' that needs to be taken along the journey of enlightenment.

An example of Pirsig's technique of rhetorical germination develops when the reader is informed that the narrator, his son and some friends are travelling to Montana via secondary roads, avoiding freeways at all costs. 'We want to make good time', the narrator notes, 'but for us now this is measured with emphasis on 'good' rather than time and when you make this shift in emphasis the whole approach changes.'⁽³⁵⁾ This is only the second page of the book and Pirsig is already beginning to thread the concept of Quality into the fabric of the novel. At this point however, the reader is probably focused to a greater extent on the narrator's choice for an aesthetic and relaxing vacation away from the hubbub of busy traffic. Yet, as the novel progresses we begin to realise that this seed of information has a two-fold purpose. The first of these is the purely literal meaning of the narrator's search for a calm and unruffled holiday; the second, and perhaps more important purpose, is the introduction for the reader into Pirsig's 'value created world'. This is an existence where a shift is made in ones approaches to thinking about life, where the emphasis is placed upon what is 'good' and not simply upon cleaving the world up into subjects and objects for the sake of convenience. A slightly obvious example of this can be seen in the way the human condition is so often split between mind (spirit) and body (matter) which independent of one another have little or no existence; yet together the mind and body unite to create a greater 'good', both the human being and the human doing."

"This is a very confusing use of the word good," states the dummy.

"This 'good' which Pirsig talks of is not 'good' as an adjective," I reply, "it is 'good' as a noun. What Pirsig is trying to point out here is that the whole idea of placing things into a particular membership with a structural hierarchy of intellectual categories known as subjects and objects, is simply one way of dividing up and interpreting the world, which we have inherited from the ancient Greeks, and most especially Aristotle. Pirsig is attempting to show us a world interpreted through the concept of Quality or good, which he sees as more valuable than a world divided into subject and object. Pirsig plots this introductory idea throughout both novels and is concluded in the very last paragraph of Lila.

Good as a noun rather than an adjective is all the metaphysics of Quality is about. Of course, the ultimate Quality isn't a noun or an adjective or anything else definable, but if you had to reduce the metaphysics of Quality to a single sentence, that would be it.⁽³⁶⁾

ZMM's narrator explains how he often used secondary roads in the past and gained a feeling of relaxation and enjoyment from travelling on them, without truly understanding why. He wonders why 'it took so long to catch on. We saw it and yet we didn't see it. Or rather, we were trained not to see it. Conned, perhaps. . . it was a puzzling thing.'⁽³⁷⁾ In this paragraph, Pirsig introduces to the reader the idea of opening up the mind to new ways of perceiving the world around us and softening our modern addiction to rigid and closed 'truths'. This is an element that will be invaluable to the reader if they're to attempt the alternative outlook that Pirsig puts forward. As the narrator says, 'the truth knocks upon your door and you say, "Go away I'm looking for the truth," and it goes away. Puzzling.'⁽³⁸⁾ Hannah's eyes widen and shine and she leans forward and says excitedly, "Just like when I was in the library the other day and looking for a book to

read, I had a book in my hand, I had the truth of my search for a book in my hands, but I didn't recognise it and that's why I left the library frustrated." "Sometimes," I reply, "when the intellect steps in we can lose the quality of the moment to the so-called rationality of the mind."

Hannah now has a smile on her face as broad as the dummy's and as she lies back I continue with my notes.

"As the first section of ZMM develops, the narrator, (who may be fully or only partially autobiographical,) offers us details recalled dimly from his past. For instance, we learn that he is 'happy to be riding back into this country.'(39) We also discover that he has been on a similar journey before but we get a blurred sense of unease in these early pages, not only about the narrator's memories but also about his current state of mind. As the narrator grapples with these partially familiar surroundings we become aware of the main theme in the novel's first section, the divide created by modern technology between those with what Pirsig terms the 'classical mind', who see value in the static patterns of structure, form and precision; and those on the other side with what Pirsig terms the 'romantic mind', people who find value in the dynamic patterns of randomness, inspiration and spontaneity. Those with a 'classical mind' look at the advantages of the technological world and find beauty in its parts, whereas those with the 'romantic mind' look back to a pre-technological society as something more beautiful and superior, in its entirety, to the mechanical ugliness of the modern world. Pirsig sets out ambitiously to conciliate this rift, which can be summarised as the binary opposition between art and craft or subject and object; these being just two of the possible examples of the way the world has been cleaved apart into manageable, simplifying dualistic categories of opposites. I'll come back many times, as Pirsig does within his novels, to this theme of the classic / romantic split. "However, with this attack on binary oppositions made, I next want to embrace a dualistic confrontation myself by evaluating Pirsig's work in relation to Roland Barthes oppositional literary model of the 'readerly' or 'writerly' text."

Hannah then suggests that we take a short break, and I'm quick to agree.

Chapter Three

Literally Zen

"I would suggest that Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance is written in a form Roland Barthes might have termed a 'scriptible' or 'writerly' text. I say this because the reader is not positioned by the author as a passive consumer of the text but as an active producer and co-operative writer of the text." "I was under the impression," says the ventriloquist's dummy, "that when Barthes refers to 'writerly' texts, he is referring to novels such as James Joyce's Finnegans Wake(40), which revolutionise the form and structure of the genre itself. James Joyce uses a unique concoction of portmanteau words and the dreaming stream of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker's interior monologue to cause the reader to create their own interpretation of the text, and therefore, re-writing the text for themselves. Tell me, how do you find it possible to equate Pirsig's, rather familiar, 'chautauqua style' with Barthes definition of the 'writerly' text?"

"I was implying that ZMM, was 'writerly' in terms of its content, in the way it expresses philosophical ideas, as opposed to its style which, as you have pointed out, is not 'writerly' in the way that Joyce's work is. With this said, however, the style Pirsig uses for both ZMM, and Lila is extraordinary in comparison to that of other philosophical texts and although it is written as a novel it is clearly not simply a work of fiction in the traditional sense of this term. If you care to take a look around several book-shops, you'll notice Pirsig's novels in wildly contrasting categories, ranging from the 'occult' and 'new age thinking' to 'maintenance manuals' and

'twentieth century classics'. It would appear as difficult to classify Pirsig's writing as it is to define the concept of 'Quality'."

Men invent responses to Quality, and among these responses is an understanding of what they themselves are. You know something and then the Quality stimulus hits and then you try to define the Quality stimulus, but to define it all you've got to work with is what you know. So your definition is made up of what you know. It has to be. It can't be anything else.(41)

"I suggest that Pirsig's 'writerly', or open style, is an effective technique for questioning the legitimacy of language's claim to uncover 'the truth'. I also feel that it is essential for Pirsig because it allows the individual, secular, one might even say existential, reading of his work which it demands of the reader. Pirsig's 'writerly' approach endeavours to unravel the myth of the 'author' as 'auteur', an omnipotent, 'god-like' entity, who is able to script definitive meanings by claiming a direct route, or rather root, to knowledge via words which are taken to be literally 'the truth of things'."

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was god. . . And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth.(42)

"So what is the opposite of a writerly text?" asked Hannah.

"A 'lisible' or 'readerly' text. Yet, perhaps opposite isn't quite the right word to use because it infers a duality that I feel sure Barthes didn't intend. I think it would be more advantageous to see Barthes' intentions as providing the terms 'readerly' and 'writerly' as two extreme types of text; neither of which could actually exist in reality for the following reasons. The purely 'writerly' text would be unreadable, and for that matter unwritable, because its language would have to exist in a perpetual present to save it from critical closure. In other words, nothing about it could be pinned down and evaluated. It would contain no common ground on which two interpretations could be discussed (at least not in any sense that we would understand today). In the same way, the purely 'readerly' text would perhaps be unreadable in a literary sense, although not unwritable in the form of a shopping list for example."

"The 'readerly' text," says the dummy, "renders the reader inactive causing them to become lazy and leaving them with little or no freedom to interpret the text. They become static consumers of a text which is dictated to the by an author(ity)."

"So if I understand correctly," says Hannah, "Barthes is suggesting that the author of a text which falls mainly on to the 'readerly' extreme, is confirming the elitist notions of the artist as an omnipotent controller over his or her reading herd."

"Perhaps that is putting it a little crudely," I add, "but an element of what you say strikes me as fair comment."

"This concept," continues Hannah, "seems very deeply rooted within our culture. We constantly place the author as the final arbiter of the text, thereby suppressing the proliferation of meaning and individual interpretation that are possible within any composition."

"I suggest that we can also add the voice[s] of Mikhail Bakhtin's 'polyphonic' or 'dialogic', to the description of Pirsig's literary content," I remark. "By polyphonic Bakhtin literally means 'many voiced', indicating a style of novelistic discourse in which several different points of view interact on a more or less equal basis. In both ZMM, and Lila, Pirsig uses several characters whose points

of view conflict with one another to capture and incorporate the diverse selection of opinions that exist on the metaphysical question of Quality. In his *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*(43) Bakhtin contrasts Dostoyevsky's interplay of various characters voices as 'dialogic', against Tolstoy's single viewpoint characterisation, which he sees as 'monologic'."

"Yet, Bakhtin implies that this 'polyphony' occurs when the author rejects the urge to impose a final judgement upon his or her text," expresses the dummy. "Surely in the act of writing philosophy Pirsig is trapped into imposing just such a judgement. Fixed meanings are an inevitable consequence of metaphysical discourse."

"I'm sorry but I can't accept this view."

"Rejection is one thing; explanation quite another," says the simulacrum.

"Bakhtin," I respond, "views language as essentially 'dialogic', a term which he uses to express a belief that every speech act springs from previous utterances and therefore includes within its own voice the discourse of the 'Other'. It is Bakhtin's view that this 'other' manages to penetrate the speakers' consciousness through its words and ideas. This dialogic position differs from the 'monological' which, theoretically at least, attempts to maintain a single homogeneous ideological stance through a conscious process of suppressing any contradictory discourse. Consequently, the 'monological' position strives to repress ambivalence. A short study of Pirsig's work will quickly reveal the dialogic nature of his prose. Take the openness with which he discusses his application of rhetorical language throughout *ZMM* and especially in chapter twenty-nine where Pirsig lays bare his rhetorical agenda."(44)

"I'm still not persuaded by your argument," tenaciously insists the wee dummy.

"I'm in agreement with John Lechte,"(45) I say, "who suggests that. . ."

"Reverting now to the blatant use of rhetoric are we; trying to gain popularity and support by using quotations and explanations from the wise and the famous?" says the puppet.

"At least hear me out," I reply with a wry smile. "Lechte says that '. . .in *The Brothers Karamazov*, not only words create meaning, but also the contextual relationship between these words.' Pirsig chooses to write his philosophical investigation into the metaphysics of Quality, in the form of a novel, why? I suggest it is because even though words can point towards a partial understanding of his concept of Quality, it is the contextual relationship between culture, history words and ideas etc., which positively enlighten the mind."

In my mind, when I look at these fields, I say to [Sylvia,] 'See? . . .See?' and I think she does. I hope later she will see and feel a thing about these prairies I have given up talking to others about; a thing that exists here because everything else does not and can be noticed because other things are absent. She seems so depressed sometimes by the monotony and boredom of her city life, I thought maybe in this endless grass and wind she would see a thing that sometimes comes when monotony and boredom are accepted. It's here, but I have no name for it.(46)

"I suggest that Pirsig both knowingly and skilfully avoids the 'author' within the authoritative, post-enlightened philosophical position; that predominantly Christian, Anglo-American literary style, which perceives the author as the sole arbiter of the meaning within the text through the 'words made flesh'. The result of this 'authoritative' style of literature tends to be closed, static, and frozen in time. Pirsig seeks an approach to language that is more dynamic, open, and

perpetually present. Viewed in these terms the 'writerly', 'dialogic' or 'polyphonic' style has many comparisons to the literature of Zen Buddhism and especially the Zen Koan."

In the distance, the growl of an off road motorcycle gets ever closer to our position on the Downs. "Perhaps," I declare, raising my voice so as to be heard above the engine sound of the fast approaching motorbike, "because of his time spent in the United States Army, serving in Korea(47), or because of his ten years spent living in India studying Oriental Philosophy at Benares Hindu University,(48) Pirsig's writing shows strong, overt and covert, signs of Buddhist influence." "Would I be right in thinking that a Koan is a seemingly non-sense question?" inquires Hannah at the top of her voice, "something like 'the sound of one hand clapping'?"

"The word ko-an," says a young woman who pulls up alongside Hannah and me on her DT Suzuki 250, "literally means 'a public document,'(49) and is as you say a seemingly non-sensical question given to the students of Zen by their teachers, the Zen Buddhist masters." The girl on the motorcycle turns off her engine and takes off her helmet and I'm struck by her uncanny resemblance to Marianne Faithful. "The Koan is given to the Zen student as a subject for meditation or 'Zazen', or its Sanskrit equivalent dhyana, so that the student may open his or her mind to the possibilities of a world outside of the traditional realms of cause and effect. When the student can manage to do this, he or she will move towards a state of consciousness as pure consciousness and obtain a state of mind known as Sartori or Kensho-Godo, illumination or enlightenment. The Koan sets out to violate the postulates of logic thereby emphasising, rather than concealing, the paradoxical elements of existence. This is done in an attempt to awaken the student to the presence of the 'Absolute' or ultimate reality, which can only be appreciated in a realm quite separate from rationality and reason.

"Pirsig," I remark, "quotes from these Koans in each of his novels, but perhaps more than this the whole character of the Koan is perpetuated throughout Pirsig's method of communication. However, on a more specific level, Pirsig uses the Koan entitled 'Joshu's Dog',(50) to indicate the idea that the simplistic binary opposition of a true or false answer is not always sufficient to express the needs of the question."

"This actual Koan, 'Joshu's Dog,' was recorded by the Chinese master Ekai," expresses the motorcycling Buddhist, "who is also known as Mumon. 'Joshu's dog', is taken from one of the classic texts of Zen Buddhism, entitled 'Mu-mon-kan' meaning 'no gate barrier'.(51)

"Around the application of this Koan," I continue, "Pirsig discusses the Japanese word Mu meaning 'no-thing'; he indicates that Mu, like Quality, points outside the process of dualistic discrimination. Mu simply says, 'no class, not yes, not no.' It states that the context of the question is such that a yes or no answer is in error and should not be given. 'Unask the question is what it says.'(52)

The Koan:

Joshu's Dog

A monk asked Joshu, a Chinese Zen master: 'Has your dog Buddha nature or not?'

Joshu answered: 'Mu.'

"Pirsig suggests that Mu becomes appropriate when the context of the question becomes too small for the 'truth' of the answer. When the Zen monk, Joshu, was asked whether his dog has a Buddha nature, he answers Mu, meaning that if he answers either positively or negatively, he would be answering incorrectly. The Buddha nature cannot be captured within the yes or no

answer." "Pirsig adopts a similar position himself in relation to the question 'What is Quality?' He believes the context of the question to be too small for the truth of the answer. However, traditional subject/object metaphysics won't even recognise Quality as a valid question or Mu as a valid answer in response. This situation arises within traditional subject/object metaphysics, because it has bound itself within a straightjacket of etiquette in its attempts to encapsulate knowledge within neat identifiable bundles. It does this by fixing both knowledge and meaning to the limited boundaries of eternal principles such as yes or no, true or false."

"Zen Buddhists," says the young woman, "accept that the universe is ultimately a single, energetic, interdependent entity and that the more we understand ourselves, the more we are able to appreciate that we prevail only in affinity with this entity. Zen Buddhists term this interdependent quality, 'emptiness'; a condition within which all dualities dissolve. Just as the physical elements of our human condition are continuously altering so too are the psychological patterns known as the 'ego'. Zen Buddhists suggest that as the 'ego' dissolves through the search for Sartori, our perception of a frozen duality between subject and object will thaw into a more fluid state of looking at the world. Zen Buddhists describe this unifying situation through statements such as:

'The man sees the mountain, the mountain sees the man.'

"In a similar line taken from the Heart Sutra, which reads: 'Form is emptiness, emptiness is form,' one would be forgiven for thinking that this is little more than a piece of contradictory word play. Another of those esoteric 'Eastern' sentences meaning nothing, yet said to contain the wisdom of the universe. However, if we place our scepticism of 'Eastern' ideas off to one side for one moment, and look at this line in the light of modern science, we will find that in the micro world of quantum physics, atomic forms contain emptiness and emptiness is actually full of atoms and sub-atomic particles. Emptiness cannot therefore be classified as something separate from, or beyond, our existence, it is the relatedness of everything in the universe."

"So what exactly are you getting at?" Hannah inquires.

"Take the doll, that your friend is holding," explains the motorcycle girl, pointing to Jack, my ventriloquist's dummy. "It is both a doll and not a doll, because we can choose to call this particular pattern of atoms at this particular moment by the word doll. In addition, I'm sure that you consider yourself a human being, yet you're also not a human being, but merely a temporary vibrating construction formed by your position in time and space. Zen teaches that our suffering begins when we impose upon this vibrating form of atoms the illusion of self; and then attempt to guard this false sense of self from losing its boundaries to the forces which surround it. Zen suggests that all conflicts arise from the illusion of division and separation in a world that is completely unified and continuous. Enlightenment is the equal recognition of the oneness of all forms and the uniqueness of each form. "The student of Zen Buddhism is always in a sense trying to become a beginner. To experience life as if through the eyes of a child without the weight of accumulated opinions, ideas and the other cultural baggage we acquire as we travel through life. The student seeks what the Zen teachers call 'beginner's mind'. This doesn't mean ignoring cognition, which Buddhists count as the sixth sense, because thought, reflection and meditation enable us to know what is happening directly, the way things are reflected in a clear mirror."

"If we look at the grass with beginner's mind, we simply see the grass. We do not see a particular type of grass or that the grass is a certain shade of green, or that it is shorter than the grass we have growing at home on our front lawn which reminds us that it is about time we got out and cut it. With beginner's mind we simply see the grass. Then because all our senses are liberated we can

harmonise them in unison without distraction. We can become alive to all sorts of things that we would otherwise have failed to perceive. We may even sense that the life in the grass is not that different from our own. At this point, we are reaching a level of perception that the Zen masters call 'intimacy', or 'no separation'. Zen teaches that when we are most aware, there is no feeling of separation between subject and object."

The woman sees the grass the grass sees the woman.

"Beginner's mind is unified mind. It is the practice of being completely involved in whatever you are doing. Imagine that you are priming a canvas or painting a door, beginner's mind will enable you to concentrate on the point under the brush. In this way you will not be blinded by the entire surface, or swamped by the size of the job at hand, which could then leave you feeling defeated before you even begin the task. With beginner's mind you are homed into the here and now." "Pirsig calls this practice of beginner's mind, 'care'."(53)

I think it's important now to tie 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's bound to have some characteristics of Quality.(54)

"Zen practice is for those who don't mind always being at the beginning," continues the young woman on the motorcycle, "because every moment is new, which means that we too are new. We are not separate from the moment."

"Similar to the intuitive moment that I spoke of at the beginning of our conversation Hannah," I remarked.

"Which is?" asked the young motorcyclist.

"Have you seen one of those ambiguous pictures in which one image is seen from one perspective and then from another view a completely different image is seen, yet the two images can never be seen together."

"The duck/rabbit, or face/candle pictures, you mean?"

"Exactly. Well, in the intuitive moment the picture is not seen as either a duck or a rabbit, but as both, yet only in the sense that it is perceived as just so many lines on a two dimensional sheet of paper. A clearer example might be to imagine the situation when Isaac Newton asked, 'Why do apples fall to the ground?' Suddenly in that moment he must have intuitively realised that although apples appear to fall to the ground, what he saw could also be described as the gravitational attraction of each to the other. The apple to the ground and the ground to the apple. Perhaps Isaac Newton had that rare quality to dream of ideas and then remember them while the rest of us dream and in the morning, we forget. Yet, isn't this dreaming and remembering what Buddhists mean by having beginner's mind or what Pirsig would call 'caring'? In the intuitive moment a shoelace, a doll, an apple or a blade of grass can inspire the greatest understanding and the greatest beauty."

Quality is the Buddha. Quality is the scientific reality. Quality is the goal of art. It remains to work these concepts into a practical down-to-earth context, and for this, there is nothing more practical or down-to-earth than what I have been talking about all along - the repair of an old motorcycle.(55)

"In an attempt to further illustrate this Zen concept of beginner's mind, Pirsig introduces the idea of 'stuckness', the mental block that accompanies being physically stumped. Those occasions when you're working to solve a problem, you've tried every possible solution and nothing has worked; then you have to face the fact that you're, 'just plain stuck.

In traditional maintenance this is the worst of all possible moments, so bad that you have avoided even thinking about it. . .[and] the basic fault that underlies the problem of stuckness is traditional rationality's insistence upon 'objectivity,' a doctrine that there is a divided reality of subject and object. For true science to take place, these must be rigidly separate from each other. You are the mechanic. There is the motorcycle. You are forever apart from one another. . . This eternally dualistic subject/ object way of approaching the motorcycle sounds right to us because we're used to it. But it's not right. It's always been an artificial interpretation superimposed on reality. It's never been reality itself. When this duality is completely accepted a certain non-divided relationship between the mechanic and the motorcycle, a craftsmanlike feeling for the work, is destroyed. When traditional rationality divides the world into subjects and objects it shuts out Quality, and when you're really stuck it's Quality, not any subjects and objects, that tells you where you ought to go.'(56) After all it is this stuckness that Zen Buddhists go to so much trouble to induce; through Koans, deep breathing, sitting still and the like. [When] your mind is empty, you have a 'hollow-flexible' attitude of beginner's mind. . . Stuckness shouldn't be avoided. It's the physical predecessor of all real understanding. An ego-less acceptance of stuckness is the key to understanding all of Quality, in mechanical work as in other endeavours.'(57)

"I suggest that Pirsig views 'stuckness' as a prime example of the dynamic interruption that is able to dislodge those static patterns of logic, morality and meaning, that we so often perceive as timeless truths rather than man-made catechisms. The Koan suggests that it is impossible to grasp the essence of Zen within the parameters of dualistic reason. It also indicates to the student the limitations of traditional dualistic rationality by creating a state of extreme inner conflict within the mind. So much so that the pupil goes round and around in an attempt to find a solution to the impossible Koan and eventually reaches a point where stuckness is the only way to describe their predicament." "When 'stuckness' is fully accepted," says the young motorcycle woman, "which could take a life-time, Sartori (the Buddhist term meaning enlightenment) is within reach."

"What Pirsig proposes in each of his novels," I add, "is a challenge to the traditional subject/object reality. He presents us with a dynamic alternative in which relativity and contingency are of greater significance than fixed truths. This he does by presenting Quality as the pre-intellectual awareness that gives rise to the changing form and structure of reality. He is careful to avoid the error of assuming a fixed interpretation of reality, meaning, and knowledge.

With Quality as the central undefined term, reality is, in its essential nature, not static but dynamic. And when you really understand dynamic reality you never get stuck. It has forms but the forms are capable of change. To put it in more concrete terms: If you want to fix a motorcycle, then classical, structured, dualistic subject-object knowledge, although necessary, isn't enough. You have to have some feeling for the quality of the work. You have to have a sense of what's good. This sense you can develop. It's not just 'intuition,' not just unexplained 'skill' or 'talent.' It's the direct result of contact with basic reality, Quality, which dualistic reason has in the past tended to conceal.(58)

"In order to illustrate his desire to move beyond the subject/object divide, Pirsig chooses to write in a style which is not in a traditional form of academic philosophy, but a narrative, or 'philosophy', by which I mean, philosophy as a genre of literature."

"Perhaps," says Jack, "Pirsig writes a narrative and not an academic paper because a novel is more profitable?"

"Cynic," says Hannah.

"When Pirsig's work is viewed as a philo-story," I continue, "it is no different from the myriad of other pieces of literature situated within the so-called Western tradition of thought. Many of the works that we categorise as philosophy can also be seen as fine works of literature and although many of their ideas have been challenged, surpassed and discredited, their prose remains some of the finest and most beautifully written in the whole history of writing. It is also equally possible to consider much poetry and prose as contributing a valuable insight into ontological, epistemological and metaphysical debate. Take the works of Novalis, Coleridge, Jane Austen, and Kafka, as a small but significant example. The literary distinction and division between creative and theoretical writing is rarely as clear cut as we sometimes believe."

Hannah and I say farewell to the young woman on the motorcycle and as we walk off along the track she starts her engine and growls off into the distance.

Chapter Four

A Ghostly Figure In The Landscape.

Hannah begins to amble off along the bank of the river while Martin fumbles with his books and stumbles over his backpack. She looks down into the water and notices how much deeper the river seems now. It is also a little clearer, perhaps because the silt has begun to settle, completely covering the pebbles on the riverbed with a dusky umber veil. Hannah remembers how, when they began the journey the murky water had had to struggle past debris of various shapes and dimensions, at times giving the river the impression of being almost dammed. Yet somehow the water had managed to trickle over, under or around old stained mattresses, rusting shopping trolleys and dustbin liners (that were so full the thin black plastic had formed patterns and profiles that in another environment would have appeared aesthetically pleasing). Hannah imagines that the riverbed that she is now looking at must have been left undisturbed for some considerable time. Perhaps, she thinks, because very few people ever attempt to travel this short distance either to dump their refuse or investigate what might be here.

Hannah is snapped out of her daydream by a knocking sound from behind her. Turning and expecting to see Martin close by, she is surprised to find him still way off down the riverbank. Hannah hurriedly looks around but no one is near. A piece of white oblong card catches her eye; it is pinned to the trunk of a yew tree. Upon it are written the words: 'From the post-man.'

Hannah removes the card and flips it over. On the back, there's a question: 'Ask about the ghostly figure in the landscape.' That's all! Hannah takes a more careful look around but still there appears to be no one, other than Martin, anywhere in sight. Hannah's back begins to tingle as if legions of tiny insects advance down her spine; she shivers.

Eventually Martin catches up to Hannah's position, "Did you just see anyone?" She asks.

"No, not a soul."

As they both begin to walk once more along the side of the river, Hannah's curiosity grows and she feels an inexplicable craving to ask the question from the card.

"You made a reference earlier," she says, in as casual a manner as she can muster, "to a ghostly figure in the landscape; what exactly did you mean by that?"

"I did?"

"You did!"

"I did that's right," remembers Martin, "it was when I was giving a summary of ZMM, right? I said I'd get back to it? Well I suggest that it would be far easier if I start by explaining a little about the character of Phaedrus to begin with; I think you'll see why as I progress, okay?" "As you wish," replies Hannah.

Martin begins by explaining that Phaedrus is the title of a philosophical dialogue composed by the Greek philosopher, Plato. Plato created the character of Phaedrus, a young orator, as a foil for his interpretation of Socrates, who would eventually run intellectual circles around the young Phaedrus during their verbal encounter on the topic of love.(59)

Martin describes how and why Pirsig uses the name Phaedrus as a pseudonym for his narrator's former, insane, self. He gives two main reasons; firstly, it is used as a challenge to Plato's portrayal of Phaedrus as a victim of his own misguided attempts at using rhetoric to give authority to his weak philosophical position. This impressionable young man's opinion is refuted and ultimately defeated by 'Platocrates' superior dialectic method of discovering the 'Truth'. Martin uses the name 'Platocrates' as a way of separating Plato's interpretation of Socrates, from the conflicting accounts of him in the writing of Xenophon.(60) Socrates never wrote down his philosophical meditations and so we have little knowledge of his actual thoughts. "However," Martin is quick to add, "it is thought that he never claimed to have absolute knowledge of things such as truth, goodness and justice. Socrates' celebrated acceptance of his own ignorance is an indication of his own uncertainty and relative scepticism. Plato on the other hand had absolute faith in the certainty of truth, believing them to exist in the super-sensible realities of the ideal forms. What Plato has done is to amalgamate Socrates' method of refutation with his own belief in the Theory of Forms. It is this amalgamation that Martin has termed 'Platocrates'.

Martin concedes that Plato does not portray Phaedrus directly as a Sophist in the same way that he depicts characters such as Gorgias or Protagoras. These two men are shown as professional itinerant teachers of oratory and political skills, whose first priority is in the task of convincing and altering the opinion of others either in law or the affairs of state. In Plato's view, they each have little interest in pursuing what he himself considers the highest moral activity, the search for this Platonic 'Truth'. Plato presents Gorgias as a nihilistic sceptic and Protagoras is portrayed as a person who has become extremely wealthy through his profession. Although Protagoras is depicted as an intelligent person whose reason far exceeds other Sophists, he is still shown to be no match for the debating skills of 'Platocrates'. Phaedrus, on the other hand, is sketched by Plato as a young man with a mediocre knowledge of oratory and rhetorical skills. It is also made clear to the reader that the ideas of which he speaks are not even his own, but those of Lysias, an orator who has just delivered a speech to Phaedrus on the topic of love. The Phaedrus that Plato creates is a rather hollow and two-dimensional characterisation, unlike most of his other creations; he has neither the intelligence nor the experience with which to combat the superior dialectical wisdom of 'Platocrates'.

Martin is convinced that Pirsig appropriates the name Phaedrus in order to claim back recognition for the Sophists and their method of rhetoric.(61) Pirsig recalls that the Sophists, or rhetoricians, were some of the first teachers in the Western world and that Socrates and Plato themselves were often referred to as Sophists. Martin also implies that if there is a division between the persuasive techniques of Plato and the Sophists, then the line is extremely thin.

"And the second reason?" asks Hannah.

"The second reason for Pirsig's use of the name Phaedrus," explains Martin, "is due to its original Greek meaning, which is that of a wolf. In one section of ZMM Pirsig's Phaedrus is so absorbed in thought and meditation he remains for several days without food or proper shelter high up on an isolated mountainside. On one cold morning, Phaedrus comes face to face with a timber wolf. The feral creature appears curious and as they stare into each other's eyes Phaedrus feels a kind of recognition. So much so, that deep within the being of the wolf, Phaedrus begins to see an image of himself."

Hannah suggests that Phaedrus' meditation on the mountain has a striking similarity to Prince Gautama Siddhartha's(62) legendary seven-day meditation under the bodhi tree, which led to his eventual enlightenment. Martin agrees, simply adding that tragically Phaedrus' meditation leads instead to deeper frustration, despair, and an eventual mental breakdown.

Martin continues by indicating that there is a strong and varied intertextual connection between the wolf and humans in literature. He gives examples from Aesop's fables, from fairy tales and even mentions the werewolf of pulp horror fiction. Yet, for Martin, the most noteworthy in connection with Pirsig's writing, is the human/wolf association in the genre of philo-story and in particular the central character of Steppenwolf by Herman Hesse. This poetic novel that is written as a self-portrait, is the study of a man named Harry Haller, whose initials give an indication to the source of this very complex character. Haller feels himself to be half-human and half-wolf, describing himself as 'a wolf of the steppes that has lost its way and strayed into the towns and the life of the herd.'(63) Hesse's novel contains an undercurrent of philosophical connotations and artistic themes that relate to the thoughts and ideas of writers such as Nietzsche, Novalis, and Goethe; three writers, Martin informs Hannah, who have also played an unmistakable part within Pirsig's novels. In a similar way to Pirsig's Phaedrus, Hesse's central character is caught in a conflict between mind and body, spirit and life. And Hesse illustrates this conflict in a simple, yet effective, scene in which Haller quotes a passage from the German Romantic poet Novalis, to his landlady's nephew:

"Most men will not swim before they are able to." Isn't it witty? Naturally, they won't swim! They are born for the solid earth, not for the water. And naturally they won't think. They are made for life, not thought. Yes, and he who thinks, what's more, he who makes thought his business, he may go fa

r in it, but he has bartered the solid earth for the water all the same, and one day he will drown.(64) "And drown," Martin sombrely informs Hannah, "is metaphorically what Phaedrus does. This Faustian view of intellect and knowledge that surrounds Hesse's novel, has so close a relationship to Pirsig's main theme that it is almost impossible to imagine that it has not influenced his work in some way. Yet maybe, and one should not make light of this point, perhaps it was Phaedrus and not Pirsig who read Steppenwolf."

"Now, let us return to that ghostly figure in the landscape," says Martin. He begins by explaining that the existence of Phaedrus as a character in Pirsig's novel is merely hinted at in the early pages

of ZMM, 'It was intended earlier simply to restate some of Phaedrus's ideas,' the narrator explains, 'but to omit him now would be to run from something that should not be run from.'(65)

The dummy begins to laugh, eventually remarking, "That was great literature? It was rather like someone implying that, 'he was as scary as a scary thing.'"

"I concede that 'to run from something that should not be run from' is not a classic line, however the point is relevant all the same, don't you think? Plus there is always the possibility that Pirsig is being humorous or ironic," replies Martin.

"Of course!" says the dummy.

"The hints of Phaedrus's ghostly presence," Martin continues, "come via an unsettling feeling the reader receives from the narrator's language. This to me suggests a troubled mind; as I think you'll see in the passage that I'm about to read to you which contains elements of unease, mystery and paranoia:

Lately there's been a sense of something peculiar about this road, apprehensions about something, as if we were being watched or followed. But there is not a car anywhere ahead, and in the mirror are only John and Sylvia way behind.(66)

Martin goes on to describe how literal illustrations of the landscape, from the very early pages of the novel, enable the reader to experience sensually the atmosphere, life and environment of the American West; its dryness and sparseness are expressed through similar prose. "However," adds Martin, "by the time the reader enters the third chapter of the novel the description of the landscape takes on a new role. One which is strongly linked to the characterisation of Phaedrus, the narrator's former self, who must eventually be confronted in the course of the journey back into the narrator's own past. It soon becomes clear to the reader that the landscape is an integral part of who and what Phaedrus was and is; because he still exists in the narrator's mind, yet only here in dull fragments recalled at random from his 'electro-exorcised' past."

"It was," Martin goes on to inform Hannah, "in this landscape that the narrator last travelled and at that time he was Phaedrus and the man he has now become did not exist. This is why the ghost is situated within the landscape, not because the author has contrived it this way for literary effect, but because Phaedrus, in a very real sense, is a ghost not only within the landscape but also materialising out of it. This next section clearly expresses these points:

It seems huge, overpowering. The prairie here is huge but above it the hugeness of this ominous grey mass ready to descend is frightening. We are travelling at its mercy now. When and where it will come is nothing we can control. All we can do is watch it move in closer and closer.(67)

What Martin observes in this short paragraph is how Pirsig uses repetition; the word 'huge' is employed three times in the first sentence and a half. Martin suggests that Pirsig is applying language which crowds and surrounds the reader with signs which imply fear and anxiety; words such as 'overpowering', 'ominous', 'mass', 'descend', 'frightening' and 'mercy'. Next to these words and among them are indications of the narrator's powerlessness, fragility and impotency when confronted by this apparition; phrases like 'nothing we can control' and 'all we can do is watch.' "Then," says Martin, "there is the sublime, metaphorical, imagery of the 'overpowering, ominous grey mass of storm clouds which descend uncontrollable from above'. This description of a torturous firmament brings to mind the sublimely romantic skies of Turner's paintings.(68)

"Phaedrus is here; we as readers may not be fully aware of it in these early stages of the novel," Martin reminds Hannah, "but when we do learn of his existence the strength of these early passages returns to us and augments our awareness of his dominating presence. As the narrator lies sleeplessly in a hotel room looking out of the window he comments that, 'there is no question about it. Phaedrus saw all of this. What he was doing here I have no idea. Why he came this way, I will probably never know. But he has been here, steered us on to this strange road, has been with us all along. There is no escape.'(69)

Martin now describes how the narrator first discovered Phaedrus when drawing a conclusion from a mysterious series of events that took place many years before the novel was written. The narrator believes he remembers going to a party one Friday night as Phaedrus, where, after talking to everyone too long and too loudly and drinking way too much, he went into a back room to lie down for a while. When he awoke it was daylight and the room was not at all like the one he'd gone to sleep in. His clothes were changed and the room he was in led out, not into a house, but into a hospital corridor. Slowly there grew a body of evidence to argue against the 'drunken party experience.'(70) Was this memory not his own?

The narrator explains that it took him more than a week to work out that everything before his waking up was a dream and everything afterwards was reality. The narrator was now a new personality, his old one, Phaedrus, was dead.

Martin now explains how the narrator coldly and technically describes Phaedrus' fate after he had been committed as insane and destroyed by order of the court. Martin describes how Phaedrus is subjected to the transmission of high voltage alternating current through the lobes of his brain on twenty-eight separate occasions, in a process known technologically as 'Annihilation ECS.' Phaedrus' whole personality is erased without a trace in a faultless act that defines the relationship of Pirsig's narrator to Phaedrus. 'I have never met him.' Says the narrator, 'Never will.'(71)

Martin continues to explain that Phaedrus had seen these roads that the narrator is now travelling along, seen them with the same eyes because he once looked out from behind them. The narrator explains that he often receives strange fragments of thought and memory that are not his own. This feeling, he tells us, is real fear, knowing that there is nowhere that he can run away from Phaedrus, nowhere that he can hide.

Martin describes Phaedrus's descent into madness as resembling a journey into the heart of the Minotaur's cave. Getting deeper and more confused in the darkness of his venture, until finally the safety string, which bound him to the outside world of 'common sense,' snaps without his knowledge. He ventures further into the darkness until eventually, with no way of finding his way back to the comforting light of 'reality,' he is lost.

As the narrator travels across America delivering his Chautauqua to the reader, an increasing number of memories involving Phaedrus begin to flood back to him. Perhaps one of the most poetic of these recollections is of Phaedrus copying out by hand the 2,400 year old Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu.(72) As Phaedrus reads the text, he sees in this ancient work an identical reflection of his own ideas about 'Quality'. As this realisation takes hold, his mind becomes feverishly active and begins to run away from itself. Pirsig writes: '. . .but now the slippage that Phaedrus had felt earlier, the integral parting of his mind, suddenly gathered momentum, as do the rocks at the top of the mountain. Before he could stop it, the sudden accumulated mass of awareness began to grow and grow into an avalanche of thought and awareness out of control. . .Until there was nothing left to stand. No more anything. It all gave way from under him.'(73) Phaedrus then became completely enveloped by insanity, an isolated figure in a threatening landscape, like

Casper David Friedrich's, 'traveller' From the Summit,(74) who stands upon a mountain top looking over a sea of fog. However, says Martin, in Pirsig's version of this scene, the summit upon which the traveller stands is crumbling away from under his feet.

Martin recounts how the narrator's dreams contain obscure flashbacks, memories of white painted rooms, glass doors and dark figures hiding in the shadows. The energies in these dream sequences have a slightly surreal quality about them. Pirsig's language seeks to break down boundaries between the reasonable and the illogical. The author achieves this through the techniques of automatic writing(75) and the juxtaposition of random images, to reveal something of the unconscious workings of Phaedrus's mind.

"This is an old Dadaist technique," says the dummy, "which is about as successful at ridding the author's cerebral censorship, as their Cut-up(76) technique is at ridding the reader's conscious control."

"It has also been used by writers such as William Burroughs in his novel *Naked Lunch* and in Tuli Kupferburg's poem *Greenwich Village of my Dreams*," says Martin. "However I remain reticent about Pirsig's success in using this technique in these dream sequences."

"You say, 'these dream sequences,'" remarks Hannah, "are there several?"

"There are indeed three dream sequences in *ZMM*, each of which gets progressively more detailed," he explains. "It is interesting also to see how the narrator's reaction changes after each dream. In the first sequence, the narrator sees himself standing in a white room, looking at a glass door. On the other side of this door stands Chris. The narrator feels that the explanation of this dream is obviously related to his strained relationship with his young son. At this point he is either unwilling to accept, or is unaware of, the existence of Phaedrus. The morning after this first dream Chris says that his Dad has kept him awake all night talking; the narrator remembers none of this and becomes extremely concerned; especially when he learns that he had told Chris in his sleep that he will meet him at the top of the mountain. How can he, the narrator, meet Chris at the top of the mountain when he is already with Chris? The narrator begins to wonder if he is suffering from temporary memory loss, or if Phaedrus possesses him in his sleep. Will Phaedrus and all his former insanity finally return at the top of the mountain?"

The next two dream sequences are highlighted by the use of Italics. Martin feels that this adds a visual component to the already gothic element of horror and mystery in these passages. "These dreams are easier to place than the first," Martin explains, "because they are linked to the narrator's mental hospital experiences. In the first of these two later dreams,(77) Phaedrus explains to Chris, before he is cut off by the dark figure from the shadows, that he cannot now meet him on the mountain because the mountain has gone, but that he'll meet him at the bottom of the sea. Then the narrator finds himself standing all-alone surrounded by the deserted ruins of a city, which stretches out endlessly in all directions. This would seem to indicate the state of the narrator's mind, as it slowly begins to crumble back into the madness of Phaedrus. At this stage of the novel the narrator is dangerously close to regressing back into his former state of insanity."

"However," continues Martin, "in the third and final dream sequence,(78) the dark figure is no longer threatening, but frightened, and stands cowering in the corner of the white room, pitifully afraid. The narrator grabs this 'loathsome, evil thing' and begins to strangle it, only to find a terrified Chris waking him up. The narrator sees fear, along with tears, in his son's eyes. The oncoming threat of insanity surrounds the narrator; he is near the centre of the Minotaur's cave and is holding only the tinniest thread of string in the tips of his fingers. His is a mind clearly

divided against itself. These are very tense moments indeed and in a rather cryptic passage the reader is thrown even further into turmoil, with Pirsig using several confusing metaphors, such as: 'The we of the truck is upon us.'(79) However, in the depth of this confusion a realisation occurs which indicates that the narrator is slowly reweaving the threads of the string and may now, not only find his way out of the cave, but also pacify and befriend the minotaur. The narrator's reunification with Phaedrus and his son are beginning to materialise. We see in these final passages of the novel Chris rocking and wailing on the ground in complete mental torture; the narrator is completely at a loss for what to do and just at the breaking point of his own near suicidal hopelessness, he begins to speak to Chris with a voice which is not his own. Chris stops rocking and begins to listen:

Everything is all right now, Chris.
That's not my voice.
I haven't forgotten you.
Chris's rocking stops.
How could I forget you?
We'll be together now.
The we of the truck is upon us.
Now get up.

Chris slowly sits up and stares at me. The truck arrives, stops, and the driver looks out to see if we need a ride. I shake my head no and wave on. He nods, puts the truck in gear, and it whines off through the mist again and there is only Chris and me.(80)

The voice is that of Phaedrus, returned to save the sanity of his son and his usurping doppelganger. Yet, this is not the Phaedrus of old, dogmatic, and unrelenting, but one who is reunited with the narrator, creating a balance between the Classic and the Romantic. Perhaps the truck that Phaedrus waves away is a symbol of the institutional system of psychological rehabilitation and shock therapy. Martin admits that he is not altogether sure, but what does become apparent in the final pages of the novel is that when the father explains his hospitalisation to Chris, the facts of which have never been discussed before by them, the boy is relieved of a huge burden. After these events the father and son carry on their journey together, riding now with their motorcycle helmets off. They can feel the air all around them and their heads are free to move naturally. They can finally hear each other's words. Chris stands up on the passenger's foot-pegs and can now see clear ahead. Here the novel ends, leaving the reader with a sense of reconciliation and optimism.

Section Two: Dispositio

Arranging, the second stage of classical rhetoric.

[Chapter Five: Figuratively Zen](#)

[Chapter Six: The Church of Reason](#)

[Chapter Seven: Plato's Phaedrus](#)

Chapter Eight: Lila

Chapter Nine: The Platypus

Chapter Five Figuratively Zen

The power of speech is not the power to command obedience by replacing argument with silence. It is the power to challenge silent obedience by opening argument. The former result can be obtained by force as well as by logos, but the latter can only be achieved by logos, or rather by anti-logos.(81)

Hannah and Martin are strolling along the river path making their way slowly up and across the Downs. Martin occasionally glances at a notebook he hold in his left hand. On his right hand and arm sits a grey haired ventriloquist's dummy named Jack.

Martin: Within each of his two novels, Pirsig openly acknowledges his application of rhetorical language. He refuses to hide the fact that he is using this device as a channel of persuasion.

Hannah: To influence people in this way sounds slightly questionable and against everything that you've implied Pirsig represents. Isn't rhetoric a misuse of language and an abuse of power and position?

Martin: Mu, because Pirsig never uses the persuasive technique of rhetoric to present a definite truth. He views rhetoric as an inherent factor in all forms of communications. To imply that a language can be somehow above rhetoric is to deceive. Signs are not the 'things' they represent; the word 'hippopotamus' is not what a hippopotamus actually is; the word only represents the physical object we call a hippopotamus. A drawing of a wig, or the word wig, is not a hairpiece anyone could wear; it's only a representation of human hair. All forms of communication are for this reason based upon an understanding of the connection between the sign and the object or idea that it represents. Therefore you could write that all language is metaphorical, that it stands for something that it is not.

By the side of the river, sitting on a low mound is a man dressed in a Royal Mail uniform. He's attempting to take off his boot; he pulls at it with both hands, panting. He gives up, exhausted; rests for a short while and tries again. As Hannah and Martin approach, he looks up.

Martin: The word 'Hippopotamus' is a metaphor for a large African Artiodactyla ungulate of aquatic habits, which has very thick skin, short legs, and a large head and muzzle.

Post-Man: Don't forget that even this description you give for a 'hippopotamus' is merely a string of words (signifiers) which are attempting to point towards the concept (signified) of the object (referent). A pointing that is itself trapped within a whole system of ambiguous communications.

Hannah: Excuse me?

Post-Man: Perhaps the referent (the meaning and existence of the objects or ideas) would not exist for us without the metaphors through which we classify and apprehend them. It is also quite probable, from a position that many would claim unthinkingly to be mere linguistic idealism, that the referent has no independent existence at all. Maybe, just maybe, the word 'wig' is not simply a

representation of a representation, as you've implied (sounding rather like Plato when he writes of the mimetic image)(82), but the word is instead all the authority the object can ever possess.

Martin: Even so, the metaphor, let us say for example, 'horse,' when it is either spoken, written, drawn or conceptualised, is not a horse we can ride. Therefore, something physical must exist beyond the word, because people do ride horses, don't they?

Hannah: So the reason I don't ride horses is because their existence as rideable referents is in doubt and I always thought it was because of those annoying flies that buzz around them all day.

The Post-man hands Martin a piece of card that is decorated with the picture of a tree falling in an isolated forest. The dummy begins to read from the card.

"Within the chain of supplements, it was difficult to separate writing from onanism. Those two supplements have in common at least the fact that they are dangerous. They transgress a prohibition and are experienced within culpability. But by the economy of difference, they confirm the interdict they transgress, get around danger, and reserve an expenditure. In spite of them but also thanks to them, we are authorised to see the sun, to deserve the right that keeps us on the surface of the mine."(83)

Hannah: That was very poetic, but what the hell did it mean?

Post-Man: I can't claim to know what this passage actually means because I think meaning and knowledge are part of the problem that this text is attempting to address. However, I presume that the term 'chain of supplements' is Derrida's comment upon the contradictory claim of an entity or concept to maintain its own consummation, completion and sovereignty. Especially, that is, when we consider that it can only ever exist as part of an infinite and unbroken chain of signifiers, which must inevitably contain both additions and insufficiencies. The whole situation is complicated still further when we consider that "the word 'supplement' itself creates problems of conceptual grasp when one attempts to define it(84) . . . The notion of 'supplement' is bound up in a supplementary play of meaning which defies semantic reduction."(85) Yet I see all of this, unlike some critics, as obviously a deliberate ploy on Derrida's part, rather than an oversight. It is his attempt to destabilise those fixed notions of meaning, knowledge, and truth that many believe to exist in the spoken word. Speech is no more a direct line to our consciousness and truth, than any of our other pandemic forms of communication. Speech as Derrida informs us, already contains writing as part of its 'chain of supplements'; it doesn't exist beyond them in a Platonistic, transcendental realm of purity and truth.

In this passage, Derrida links writing with masturbation from a locality that perceives each as illicit and immoral acts in the religious sense. He claims that it is because of these prohibited exertions that pious ordinance and the inevitable homogenising consequences are at the very least brought into question. Derrida makes the subtle claim that it is because of these things and in spite of them that we are able to make relative sense of, and express thoughts about, our existence, - 'We are able to see the sun'. It is also because of and in spite of writing and onanism that we remain as dwellers of and upon this fragile earth, - 'to deserve the light that keeps us on the surface of the mine.'

Martin: These last two references sound very Heideggerian to me.

By the time Martin has finished saying these words the Post-Man has upped and left.

Hannah: These ideas are all very entertaining, from an academic point of view, yet they are not entirely practical are they? Do you think you could manage to get a little less cryptic and a touch more 'down-to-earth,' by explaining the relationship between Pirsig and rhetoric?

Martin: Broadly writing, rhetoric is the art of persuasive discourse. Aristotle once wrote that 'rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever.'(86) Although this definition was written over two thousand years ago, it remains even today as an adequate and general description of rhetoric. However Pirsig, or perhaps I should say his Phaedrus, is not altogether impressed by Aristotle's definition.

Rhetoric is an art, Aristotle began, because it can be reduced to a rational system of order. . . That just left Phaedrus aghast. . .(87)

When Phaedrus dismantled Aristotle's statement that rhetoric was an art because it could be reduced to a rational system of order, he discovered that by this criterion, 'General motors produced pure art, whereas Picasso did not.'(88)

Pirsig describes Phaedrus as a hard working yet appalling student who is as unfair to Aristotle as Aristotle himself had been to his predecessors, the Sophists. Yet, Pirsig explains that both Aristotle and Phaedrus are both poor scholars for the same reason; they have each maligned their opposition because these antagonists' ideas made a serious challenge to their own intended thesis. Phaedrus is outraged by Aristotle's displacement of rhetoric as a mere branch of Practical Science. When he investigates Aristotle's claim further he is horrified to discover that the category of Practical Science is itself only a minor division of Theoretical Science, one of the major categories in Aristotle's hierarchical order.

As a branch of Practical Science [rhetoric] was isolated from any concern with Truth or Good or Beauty, except as devices to throw into an argument. Thus Quality, in Aristotle's system, is totally divorced from rhetoric. This contempt for rhetoric, combined with Aristotle's own atrocious quality of rhetoric, so completely alienated Phaedrus he couldn't read anything Aristotle said without seeking ways to despise it and attack it.(89)

Phaedrus implies that Aristotle's only concern with rhetoric is as a counterpart of dialectic. He begins 'to wonder if 'dialectic' has some special significance for Aristotle which makes it a fulcrum word - one that can shift the balance of an argument, depending upon how it is placed.'(90) Phaedrus explains how Aristotle challenges Plato's belief in the 'dialectic' as the sole method of reaching truth. For Aristotle, there is also the physical or scientific method of observing and arriving at facts. This duality of scientific method aided by dialectical reason is, Phaedrus informs us, fundamental for understanding Aristotle's metaphysics. It is also fundamental for comprehending the fulcrum effect of the term 'dialectic' as well as its assault on rhetoric and its advocates. In Plato's dialogue, Gorgias, rhetoric is portrayed as an object and as such is shown to have parts. These parts have relationships to one another and can therefore be dissected. It is because rhetoric is portrayed as an object, with parts and relationships, that it cannot point to truth, because for Plato the truth is whole, the truth is universal, the truth is one. For Plato, only dialectic can lead to the one; rhetoric is relative and leads us away towards the many. Phaedrus claims that it is these many parts that form the basis of Aristotle's art of rhetoric, a mere secondary branch of science upon the proverbial tree of knowledge.

Phaedrus perceives the dialectic method as 'the usurper, a parvenu, muscling in on all that is Good and seeking to contain it and control it.'(91) He believes that Plato sets out to destroy the Sophists and their rhetorical approach because they stand for relativity and as such they give an

unstable foundation to the future of the human condition. Plato replaces relativity with the certainty of knowledge that only his single unchanging 'truth' can bring. At the end of a monumental struggle, dialectic had pushed the balance of power on to the side of truth. Rhetoric and relativity had been pushed indefinitely into the margins of Western thought. Phaedrus sets out on a crusade to bring rhetoric back into the main stream; he fails. Pirsig, however, although unimpressed with much of Phaedrus's dogma, is sympathetic to his belief in rhetoric and relativity and continues this part of his crusade.

Hannah: So how does he manage to do this?

Martin: Through the application of tropes. An example of this is Pirsig's use of figurative language to present the characters of John and Sylvia Sutherland as a vehicle for familiarising the reader with the dichotomy of binary oppositions. John and Sylvia stand as a representative of the 'romantic mind,' in contrast to the narrator's predominantly 'classic mind.' This type of rhetorical analogy is a literary effect that Pirsig uses creatively to position the reader into a situation where we are able to make complex analytical connections via apparently ordinary and everyday experiences. A definitive response is never offered in this or any other situation; all that is ever provided is a particular position.

Hannah: This sounds like the same thing to me, simply dressed up in fancy words. How is rhetorically offering a position so very different from a definitive response?

Martin: It is different because a definitive response can be obtained by forces as well as by logos, whereas a rhetorical position can only be accepted through logos, or rather through anti-logos.

Hannah: An illustration would be good!

Martin begins to slowly flick through the pages of Pirsig's first novel.

Martin: I'll quote from this section and then explain what I think Pirsig is attempting to say.

Waiting for [John & Sylvia] to get going one morning in their kitchen I noticed the sink faucet was dripping and remembered that it was dripping the last time I was there before and that in fact it had been dripping as long as I could remember . . . John said that he had tried to fix it . . . but it hadn't worked. The presumption left was . . . if you try to fix a faucet and your fixing doesn't work then it's just your lot to live with a dripping faucet.(92)

Now the narrator wonders whether this constantly dripping faucet, week in and week out, will eventually cause the Sutherland's nerves to snap. Then one day, through 'some intuition,' he saw what he felt was Sylvia's suppressed anger at the faulty faucet.

It was the combined dripping of the faucet and the noise of the kids that blew her up. What struck me hard then was that she was not blaming the faucet, and that she was deliberately not blaming the faucet. She wasn't ignoring that faucet at all! She was suppressing anger at the faucet and that goddamned-dripping faucet was just about killing her! But she could not admit the importance of this for some reason.

Why suppress anger at a dripping faucet? I wondered.

Then it patched in with the motorcycle maintenance [the Sutherland's had a block against this sort of maintenance] and one of those light bulbs went on over my head. It's not the motorcycle maintenance, not the dripping faucet. It's all of technology they can't take.(93)

The narrator explains that the reason John and Sylvia motorcycle through the country in the fresh air is to escape technology. They use terms such as 'it' and 'it all' as descriptions of the 'systematic forces that give rise to technology.'(94) They see anything technological as part of this inhuman world and do everything in their power to avoid it.

The narrator is not unsympathetic towards the views of John and Sylvia, but he sees their hatred of technology as self-defeating. The discourse of logic suggests that without technology, standards of living would be rapidly reduced. However, the narrator is quick to add that 'there are human forces stronger than logic,'(95) Herculean forces powerful enough to break the dominance of technology. The reason the narrator gives for seeing this anti-technical stance as self-defeating is that, 'the Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as [it] does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower.'(96)

Hannah: Would you not agree that Pirsig's use of tropes to position the reader towards an 'open' reading of the text is something of an oxymoron?

Martin: Quite possibly, but one I would think is almost impossible to avoid. Pirsig's approach is intended to allow the reader a larger degree of personal and intellectual involvement, and dare I say freedom, as they set out to analyse and interpret the book's meaning for themselves. In the passage that I've just quoted Pirsig nurtures the seeds of his Quality-thesis with the wastewater from the dripping faucet in the hope that these ideas may begin to germinate in the mind of the reader. In this short section Pirsig has bound together both the literal and figurative elements of language into a higher quality signification; and also bound together the classic and romantic oppositions into the higher 'Metaphysics of Quality.'

Hannah: The example you've given would seem to enforce the narrator's position in a much stronger fashion than that of either John or Sylvia Sutherland.

Martin: It does, you're right, but that is the narrator's position; Pirsig isn't suggesting that nobody voice an opinion, just that each opinion is simply that; an opinion, without any superior claim to a legitimacy beyond itself.

Perhaps a better example from the novel is when Pirsig uses his narrator to explain a situation in which John Sutherland's motorcycle handlebars are slipping. The narrator attempts to fix the problem on John's new and expensive BMW, with a shim (a thin flat strip of metal) cut from an old beer can. John is insulted that his friend should attempt to fix his precision machine with a piece of disposable beer can. The narrator explains, humorously, and perhaps slightly cruelly, that the beer can is as good at rectifying this particular problem as a shim imported from Germany out of the private stock of Baron Alfred Krupp, who has had to sell it at great personal sacrifice to himself.

What underlies this passage is that the narrator sees the shim in an intellectual, classic, and what he later calls, 'square' way; whereas John sees the shim in terms of immediate appearance. In his romantic 'hip' understanding it is an old beer can. The narrator perceives the shim for what it means and for what it can do; John sees it for what it was and how it looks.

Essentially both John and the narrator are looking, talking and thinking about the same thing; but they are each coming at it from completely different directions. Pirsig terms this as 'a conflict in visions of reality.'(97)

Hannah: The classic/romantic divide once more?

Jack: What the expression 'a conflict in visions of reality' also implies is the direction from which Pirsig's thoughts are emerging, namely relativism.

Hannah: What makes you say that?

Jack: Relativism is the view that accepted standards of right and good may change radically throughout history and also vary enormously between cultures and individual persons. On the subject of the shim, neither John nor Pirsig's narrator is completely right nor completely wrong; for the simple reason that these terms, right and wrong, are invalid and insufficient in this situation.

Martin: From an aesthetic point of view John could well be right, an old beer can is out of place on a precision built machine. However, on a practical level the narrator has an equally valid claim to be right; the beer can does indeed fulfil the function of a shim as well as anything could. Therefore, what is right and good in each case is relative to each individual position.

The whole of chapter ten in ZMM, is devoted to relativism and relativity. It contains a fascinating quotation by a young Albert Einstein who states that "truth is a function of time" and that, "scientific truth is not good for eternity but is a temporal quantitative entity that can be studied like anything else." As the narrator explains, "To state that [scientific truth is relative] would annihilate the most basic presumption of all science. . . But there it was, the whole history of science, a clear story of continuously new and changing explanations of old facts."(98)

Jack: The phrase 'a conflict in visions of reality' also suggests another connection; one that links Pirsig's work to a movement in philosophy that grew in the United States of America at the turn of the century and came to be known as Pragmatism.

Hannah: What's Pragmatism?

Martin: Pragmatism, in the general sense, rejects the notion of an absolute 'Truth', seeing it instead as 'the name of a property that all true statements share.'(99) The practitioner of Pragmatism is of the opinion that all truths are human and relative and can only be tested by the value of their consequences. In the case of the shim, the conflict is between the different ways in which the two men view the application of the metal from the consumed beer can as a means of fixing a precision machine. Their conflict is not with the idea of the shim itself; their difference of opinion is, as Pirsig says, with their visions of reality. They are separated on either side of a people-made, classic/romantic dilemma. John assesses reality as it appears to him at any particular moment; he sees and discusses things in terms of immediate experience. Whereas the narrator assesses reality in terms of its underlying form, the parts of a motorcycle, the lines and planes, shapes and symbols of a drawing, or the words, sentences and metaphors of literature.

Hannah: So, our individual consciousness perceives the world and truth quite differently to others, due to factors such as, life experience, education, physical abilities and disabilities, beliefs and desires; are you suggesting that it is our communication which robs us of all attempts to experience and express these individual responses to 'reality'? Are we imprisoned within the

limiting forms of pandemic communication systems? Are we entrapped within what I believe you called earlier 'the homogenisation of language?' If I understand you correctly this reminds me of a work of art I saw on TV last week, in which a glass tank is lined from top to bottom with a variety of fish all facing the same way. I think that it's called something like, 'Moving in the same direction for the purpose of communication.'(100)

Martin: There are two points to make here. Firstly, is there an individual response to, and consciousness of, reality that is separate from the pandemic communication system of society, such as language? Our reply to this question will influence our opinion of whether consciousness and thought can exist beyond the boundaries of our given language, or whether our language constructs our ability to cogitate. I imagine that it does, but I don't say this with any scientific conviction. The second point I wish to make follows on from the first and asks 'what of poets and poetic language?' What is their role if it is not to communicate to the rest of us, in a form we can hopefully comprehend, their vision of reality, their personal response to what they see and experience around them? The poet obviously has to work with the means of communication each society has available. Otherwise no one would understand them and their work would end up in a similar fashion to the late unfathomable ramblings of Friedrich Nietzsche. Surely the poet must see part of his or her role as expanding their particular culture's language, supplying new metaphors and recreating the ones that have slipped into the realm of cliché and started to decay. The poet is often the one who swims against the shoal. The symbols and words of a language are like the practical aspects of an engine; and the metal from which the engine is designed and cast is like the sentences each writer creates and moulds. Just as the overall engine is much more than the parts from which it has been assembled, so too is a piece of literature, a painting, a symphony, a bodily gesture, more than the words and letters, lines and colours, sounds and pauses, used within its construction. If we extend this whole idea still further we can also envisage that it is the philosopher's role to work within the pandemic communication system and to express ideas about how they see the world. The philosopher's language is not the world or even a reflection of the world; it is rather the interpretation of the world. The philosopher has no wish to communicate a two-dimensional world of letters on paper. He or she wants to present a multi-dimensional universe of ideas, and in this respect, a philosopher must also be a poet.

Chapter Six

The Church Of Reason

Martin and Hannah are still walking close to the river's edge but the scene is far more wooded now.

Martin: Much as Immanuel Kant claimed that David Hume's writings woke him from his 'dogmatic slumber', so Pirsig's *Phaedrus* ends a long lateral, mental drift after reading F. S. C. Northrop's *The Meeting of East and West*. Northrop's book implies that there is a primary element within Western cultural existence that has led it down a 'theoretical' path. In contrast, the cultural existence of the Orient, Northrop suggests, has followed an 'aesthetic' path. Northrop's supposition is that at a fundamental level Eastern existence has an aesthetic element that has evolved from a multitude of factors such as climate and terrain, language and diet, myth and ritual, taboo and medication. The same, he believes to be the case with Western culture, except that its foundations have given it a 'theoretical' element.

Just as Kant himself admitted that his most important tenets were either explicitly or tacitly in answer to problems raised by David Hume, Pirsig suggests that *Phaedrus*'s ideas about the 'classic' and 'romantic' modes of reality correspond roughly to those of Northrop's 'theoretic' and

'aesthetic.' However, Pirsig is quick to point out that there are major differences between these two ideas. Phaedrus's 'classic reality,' he informs us, is not exclusively theoretical but also has an aesthetic element, just as his 'romantic reality,' although primarily aesthetic, is not completely devoid of theory. Pirsig maintains that Northrop's 'theoretic and aesthetic split is between components of a single world. The classic and romantic split is between two separate worlds.'(101) Pirsig will eventually attempt to unite these separate worlds via his 'Metaphysics of Quality.'

Phaedrus spends two whole weeks in a Seattle hotel room pondering over Northrop's suggestion that much more notice needs to be paid to the 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' out of which theory arose. Phaedrus eventually decides that the path he must take in order to find answers to his frustrated questioning is not a purely scientific one. Instead, he realises that he must choose the steep, winding and often difficult track that will lead him into what he terms the 'high country of the mind.'(102) He returns once more to university; this time not to study science but philosophy.

Hannah: In using this climbing metaphor to describe philosophy as the high country of the mind, is Pirsig, in your view, presenting a general view of philosophy, or is this a more personal view?

Martin: Without wishing to sound contradictory, I'd have to say both. Pirsig is presenting a particular view of metaphysics as a discipline of universals.

Hannah: So, does this 'high country' have one summit or many?

Martin: Mu. Pirsig sees the philosopher's task as investigating the generalities of the human condition as a whole and not the interests of any particular group. However, if the metaphor 'the high country of the mind' suggests a particular version of philosophy, placing metaphysics as the summit of everything that is known thus far, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is meant as an elitist statement. Pirsig is at pains, throughout both novels, to point out that the pathway to the high country of the mind is available to everyone. Yet it is not an easy path and takes a great deal of stamina and discomfort to travel any distance. Moreover, the real drawback in our modern world is that no financial profit can be gained from such a climb. The only profit is an 'austere beauty' that, Pirsig says, makes the hard work worthwhile for the few who undertake the journey.

In the high country of the mind one has to become adjusted to the thinner air of uncertainty, and to the enormous magnitude of questions asked, and to the answers proposed to these questions. The sweep goes on and on and on so obviously much further than the mind can grasp one hesitates even to go near for fear of getting lost in them and never finding one's way out.(103)

Hannah: Pirsig's entry into the world of metaphysical questioning sounds like the journey into the labyrinthine cave of the Minotaur that you mentioned earlier.

Jack: Where did you think that he got the idea?

Martin: I think that you're right Hannah, and in Pirsig's cave one only ever has a short length of thread, 'the sweep goes on and on and on so obviously much further than the mind can grasp.' The limits of this thread Pirsig calls the 'Church of Reason.' To travel beyond this thread and to venture into the darkness is to risk being misunderstood within the Church of Reason; to be labelled a heretic and even to jeopardise one's claim to sanity.

Hannah: Would I be right in assuming that Pirsig presents the Church of Reason as a negative influence upon our understanding of the world?

Martin: I would say that Pirsig sees the Church of Reason as more restrictive than negative. He is particularly interested in the 'corruption and decay within the Church of Reason.'(104) This suggests to me that Pirsig doesn't see the Church of Reason as a corrupting influence in itself, but rather, that by its very existence the Church of Reason is open to corruption. Many of those ordained within the 'Church' have an interest in restricting its growth beyond their beliefs. If reason is unable to transform and expand then all it can ever become is stagnant irrationality. The Church of Reason seems to Pirsig at times, unwilling and perhaps, more worryingly, incapable of listening to that which appears outside of its doctrine. Pirsig is attempting to defend rationality against an immovable god of reason that ordains that it is unforgivable to appear illogical. To stop making sense is to be branded a heretic or lunatic in the eyes of reason's overlord. For doing no more than veering off the customary path of reason, travelling beyond the traditional limits of the 'high country', is to be deemed disrespectful to the holy order who kept a tight rein upon the controls of reason.

The church attitude is simply that the accountability must be to the God of reason, not to the idols of political power. The fact that [Phaedrus] was insulting people was irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of what he was saying and he couldn't ethically be struck down for this. But what they were prepared to strike him down for, ethically and with gusto, was any indication that he wasn't making sense. He could do anything he wanted so long as he justified it in terms of reason. But how the hell do you ever justify, in terms of reason, a refusal to define something? Definitions are the foundation of reason.(105)

Hannah: Many new ideas must appear illogical before the structure of our reason is adjusted to compensate for them. Darwinian evolution, the Copernican revolution and Heisenberg's solution, to name but a few.

Chapter Seven

Plato's Phaedrus

Dialectic, which is the parent of logic, came itself from rhetoric. Rhetoric is in turn the child of the myths and poetry of ancient Greece. That is so historically, and that is so by any application of common sense. The poetry and the myths are a response of a prehistoric people to the universe around them made on the basis of Quality. It is Quality, not dialectic, which is the generator of everything we know.(106)

Martin: According to Plato's 'Theory of Forms,' everything from rocks to rodents and from jugs to justice can only be determined by comparison to their original forms; those super-sensible realities, or patterns, that exist exclusively in the 'world of ideas.'

Hannah: I'm confused, because, if these forms exist outside of time and space, in a higher realm of spiritual reality beyond appearance, how can we know what these forms are like? And how are we to judge the 'copies' of these ideal forms, the ones that do exist in time and space, if we'll never be able to measure them against the ideal forms?

Martin: Plato addresses this rebuke by claiming that every human being goes through a process called 'anamnesis' (recollection or the act of unforgetting). Plato believes that the soul travels

through numerous cycles of life and death, of bodied and disembodied modes of existence. During each of the disembodied states, the soul comes to know the forms; but to its eternal annoyance, and our anxiety, the soul forgets about the forms during re-embodiment. However, through the use of our reason we are slowly able to recall much, if not all, of our disembodied knowledge and depending upon how great an emphasis we place on rational thinking, the closer we get to anamnesis.

Hannah: So I suppose that in Plato's way of looking at existence, we can never discover anything, or learn anything, new; we simply remember and uncover things we've forgotten at birth. That's sad!

Martin: 'Platocrates' second speech in the Phaedrus proclaims that the most brilliantly seen of all the forms is beauty, 'once ours to see in all its brightness.'(107) Plato introduces these words into the mouth of Socrates to introduce his theory of anamnesis. Yet, what is fascinating in the Phaedrus is that Plato is only able to present his ideas about the self-moving human soul, which is striving to reach the heavenly world of pure forms, by using an allegorical myth. This is a severe contradiction of Plato's earlier statements that such poetic techniques are Sophistry when used to explain ideas. It is also interesting and rather surprising to see that within the Phaedrus Platocrates explains that analogy is the only way to define the indefinable.

To describe [the nature of the soul's immortality] as it is would require a long exposition of which only a god is capable; but it is within the power of man to say in shorter compass what it represents.(108)

In Platocrates' analogy, the charioteer represents the rational part of the soul. The winged chariot is the soul itself that is being pulled by two horses. One horse is white and noble, 'his thirst for honour is tempered by restraint and modesty; he is a friend to genuine renown and needs no whip, but is driven simply by the word of command. The other horse is black, surly stubborn and passionate; wantonness and boastfulness are his companions, and he is hairy eared and deaf.'(109)

Pirsig's Phaedrus uses Platocrates' application of the analogy to undermine the assumption that truth is the sole product of the dialectic method which Plato insists will inevitably prove the holiness of reason! He also uses Plato's text to emphasise the point that although Socrates has sworn to the gods to tell the truth, he has previously stated that this description of the soul as a chariot is an analogy. 'Of course it's an analogy,' Pirsig writes. 'Everything is analogy. But the dialecticians don't know that, [but Platocrates knew it because if he] hadn't stated it he wouldn't have been telling the truth.'(110) Pirsig's Phaedrus then uses Platocrates' application of analogy to weaken the philosophy of Aristotle (or more precisely, of the group of critics at the university in Illinois where Phaedrus was studying for his PhD, who became known as the 'Chicago Aristotelians') that the 'dialectic comes before everything else.' Pirsig writes: 'Once it's stated that the dialectic comes before everything else, this statement itself becomes a dialectic entity, subject to dialectic questions. . . What evidence do we have that the dialectic question-and-answer method of arriving at truth comes before everything else? We have none whatsoever. Moreover, when the statement is isolated and itself subject to scrutiny it becomes patently ridiculous. Here is this dialectic, like Newton's law of gravity, just sitting by itself in the middle of nowhere, giving birth to the universe, hey? It's asinine.'(111)

Suddenly as if appearing out of nowhere the Post-Man is standing on the path in front of Martin and Hannah.

Post-Man. May I suggest that this is a relatively pragmatic reading of Plato's text?

Hannah: Can you stop just appearing out of nowhere? It's making me nervous.

Martin: Pragmatic! In what sense?

Post-Man: In that it implies a tamping down of the needs for truth and closure. It portrays these needs as having been brought about by a cultural arrogance that favours simplistic dual oppositions rather than the chaotic complexities of existence. 'From a fully-fledged pragmatist point of view, there is no interesting difference between tables and texts, between protons and poems. To a pragmatist, these are just permanent possibilities for use, thus for redistribution, reinterpretation, and manipulation.'(112)

Martin: There's certainly an affiliation between the Pirsigian 'Metaphysics of Quality' and generalities of Pragmatism but it's not of the 'fully fledged' variety in Rorty's sense of the term. In Pirsig's second novel, *Lila*, he describes a kinship between his work and pragmatist thought. This is most clearly seen in a quotation he uses from William James: 'Truth is one species of good, and not, as is usually supposed, a category distinct from good, and co-ordinate with it. . .The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief.'(113)

Pirsig is sympathetic to pragmatist views, especially in his analysis of Plato's contradictory claims to truth free from fiction and rhetoric. However, I don't see him as a whole-hearted pragmatist, for he has remained a nostalgic Kantian or Heideggerian who has the tendency to take the legitimacy of his own arguments seriously.

Hannah: You say that Plato's writings are contradictory, how and why?

Post-Man: Because Plato deals at great length, in his own fictional dialogues, with the detrimental consequences of fictional representation. He seizes upon literature's tendency to exchange credible myths for the rational pursuit of truth and knowledge, yet his own work makes use of symbolism, allegory and narrative structure. In texts such as the *Phaedrus* and *The Republic*, Plato continually makes assaults upon the artist for his reliance upon what he sees as third rate techniques of mimetic illusion. Yet, at the same time his dialogues are manipulating identical approaches to literary presentation, including fables, metaphors and analogies.(114)

Hannah: You sound as though you're in agreement with Martin.

Post-Man: I think the disagreement between us only arises when Martin refuses to accept the full consequences of pragmatic theory. When he stands upon the escarpment of autonomy in thought and actions, unshackled from the baseless presuppositions of our existence, he is struck with a paralysing fear. It is at this juncture that Martin chooses to pull back and cling once more to an absurd faith in the groundless foundations of that which he himself derides, 'the Church of Reason.' These groundless foundations are what Jean-Francois Lyotard calls 'grand' or 'meta-narratives'; those ostensibly universal, absolute, or ultimate truths that are used to legitimise various political, metaphysical and scientific projects, such as Marxism and Fascism, Platonism and modernism, psychoanalysis and sociology. Lyotard sees no possible ground upon which to place any such arguments, all are fictions and no dialectic truths can grow from these narratives.

Before Martin has a chance to respond the post-man has wandered off again out of sight.

Hannah: Not again! What's he up to now; and how is it that he seems to know so much about your thesis?

Martin: He's just playing games, that's all. I'd much prefer to get back to our discussion of Plato's Phaedrus.

I'd like to take a look at Plato's spurious assumptions that 'there is not nor ever shall be, as the Spartan said, a genuine art of speaking which is divorced from the grasp of truth.'(115) Plato adds to this attack upon the rhetoricians: '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.'(116) However, this entreats the obvious question of how can you ever indisputably know what is 'really right?' Can you literally know what is right; or merely know what is right literally?

As he draws to his conclusion Plato distinguishes the pure spoken word as 'the legitimate brother of written speech,' suggesting that 'the living animated speech of a man with knowledge [is true illuminating wisdom], to which written speech might fairly be called a kind of shadow.'(117)

Hannah: What I don't understand is why Plato is so down on the Sophists? I keep asking myself, what is Plato's real purpose in placing speech over writing and what does Pirsig get out of bringing all of this into question?

Martin: 'Plato's hatred of the rhetoricians was part of a much larger struggle in which the reality of the Good, represented by the Sophists, and the reality of the True, represented by the dialecticians, were engaged in a huge struggle for the future mind of man. Truth won and Good lost, and that is why today we have so little difficulty accepting the reality of truth and so much difficulty accepting the reality of Quality, even though there is no more agreement in one area than the other.'(118) Yet, it would be wrong to assume that Plato's intentions were anything but honourable, even if the eventual implications of his ideas have not been.

Hannah: Surely without the idea of truth, humankind would never have advanced intellectually much beyond the ways of the early ancient Greeks. We'd have no science, technology or collected body of knowledge.

Martin: It is an interesting point but one that is impossible to prove; who could possibly say how things would be today had humankind not sworn an allegiance to absolute truth? What would things be like if we sought to find, in every situation, not what is true but rather what is pragmatic, relative and Good? The pursuit of absolute truth has not brought perfection, but who knows what Quality could have brought or could bring?

Plato, however, has complete faith in the sanctity of truth, and fights for his belief with all his rhetorical skills. He wants it fixed for all time, received from the realm of eternal forms and not derived from our mortal world of change, relativity, and decay.

Jack: I think that it's important to bear in mind that Plato felt alienated from the mortal world after it saw fit to destroy his mentor, the great philosopher, Socrates.(119) Plato idolised Socrates and went on to portray him as the witty epitome of wisdom, knowledge, and truth. Plato believed that the noble Socrates rose so far above those that condemned him to death that he would not accept that their earthly law was all the existence that life contained. The events surrounding Socrates' death profoundly influenced Plato's whole philosophy and led him to believe that wisdom and truth must exist in a realm beyond this world, without all its earthly failings.

Martin: Something that added to Plato's determination to fix truth in a transcendental realm of ideas, was a confrontation that had occurred between the Sophists and several pre-Socratic philosophers whom Pirsig names as The Cosmologists. These Cosmologists sought to establish a universal immortal principle by using analogies from the external world they found all around them. Thales analogy for this universal eternal principle was water. Anaximenes termed it air; Heraclitus labelled it fire and the Pythagoreans (being the first to establish their analogy upon a non-material principle) called it number. Next came the philosophy of Parmenides whose 'Immortal Principle' or 'The One' was, for the first time in history, positioned as something quite separate from appearance and opinion. The importance of this separation and its effects cannot be overstated. 'It's here that the classic mind took leave of its romantic origins.'(120) Pirsig points out that up until this time there had been no such thing as a separation between mind and matter, subject and object, form and substance. These divisions are simply dialectical inventions; fictitious divisions which 'are ghosts, immortal Gods of the modern mythos which appear to us to be real because we are in that mythos. But in reality they are just as much an artistic creation as the anthropomorphic Gods they replace,'(121) concludes Pirsig's narrator.

It is at a time in history when Parmenides' views are spreading throughout the ancient Greek world that a group of philosophers now known as the fifth century Sophists enter the fray. Many of these philosophers hold to views that mark them out as early humanists. This is because they suggest that the humankind has the ability to find a flexible moral position for itself without the need for divinity or divine principles. "Man is the measure of all things" are allegedly the profound words of Protagoras. The Sophists' object was not any single absolute truth, but the improvement of persons. All principles, all truths, are relative, they said.'(122)

On reading back through the history of ideas Pirsig's Phaedrus begins to understand Plato's dislike for the Sophists. He recognises that Plato is using the dialogue form to defend the immortal principle of the Cosmologists against the pragmatic ideas of the Sophists.

Now Plato's hatred of the Sophists makes sense. He and Socrates are defending the immortal principle of the Cosmologists against what they consider to be the decadence of the Sophists. Truth. Knowledge. That which is independent of what anyone thinks about it. The ideal that Socrates died for. The ideal that Greece alone possesses for the first time in the history of the world. It is still a very fragile thing. It can disappear completely. Plato abhors and damns the Sophists without restraint, not because they are low immoral people - there are obviously much lower and more immoral people in Greece he completely ignores. He damns them because they threaten mankind's first beginning grasp of the idea of truth. That's what it is all about.(123)

Hannah: So Plato places speech above writing. Why exactly?

Martin: He considers speech to be a more direct contact with consciousness and therefore identical with reality, knowledge, and truth. Whereas he considers writing (a relatively new development at this stage in Greek cultural life)(124) to be a threat to knowledge and power, portraying it as a second-hand, shadowy imitation of speech. Plato stresses throughout the Phaedrus(125) that because writing can be interpreted in ways that the author had never intended and without the writer being present to defend the work, it is left open to misinterpretation, and is therefore unable, and unfit, to communicate the truth.

Hannah and Martin are stopped in their tracks by the sight of a postcard fixed to a tree. Hannah leans forward but cannot reach the card to remove it because vicious looking brambles surround the base of the tree. Instead she leans forward and begins to read from the card:

Derrida also highlights Plato's debasement of writing by explaining how both the Platonic and Christian traditions consider 'spiritual writing' (a simulated, internal, immediate voice which is presumed to imprint genuine truth and wisdom directly upon the soul without the aid of material instruments) to be free from the ambiguities which face the inferior material script. Derrida suggests that Rousseau repeats this Platonic gesture in his *Essay on the Origin of Language*: where he says that 'to "judge genius" from books is like painting a man's portrait from a corpse.'(126)

Martin: I was going to address the consanguinity between Derrida's and Pirsig's work in a later part of my thesis.

Martin fights his way through the prickly brambles and pulls the post-card indignantly from the tree only to reveal a second post-card beneath the first. Hannah leans forward once more and began to read.

'Man is the measure of all things.' Yes, that's what he is saying about Quality. Man is not the source of all things, as the subjective idealists would say. Nor is he a passive observer of all things, as the objective idealists and materialist would say. The Quality which creates the world emerges as a relationship between man and his experience. He is a participant in the creation of all things. The measure of all things.(127)

Martin: Which leads me, unsurprisingly, back to where I intended to be; which is addressing the problem that Pirsig's *Phaedrus* faces when he attempts to equate the above explanation of the Sophists, as relativists, with the central concept and concern of their teaching which is 'virtue', an ethical absolute.

A resolution to this problem is found by Pirsig's *Phaedrus* in H. D. F. Kitto's *The Greeks*, and is further explained through a reading of two short passages from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In his book professor Kitto suggests that 'what moves the Greek warrior to deeds of heroism, is not a sense of duty as we understand it - duty towards others; it is rather duty towards himself. He strives after that which we translate "virtue", but is in Greek aret?, "excellence" . . . When we meet aret? in Plato, we translate it "virtue" and consequently miss all the flavour of it. "Virtue" in Modern English, is almost an entirely moral word; aret?, on the other hand, is used indifferently in all categories, and simply means excellence.'(128)

Pirsig then explains aret? through a reading of Homer's *Iliad*, which helps to illuminate part of its essence for the twentieth century Western mind. Aret? is seen as a characteristic of Hector, the Trojan leader, who shows no signs of pity as he leaves his heart-broken wife and infant son to their inevitable fate of slavery, while he faces certain death as a warrior in defence of the Holy city of Troy. Hector knows that the Trojans will be defeated by the Achaeans, yet he believes that his wife will in the future be consoled, even in slavery, in the knowledge that her heroic husband 'was the noblest in battle of the horse-taming Trojans.'(129)

Pirsig also quotes a passage by professor Kitto in which he explains at length the attributes of a hero of the *Odyssey*. The passage concludes by explaining that Odysseus 'is in fact an excellent all-rounder; he has surpassing aret?.'

Aret? implies a respect for the wholeness or oneness of life, and a consequent dislike of specialisation. It implies a contempt for efficiency - or rather a much higher idea of efficiency which exists not in one department of life but in life itself.(130)

Pirsig links aret? with Quality and Dharma. 'That is what the Sophists were teaching! Not ethical relativism. Not pristine 'virtue'. But aret?. Excellence. Dharma! Before the church of Reason. Before substance. Before form. Before mind and matter. Before dialectics itself. Quality had been absolute. The first teachers of the Western world were teaching Quality, and the medium they chose was that of rhetoric.'(131)

Hannah: Does Plato mean the same within his use of the term aret?, as Homer does in his portrayal of Odysseus and Hector? And if so, what is the difference between Plato's aret? and Pirsig's Quality?

Martin: Pirsig suggests that Plato usurps aret? by subordinating it to a dialectically determined truth, and attempts to encapsulate aret? by making it a permanent fixed idea, a rigid, immobile immortal Truth. He made aret? the Good, the highest form, the highest idea of all. 'It was subordinate only to truth itself. That was why the Quality that Phaedrus has arrived at seemed so close to Plato's Good. Plato's Good was taken from the rhetoricians. The difference was that Plato's Good was a fixed and eternal and unmoving idea, whereas for the rhetoricians it was not an idea at all. The Good was not a form of reality. It was reality itself, ever changing, ultimately unknowable in any kind of fixed, rigid way.'(132)

Pirsig then moves on to imply that with Aristotle's monumental creation of our modern scientific understanding of reality through 'substance' (that baseless presupposition for his notion of appearance), aret?, as Homer intended it, was buried alive under the man-made foundations of form, identity, difference, and categorisation. For Aristotle the Good becomes merely part of ethics, and rhetoric is reduced to the teaching of decorations and forms of writing. It is reason, logic and knowledge that are Aristotle's major interests, not sophistry and 'empty rhetoric'; those emotional appeals which are without proper subservience to dialectical truth.

Chapter Eight

Lila

Martin: In his second novel Lila (An Inquiry into Morals), written in 1991, Pirsig's narrator sets sail on board a yacht travelling down the Hudson river. He is in a race against the freezing waters of the fast approaching winter, on his way south to Mexico via Florida.

The reader swiftly discovers that Pirsig is taking them on another journey, not as in ZMM, to the 'high country of the mind' on a motorcycle, but through the deep and difficult waters of philosophical exploration upon a boat. The narrator and the reader are each embarking upon a poignant voyage that will attempt to illuminate what we have already discussed as 'The Metaphysics of Quality.' The author once again chooses to investigate an array of complex yet practical problems, this time he revisits and refines the initial ideas that were set out in ZMM.

Pirsig's protagonist, Phaedrus, is older now, and quite a different character from the one we came to know in ZMM. In Lila, Phaedrus is no longer a person in total conflict with himself; he is now a synthesis of his two previous identities. At the conclusion of ZMM, we saw Phaedrus re-emerge from the depths of insanity which had been brought about by a split in his personality. In Lila, we see the continuation of this re-emergence, in that the new Phaedrus contains elements of both the dynamic and creative intellect of ZMM's ghostly Phaedrus, and the controlled introspective philosophising of ZMM's narrator. This psychological cure within Phaedrus is also a representation of the healing process Pirsig suggests for the schizophrenia in Western philosophy itself, the split between the subject of knowledge (the knower) and the object of knowledge (the

known). Pirsig attempts to remedy this rift via his panacea, the so-called, 'Metaphysics of Quality.' Phaedrus's travelling companion on his journey is Lila Blewitt. . .

Jack: Not the subtlest of created surnames, is it!

Martin: Lila Blewitt isn't the subtlest of people, which becomes evident to us as soon as we meet her. Lila and Phaedrus get friendly with one another in a riverside bar when both are drunk and in need of some company. They appear, at face value anyway, to be the complete opposite of one another. Phaedrus is a 'dull old philosopher'; Lila's a sexually aggressive, fun loving person, whose former beauty is a fading memory. Yet, Lila's outgoing disposition disguises her insecure personality within and like the Phaedrus we meet in ZMM she is on the verge of a serious psychological disintegration. In many ways, the character of Lila can be seen, from a Jungian point of view, as Phaedrus' Anima, his soul image. The Anima represents the archetypal, inner image of the opposite sex which exists at the core of our psyche. In Jungian psychology, the Anima has a character that is often the exact opposite of our own outward personality or persona, and this is very true of Lila in relation to Phaedrus.

Another character who also figures prominently in the novel is Richard Rigel, an antagonistic, puritanical, conservative lawyer, and a modern day sophist who is the antithesis of the fifth century Greek variety. Rigel looks down upon Phaedrus and his ideas as a nasty by-product of the promiscuous and 'immoral' attitudes of the nineteen-sixties. Rigel has a travelling companion aboard his boat, a yachts-person named Bill Capella, who is a friendly, unpretentious young man, who plays only a minor role in the novel.

These two names, Capella and Rigel, are intriguing in that they are also the names given to two first magnitude stars. Capella, situated in the northern hemisphere constellation of Auriga, is said to represent an Athenian charioteer; much like the one used by Plato in his analogy of the self-moving human soul on its journey towards the 'world of forms' in his dialogue Phaedrus. Rigel is the name given to a first magnitude star that resides at the foot of Orion, a constellation in the equatorial region of the sky. It representing the hunter of Greek mythology whom is shot through the head in error by his lover Artemis, the sister of Apollo.(133) This myth bears an uncanny resemblance to Richard Rigel's fate at the close of Lila. He is metaphorically shot through the head by his lover through his own self-righteousness. Rigel sails away, at the close of Pirsig's second novel, to a life with the mentally unstable Lila and with a stubborn refusal to accept any ideas that challenge his own rigid Victorian system of moral values.

The name Lila is used in Hindu mythology to represent the creative activity of the Divine. One of the basic recurring themes in Hinduism is that the world is created through the self-sacrifice of God. Sacrifice in the sense of making sacred, whereby God becomes the world, which eventually becomes God again. For Hindus the world is seen as a divine play in which Brahman is the Great Spirit who transforms himself, using magical powers, into the cosmos. Brahman's creative magic is also called 'Maya', which has come to symbolise the psychological state of being under the spell of this magic play. Within 'Maya' one confuses the divine Lila with our perception of the world. Maya doesn't suggest that the world is an illusion, only that the world we create, through empirical knowledge of things, events, structures, and shapes, are merely perceptions of the world and not the world as it is in itself. Maya is the illusion of taking our concept of reality for reality itself.

In the Hindu view of nature all forms are relative, fluid and ever changing Maya, conjured up by the great magician of the divine play. The world of Maya changes continuously, because the divine Lila is a rhythmic, dynamic play.(134)

Hannah: Would that be a good way in which to describe Pirsig's second novel, as one based upon a rhythmic, dynamic play?

Martin: I wouldn't argue with that; Lila is undeniably a 'Pirsigian' text concerning both its content and style. Lila is both witty and relevant; it is peppered with illuminating digressions and meditations on subjects as diverse as sailing, sex, psychology and metaphysics. At times, the novel threatens the established notions and presuppositions of thought by disseminating fixed ideas about values and truth. Lila has many surfaces, some terrifying and insane, others relaxed and reassuring; and as these surfaces shift like the plate-tectonics of the earth's crust, whole continents of thought are altered in the process.

Pirsig uses his central character, Lila, as a vehicle for presenting complex questions in a down-to-earth manner. She is positioned to represent a particular element of late twentieth century existence; a symbol of the effects of constant progression upon the human condition; a pure dynamic without any static latching, an impetuous avalanche tumbling headlong towards insanity. Rigel, on the other hand, represents another, and perhaps polarised, element of our present human condition; he is depicted as a regressive step backward into a Victorian world of utilitarian morality. He is locked into a mental state of inertia without the merest hint of progression, a static representation of cultural extinction. Pirsig attempts to highlight the impasse between these two positions by using a relatively minor anecdote taken from Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*. This anecdotal case history refers to a conflict of morality concerning a Pueblo Indian who lived in Zuni, New Mexico, during the nineteenth century. 'Like the Zen Koan (which also originally meant 'case-history') the anecdote doesn't have any single right answer but rather a number of possible meanings that keep drawing Phaedrus deeper and deeper into the moral situation.'(135)

Benedict's anecdote describes the anti-social behaviour (window peeping and conduct deemed to be immodest) of one particular Pueblo Indian, whose actions eventually lead to his being charged as a witch and punished by the tribe's respected war priest. The accused Indian manages to get a message out to the white government troops. When the Indian is found hanging by his thumbs (the typical Zuni procedure for those charged with witchcraft) the war priest is tried by white laws and imprisoned for what the white culture deemed an offence. However, instead of the anti-social Indian being outcast from the tribe, he is given a position of responsibility. And before his death, he has reached the position of governor and high priest of Zuni. This situation proves to be of enormous benefit to the tribe because of the anti-social Indian's imaginative outlook and dynamic qualities. He enables the tribe to evolve with the changing times and therefore to survive in the New World order in which the white European immigrants are the growing and dominant power in the region. Yet these positions of responsibility, war priest and governor, imposed upon the rebellious Indian, causes him great suffering and unhappiness. They restrict his native endowment, his dynamic anti-authoritarian behaviour; it clips the wings of his desire to be different and free.

Phaedrus' reading of the case history draws out not only an isolated tribal incident but also an event of universal significance. He sees it as an anecdote for the entire human situation. The story is presented by Benedict as a struggle between good and evil. Yet I feel this is far too simplistic a reading; because, as Pirsig suggests, 'which is which?' Who, in this anecdote, stands for good and who represents evil? Phaedrus becomes increasingly interested in the reasons why this unhappy Indian does not simply leave the tribe. And what causes the tribe to make this former voyeur, egotist, witch and torture victim, their governor and priest?

The reasons appear to be that they are each seeking a way through the two extremes of static extinction and dynamic obliteration. 'Phaedrus concludes that the real reason the people of Zuni made the brujo [another name for a shaman, which Pirsig believes fits the situation of the Pueblo Indian much more satisfactorily than Benedict's 'misfit' or 'witch'] governor had to be because [he] had shown [that] he could deal successfully with the one tribe that could so easily wipe them out any time it wanted to. He had real political clout.'(136)

Phaedrus begins to see that several varieties of good and evil are at work within the context of Benedict's anecdote. There are, for instance, the cultural patterns of 'Static Good', as Pirsig terms them. These are the tribal boundaries and values that define the culture for its members and others. They are derived from the fixed laws and traditions that are the essential structure of any culture.

In the Static sense the brujo was very clearly evil to oppose the appointed authorities of his tribe. Suppose everyone did that? The whole Zuni Culture after thousands of years of continuous survival, would collapse into chaos.(137)

And there is also the:

Dynamic Good that is outside of any culture, that cannot be contained by any system of precepts, but has to be continuously rediscovered as a culture evolves. Good and evil are not entirely a matter of tribal custom. If they were, no tribal change would be possible, since custom cannot change custom. There has to be another source of good and evil outside the tribal customs that produce the tribal change.(138)

The brujo was a precursor of deep cultural change and because the tribe found itself in a period of deep transformation many of its people began to see the brujo's ways to be those of a higher Quality than the old priests'. The brujo was an integral part of the tribe's social evolution, and his own personal confrontations were part of the tribe's cultural growth.

After several months of thinking about this situation Phaedrus emerges with two basic divisions for his growing 'Metaphysics of Quality'. The first basic division is Dynamic Quality, 'the pre-intellectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new. It was the moral force that had motivated the brujo of Zuni. It contains no patterns of fixed rewards and punishments. Its only perceived good is freedom and its only perceived evil is static quality.'(139)

The second basic division within the 'Metaphysics of Quality' is, perhaps ironically, static quality, which describes 'any pattern of one-sided fixed values that attempts to contain and kill the ongoing free force of life.'(140) Static quality is the moral force of authority and is a consequence of, and can only be changed by, Dynamic Quality.

These static/Dynamic divisions within the Metaphysics of Quality enable Pirsig to approach such binary opposites as free will versus determinism, mind versus matter and beauty versus truth, by simply ignoring them (he eventually rephrases these traditional oppositions through creating a new vocabulary)(141). He chooses instead to separate the world into patterns of inorganic, biological, social and intellectual value. He then explains that prior to, and beyond these four patterns of value is Dynamic Quality; his Kierkegaardian 'leap' towards versatility, the unconditional trust upon which to form a moral sphere of existence.

In order to illustrate these four patterns of value (inorganic, biological, social and intellectual), it will be necessary at first to appreciate that Pirsig's central concept, the Metaphysics of Quality, of which the four patterns of value are an integral part, cannot be explained in terms of logic. Any attempts to do so are condemned to failure and will sound decidedly absurd, because what constitutes Quality for each individual is unique obviously because each individual is unique. Therefore, no single, universally acceptable definition of Quality can exist because it is not something that can be reified. It is an event.

On the Metaphysics, Pirsig writes:

Metaphysics is that part of philosophy which deals with the nature and structure of reality. It asks such questions as, 'Are the objects we perceive real or illusory? Does the external world exist apart from our consciousness of it? Is reality ultimately reducible to a single underlying substance? If so, is it essentially spiritual or material? Is the universe intelligible and orderly or incomprehensible and chaotic?'(142)

On Quality, he writes:

The central reality. . .that Phaedrus had called Quality in his first book, is not a metaphysical chess piece. . .Quality is indivisible, undefinable and unknowable in the sense that there is a knower and a known, but a metaphysics can be none of these things. A metaphysics must be divisible, definable and knowable, or there isn't any metaphysics. Since a metaphysics is essentially a kind of dialectical definition and since Quality is essentially outside definition, this means the a Metaphysics of Quality is essentially a contradiction in terms, a logical absurdity.(143)

Hannah: So if it's absurd to attempt a definition of Quality through philosophy, why choose this path?

Martin: Because although you can't define Quality via metaphysics, you can come to an appreciation of its many aspects, including what a world would be like without it. Therefore, if you can show that a world without Quality functions abnormally, then you have shown, to some extent, that Quality does exist, whether it's defined or not. Pirsig's narrator then begins subtracting Quality from our description of the world. He describes how in a world stripped of Quality everything from art and poetry, to sports and supermarkets, would disappear and only rationality would remain unchanged.(144)

The world can function without Quality , but life would be so dull as to be hardly worth living. The term worth is a Quality term. Life would just be living without any values or purpose at all. Since the world doesn't function normally when Quality is subtracted, Quality exists, whether it's defined or not.(145)

However, Quality cannot be scientifically defined because it isn't a part of scientific definition; scientific definition is part of Quality.

Does Lila have Quality? It isn't Lila that has Quality; it's Quality that has Lila. She's created by it. She's a cohesion of changing static patterns of this Quality. The words Lila uses, the thoughts she thinks, the values she holds, are the end product of three and a half billion years of the history of the entire world. She's a kind of jungle of evolutionary patterns of value. She doesn't know how they all got there any more than a jungle knows how it came to be.(146)

Pirsig's considerations on the evolving patterns of value are expressed concisely in the line: 'All life is a migration of static patterns of quality towards Dynamic Quality.'(147)

Jack: This line would appear to give Pirsig's whole thesis a teleological bearing.

Martin: I would agree that he appears to break quite dramatically from the traditional subject-object picture of evolution, one that insists that no mechanistic patterns or programs exist to which all life is heading. Yet at no point does Pirsig define an absolute in any sense. There is no absolute goal towards which all life is heading; rather, life is migrating away from the static patterns of absolutism towards the Dynamic. Pirsig suggests that all life via Dynamic Quality is deliberately heading away from mechanistic patterns.

Hannah: Which would suggest that all life is heading towards chaos.

Martin: No! It's not the case that because life isn't structured it must inevitably be chaotic. 'In a metaphysics in which static universal laws are considered fundamental, the idea that life is evolving away from any law doesn't make any sense. It seems to say that all life is heading towards chaos, since chaos is the only alternative to structural patterns that law-bound metaphysics can conceive.'(148)

This traditional interpretation says that if beliefs fail to correspond to that which we think of as 'reality', they must therefore be false. Yet, beliefs, like truths, cannot exist independently of the human mind. Science simply uses people-made sentences to invent a description of the world that will enable us to predict and control what happens. It doesn't, nor can it ever, describe what Kant calls the 'noumenal' world, the world as it is in itself. Science and all of our people-made facts, truths, and beliefs, etc., can only ever describe the 'phenomenal' world, (149) the world as it appears to our intellect and senses. As the Quantum physicist Niels Bohr writes: 'We are suspended in language,'(150) and to paraphrase the American philosopher Richard Rorty, 'A world in itself exists out there, but descriptions of the world do not.'(151) Science creates our reality, and the reality science explains for us is a reality that follows mechanisms and programmes. To fall outside of these mechanisms and programs is to be dismissed as unimportant, irrational, and false. Dynamic Quality cannot be contained by static patterns because it has created them.

Subject/object metaphysics is one interpretation of reality, not reality itself. Therefore, simply because Quality doesn't fit mechanistic laws this doesn't mean that it isn't heading somewhere. And that somewhere, Pirsig suggests, is against these mechanistic laws. 'Naturally there is no mechanism towards which life is heading. Mechanisms are the enemy of life. The more static and unyielding the mechanisms are the more life works to evade them or overcome them.'(152)

Pirsig's metaphysic of Quality is claiming that everything in the universe is an ethical activity. He chooses to divide these ethical activities into four levels of morality: Inorganic, Biological, Social and Intellectual. These four topics leave nothing, that is 'no-thing', out, except Dynamic Quality that is, which cannot be defined. However, the Metaphysics of Quality says something unique about this unoriginal classification. It suggests that these four levels of morality, although having very little to do with one another, conflict, violently at times, with their closest neighbour. Each higher level of morality is built upon the lower level via a process of continuous confrontation.

Hannah: Could you elaborate slightly?

Martin: Okay, here then, very briefly, is an outline, using a shamefully reductionist method, of the four confrontations that exist at the different levels of static moral value:

The first of these levels of morality, Pirsig terms the 'laws of nature', (153) a confrontation in which the inorganic patterns of static value triumph over chaos. Inorganic forces at an atomic and subatomic level choose or prefer, in the language created by the Metaphysics of Quality, to form into regular static patterns, combining into quarks, electrons, neutrons, atoms, molecules, chemicals and much larger compositions. This is so because the Metaphysics of Quality makes a value judgement that it's 'better' for something to exist, and exist in a flexible, yet ordered, state, than it is to be in a constant state of chaos or not to exist at all. 'This definition of 'betterness' - this beginning response to Dynamic quality - is an elementary unit of ethics upon which all right and wrong can be based.' (154) The second level of morality, Pirsig calls the 'laws of the Jungle', whereby biology triumphs over the inorganic forces of starvation and death. An example of this can be seen when the dynamic forces within nature invent, through millennia of evolution, two life-preserving molecules: the static carbon molecular pattern known as protein that protects the dynamic molecular pattern known as DNA. This combination of static and dynamic molecular carbon patterns sustains life allowing it to expand and reach greater levels of versatility and freedom.

The third level of morality, the 'Laws of Justice' are where social patterns triumph over the biological. At this level, the human situation is attempting to assimilate the relevance of evolution, yet at the same time manage to throw it off; to defeat the idea that 'might is always right' and yet find a balance within social boundaries between the private self and the public person. (155)

The final level that Pirsig addresses is that of intellectual morality. 'The Laws of Judgement', the ongoing struggle whereby the patterns of intellect are attempting to control and subordinate the static patterns of society. This Pirsig believes is the major confrontation of the twentieth century and has continuously thrown up one dominating question: 'Are the social patterns of our world going to run our intellectual life, or is our intellectual life going to run the social patterns?' (156)

Chapter Nine The Platypus

Hannah is trying to find a comfortable place to sit on a low branch of a yew tree. Martin is sitting up against the trunk of the tree reading from his notes.

Martin: In attempting to unify the world of objects to the world of values, Pirsig uses two analogies, the first of which is used to explain that his purpose is not to insist that the Metaphysics of Quality is a single exclusive truth. Rather he is suggesting that the subject-object metaphysics, which has been held up as the ultimate reality, is not the only way or the best way of looking at the world. The Metaphysics of Quality prefers instead the highest available intellectual interpretation of things and events that can only then be accepted as a provincial explanation. The analogy that Pirsig uses to explain this situation involves two types of map co-ordinates, 'polar' and 'rectangular'. Pirsig argues that it is as ridiculous to say that the Metaphysics of Quality is false and subject-object metaphysics true, as it is to suggest that rectangular co-ordinates are true and polar co-ordinates false. 'Both', Pirsig writes, 'are simply intellectual patterns for interpreting reality and one can only say that in some circumstances rectangular co-ordinates provide a better, simpler interpretation.' (157)

Hannah: So, what reason does Pirsig give for preferring the Metaphysics of Quality to a subject-object metaphysics?

Martin: His answer is that a 'Metaphysics of Quality can explain subject-object relationships beautifully but', as Phaedrus has discovered in the discourse of anthropology, 'a subject-object metaphysics can't explain values worth a damn.'(158)

Jack: Don't you think that that's a rather sweeping statement?

Martin: I guess so. However, Pirsig does go on to illustrate this position by using the second of the analogies that I mentioned earlier, the platypus analogy.

The inability of conventional subject-object metaphysics to clarify value is an example of what Phaedrus called a Platypus.(159)

The platypus is an animal with broad webbed feet and a duckbill that is found in Australia. It lays eggs and then when the Platypi have hatched the infant suckles from its mother. Following this 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, but it also 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 it is not the platypus that is 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 ours, or rather our system of people-made classification. The Platypus is not a paradox of nature, our classifications are.

The Platypus, as an animal, unwittingly, destabilises the foundations of zoological classification. The Platypus, as an analogy, stands as a metaphor for the destabilisation of all foundations. It shows that a system that claims to encapsulate everything is actually incomplete.

Jack: This Platypus analogy is like Derrida's 'supplĭment', an ambiguous term meaning both addition and replacement. The term becomes contradictory when one considers the problem of how it is that something can be added to that which is already complete. Surely, a system cannot be complete if it requires an addition. The Platypus is a dangerous supplĭment like onanism, because it adds a perverse, solitary, and weakening element to that which is considered 'normal'; in this case zoological categories.

Martin: A new animal classification has now 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. Both of these creatures are marvelled at by Zoologists and are each considered different, when actually their only difference lies in the minds of Zoologist's themselves. Their only difference exists in that they do not conform to human classifications. Indeed Pirsig notes that, 'The real mystery, the real enigma, is how mature, objective, trained scientific observer's can blame their own goof on a poor innocent Platypus.'(160)

Pirsig now 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 we 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.(161)

Hannah: What interests me about this passage, is Pirsig's use of the word 'beautiful'. Is he claiming that a value-centred metaphysics contains more 'beauty' than a subject-object metaphysics? If so, is this because he sees a value centred metaphysics as a more balanced form of reason where nothing is left hanging off to one side, or swept out of sight and ignored?

Martin: Pirsig, I feel, would have us create a new and more malleable process through which to interpret the world; a technique that has as its focal point, harmony and balance. In his view the subject-object model by which we interpret the world has outlived its usefulness and become rigid, brittle and static. The template we are using in order to structure our interpretation of the world has become unbalanced by having 'monster Platypi' inharmoniously tacked on to the outside of its form. Take for instance the relation of mind versus matter, or free will versus determinism, both of which fit so uncomfortably within subject-object metaphysics, that they threaten to bring down the whole unstable edifice. Pirsig is attempting to bring into play a new way of looking at our metaphysical interpretations of the universe. The ageing 'subject-object', metaphors of 'foundations', 'methods', and 'structures' do not fit what Pirsig is suggesting. To imply that all structures require a foundation before they can be built is to look at metaphysics as if it were a construction. This is how subject-object metaphysics has failed to grasp the essence of what it is dealing with. Metaphysics is not a building or a structure; it is a way of understanding our forms of comprehension. Pirsig attempts an understanding that includes, as a categorical imperative, balance and harmony, or, in other words, beauty; a beauty that rejuvenates the old forms of reason into a contingent and vibrantly resourceful discourse. That which guides this human desire for understanding, through harmony and balance is, you've guessed it. . .

Hannah: It wouldn't perhaps be Quality would it?

Martin: It is considered to be the lowest form of wit you know. Anyway, Pirsig explains that the 'Value Platypus' is but the largest of four major Platypi that generates an imbalance within the subject-object metaphysics. The other three are the 'Scientific Reality Platypus,' the 'Causation Platypus' and the 'Substance Platypus'. Each of these Platypi will fall, Pirsig claims, when dealt with by a Value-Centred Metaphysics.

The 'Scientific Reality Platypus', Pirsig informs us, was identified a century ago by the mathematician and astronomer, Henri Poincare, who asked the question: 'Why is the reality most acceptable to science one that no small child can be expected to understand?' Pirsig suggests that Poincare is implying that the majority of people will never understand what the scientists call 'reality'. This is not only because the maths needed to comprehend this scientific reality is far too complex for all but a handful of brilliant minds; but also because there are so many different schools of belief to which no resolution can be found.

Pirsig argues that in a Value-Centred Metaphysics this Scientific Reality Platypus vanishes. He writes, 'Reality, which is value, is understood by every infant. It is a universal starting place of experience that everyone is confronted with all the time. Within a Metaphysics of Quality, science is a set of static intellectual patterns describing this reality, but the patterns are not the reality they describe.'(162)

Jack: This sounds very much like Richard Rorty when he writes,

The traditional picture of the human situation has been one in which human beings are not simply networks of beliefs and desires but rather beings which have those beliefs and desires(163)

If we could ever become reconciled to the idea that most of reality is indifferent to our descriptions of it, and that the human self is created by the use of a vocabulary rather than being adequately or inadequately expressed in a vocabulary, then we should at least have assimilated what was true in the Romantic idea that true is made rather than found.(164)

Martin: The next two major Platypi that Pirsig identifies are those of 'Causation' and 'Substance'. From an empirical point of view, there is no such thing as either Causation or Substance. You can't touch them, see them, or sense them in any way, yet we accept them as part of our lives. Our entire system of logic is based upon cause and effect; it would therefore seem ridiculous to question these concepts because if there is no such thing as Substance what holds the properties of the tree that I'm leaning against in an unchanging state if it is not Substance. However, Pirsig is no friend of rigid customs and what he proposes is that we substitute these 'grand metaphysical illusions' of Causation and Substance with the term 'Value'. Therefore, instead of saying that A causes B, Pirsig recommends that we say B values precondition A. The word 'cause' implies a definite condition, whereas 'value' suggests a preference. The difference is linguistic, but not scientific and if you think about it, this change of terms doesn't effect any scientific facts whatsoever.

Jack: So why bother?

Martin: Because the term 'preference' is more appropriate for modern scientific theory, especially in the area of quantum physics in which particles act in a random manner and appear to prefer certain courses of action. As Pirsig notes, 'an individual particle is not absolutely committed to one predictable behaviour. What appears to be an absolute cause is just a very consistent pattern of preferences. Therefore, when you strike 'cause' from the language and substitute 'value' you are not only replacing an empirically meaningless term with a meaningful one; you are using a term that is more appropriate to actual observation.'(165)

In the case of 'substance' Pirsig's Metaphysics of Quality proposes that we replace this term with the expression 'stable inorganic pattern of value'. Therefore, we could say that what holds the properties of this piece of paper that I'm holding, in an unchanging state, is that the inorganic properties of the paper prefer a stable pattern of values. Although at first this idea may sound absurd, when you begin to think about the absurdity of our present reliance upon 'substance' that lacks any properties at all, you begin to wonder if Pirsig is not actually on to something, and that he may actually have a valid point.

Another advantage of the term 'Value' as a replacement for the terms 'Causation' and 'Substance' is that it allows the user a greater degree of flexibility. We would no longer be restricted by the constraints of scientific facts alone. With the application of the term 'Value', a certain amount of human experience would be included into the scientific and critical process. As Pirsig notes,

Phaedrus saw that the 'value' which directed sub-atomic particles is not identical with the 'value' a human being gives to a painting. But he saw that the two were cousins, and that the exact relationship between them can be defined with precision. Once this definition is complete a huge integration of the humanities and the sciences appears in which platypi fall by the hundreds. Thousands.(166)

A Short Interlude

Hannah springs down from the tree and lands on her feet by Martin's side.

Hannah: Shall we take a walk now? My bum had started to go to sleep up there.

Martin slowly gets to his feet and then stretches. Hannah bends down and picks up a small but beautifully bound leather book, which is lying next to Martin's bag.

Hannah: How did you come by such a beautiful old book?

Martin reaches out for the book as if needing to hold it and smell the earthiness of its binding before he was able to reveal its secrets. Hannah carefully passes Martin the old book.

Martin: Finding this book is where it all started; this was the catalyst that set me off upon my journey along the Pirsigian trail of Quality. I found it here on this path a little over three years ago. I remember it had begun raining and a cold wind was blowing into my face. It was one of those storms that so often appear out of nowhere in fictitious tales. Then suddenly out of the corner of my right eye, I caught sight of a book flapping towards me; I ducked as it whirled over my head, the winds finally pinning it open against a row of bushes. I must have gazed at the book for a couple of seconds in astonishment as it stuck like Velcro to the hedgerow. It didn't have a red leather cover then; just grey soggy cardboard. I bound it myself several days later using the cover from an old book of philosophy. After I had eventually, and very carefully, peeled the book from the hedgerow I discovered that most of its contents had been destroyed. I looked around for the person who might have lost the book, but there was no one about; and to be honest I'd seen no one on Albion Downs all that day. I walked back and shielded myself from the worst of the weather under this old yew tree. I sat down and began to inspect the book and even in its rain-splattered state I could sense Quality. Whoever wrote it did so with all the care that they possessed.

Hannah: So, who did write the book?

Martin shrugs his shoulders

Hannah: You've no idea who wrote it?

Martin: No, it didn't say. Yet, I have a feeling that whoever it was knew both of us Hannah!

Hannah: How can you possibly know that? Does it mention us inside?

Martin: No!

Hannah: Then how can you possibly know who wrote it, unless, of course you wrote it yourself.

Martin: If I did write it I don't remember. However, I think whoever it was placed it upon this path for me to find.

Hannah: You mean the Post-man?

Martin shrugs once more.

Hannah: Let's hear some of it then?

Martin: All right.

After opening the book and running his fist passionately up and down the central crease several times, Martin begins to read,

The Lost Book of Quality

A young woman, so the parable runs, heard about the extraordinary exhibitions of art that stood in the nation's capital. She laboured long and hard for several months to afford herself passage to this place of creation. The young woman was a keen artist herself and although she didn't consider her skills complete she was proud that she rarely went over the lines and always matched the correct colours to the appropriate numbers.

Eventually the day of her excursion arrived and she set off for the city humbly holding her work. On the journey she marvelled at the buildings she saw, at the clothes people wore and envied the inspiration upon which city folk could draw. On arrival in the metropolis she noticed on the side of a wall the artwork that she had foolishly imagined would be hidden away in side a vast hall. She stood in silent admiration, yet believing deep down that her own work shared with this art a kinship of process and imagination.

She is said to have stood there for several days until a boy interrupted her trance by asking her what she thought of his craft. The young woman called him an artist and showered him with honest praise. She then nervously showed him the work that she herself had done. He told her that if he was an artist then she must also be one and with this, the will of the weather washed away all trace of his work.

The boy smiled and took the young woman to an exhibition of art where rooms were built within rooms and on a small and empty wall he placed a piece of the young woman's work. As they stood back to view the picture a crowd began to gather and a voice from behind them questioned, "Do you really think this is art?" An argument broke out between experts who all claimed to know what was best. Some said that the art was the object, while others made claims for the concept. One even maintained that the rest had all lied; he believed that between the two the truth must reside. Leaving these connoisseurs to argue into the night the boy and the young woman took flight; some say in search of a brilliant light, marked with a number and matched to Maya white.

Martin closes the book and places it back into his bag; then both he and Hannah begin once more to walk along the bank.

After a short while they both notice that off to the left leads a long upwardly winding track, by the side of which is a sign marked with the words: To The Sweat & Spirit; after a short hesitation both Hannah and Martin nod in each others' direction, smile and begin to ascend.

Section Three: Elocutio

Style, the third and final stage in the production of classical rhetorical discourse

[Chapter Ten: The Sweat & Spirit: Part 1](#)

[Chapter Eleven: The Sweat & Spirit: Part 2](#)

[Chapter Twelve: The Sweat & Spirit: Part 3](#)

[Chapter Thirteen: The Sweat & Spirit: Part 4](#)

Chapter Ten

The Sweat & Spirit: Part 1

As locations go, the one I presently find myself in just has to be the most bizarre I've ever frequented. I take a sip from my drink, a whiskey in a waxed paper cup adorned with advertisements for forthcoming academic conferences, and begin, a little self-consciously, to look around at the collection of characters with whom I share this extraordinary space. It then occurs to me that some fifteen minutes ago, as I plodded up the steep winding path towards an unfamiliar entrance, I'd considered this place no more anomalous than any other provincial English tavern. Yet, on closer examination, as I trudged slowly and steadily nearer, its whole structure began to strike me as being far from typical. It emerged instead as a visual pastiche of designs in various styles and forms of architectural kitsch. Its roof being a quite remarkable patchwork of unfinished moulded thatch; huge lumps of synthetic material interrupted sporadically by gaping holes containing oak-like joists, supposedly there to give the impression of restoration, wear and age. At one point I even stood on tiptoes and craned my neck so that I might peer around the edge of the building and catch a glimpse of a waxwork thatcher fixed to the roof in bib-and-brace overalls. Then I realised of course, no self respecting synthetic crafts-person would be seen working at this time of day instead; he'd be inside having a non-alcoholic Beer. I saw that a stone wall facade supported the roof and that on either side of the heavily studded Elizabethan doors were the twin glazed, polyvinyl chloride, eyes of the establishment. Hanging next to the 'cast iron' Victorian gas lamps, with their partially concealed wiring, swung a huge white sign inscribed with the words:

THE SWEAT AND SPIRIT

Entering the public bar was like walking into a museum devoted entirely to the history of the public house, its low beams, oak panelling and wooden barrels, standing alongside video game apparatus, fruit machines, a jukebox and a technicoloured Karaoke system. I notice that a smooth and well-worn shove-ha'penny board had been placed upon a western style saloon bar between a large neon bottle of Budweiser(tm) and what looked like a stuffed black cat. High above the bar hung a slender and very dusty glass 'yard/meter of ale' which had had a ten centimetre segment untidily added into its centre section. Assortments of surfaces were dotted about the establishment ranging from archaic wooden benches to chrome legged, Formica(tm) topped tables. And if all of

this blended together like tuna fish and chocolate sauce, nobody else, it seemed to me, took any notice.

On the right hand side of the small bureau where I'm presently sitting, (positioned next to a large gas fire decorated with electrically illuminated pieces of 'fossil' fuel,) stands a neat collection of gold-coated wood-finish, plastic hearth tools. On the wall to my left hangs a framed notice informing its reader that several years previously this building had been used for the purposes of religious worship. Printed beneath the typewritten caption is a black and white photocopied photograph of the aforementioned Church. Reading the caption I discover that this representation has been taken from an original artist's impression of the building that had been carefully reproduced from the words of a poem now sadly lost.

I'm jolted out of my daydreaming by the sudden, yet vague, notion of feeling somewhat uncomfortable. I then realise that I'm sitting directly in the draft created by the door of the pub whenever it swings open. Through the entrance walks a young woman followed by an older looking chap who's carrying a small greenish backpack, which he slides off his shoulder and places on the nearest vacant table. They look as though they are unfamiliar with the layout of the bar; perhaps they too are strangers.

After taking several seconds to catch their breath and gather their thoughts the pair make their way to the bar. They order their drinks and I notice that the young woman appears surprised to recognise the bartender, who is dressed, for some strange reason, in a postman's uniform. He greets them both with a smile, serves them their drinks and then moves along the bar to serve his next customer. The young woman and man then walk back to their table and look decidedly glad to sit down and take the weight off of the feet. Quite a climb, I remember, getting up here.

I take another sip from my drink and become aware of an uncomfortable cacophony that I habitually presume to be emerging from two large black speakers above the bar. I then see what I believe to be the cause of this racket. An ageing hippie decked out in flared jeans and a T-shirt with the faded words 'Haight-Ashbury' on the front is giving it her all upon a small raised platform at the karaoke microphone. She's half reading, half shouting, the words that are flashing before her on a video monitor.

I'm tethered to the logic of Homo sapiens; can't take my eyes from the great salvation of bullshit faith.(167)

I note that an argument sounds as though it is striking up at the bar between an androgynous pair of identical twins and several other members of the pub. As the argument becomes more intense their voices begin to rise.

"Metaphysics, meta-nonsense more like, it's nothing more than a naive collection of unproven and 'meaningless' assertions none of which are necessary for a scientific observation of reality," pronounces the twin who sits soberly upon an orange plastic bar stool. "If you're after a Popper understanding of reality, metaphysics is far too mystical."

"Too mystical? Too logical you mean," reciprocated the second twin while slouching intoxicated upon the bar. "For a suitable understanding of reality metaphysics is too scientific."

"There is no way in which metaphysical statements can be taken as scientific. They're neither a matter of logic, i.e. true by definition a priori, nor are they provided by empirical evidence a posteriori." "So we both agree on this one point," slurred the second twin, "metaphysics is

meaningless! Although our reasons for seeing it as such are quite different. From my point of view metaphysics bears no relationship to reality, indeed, how can it when it is merely names about reality."(168)

"Merely names," exclaims a tall gaunt-looking individual from the far end of the bar, "what is that supposed to mean? You show me a thought that isn't first language, you show me anything that can be perceived without language, in one form or another, and I'll promise to join which ever ridiculous cult it is that you belong too."

"What I'm trying to say," stressed the second twin looking across the pub at the tall thin man who'd just goaded him, "is that metaphysics isn't a pathway to reality, it's a brick wall. When you exercise thought, via language, you can't reach something that's prior to thought because your thinking just carries you away from how things actually are in themselves. By using language you are literally placing yourself in an artificial reality created by that language. A reality as it is 'in itself' is something completely different from our intellectual creation of it. We can only experience intuitively what an 'exterior reality' is like. Through intellect and logic we will only ever come to understand an 'interior reality'; via analytical and rational methods, an 'exterior reality' will always remain for us an impossibility."

The second twin then proceeds to take out a piece of paper from a jacket pocket and scribble something upon it. When the androgynous twin clumsily holds up the piece of paper, it reads, 'WHISKEY.'

"There-you-are," is the legato declaration of the intoxicated twin, "you can have this piece of paper with mere words upon it and I'll have the real McCoy." With this said, (or rather slurred,) the twin first picks up a waxed paper cup and finishes off its contents, and then places it back down upon the bar and gestures to the bartender for a refill. "Mine's a whiskey barkeep, my friend down the end there just wants a word."

"The only word I want right now is 'ridiculous', and the reason I want to hear this is because it describes so aptly all of your babbling on about intuitions and 'interior' and 'exterior' realities. How do you imagine all these so-called 'intuitive feelings' come about if they're not first and foremost constructed through a thought process linked inextricably and primarily to our languages? It is essentially the structure of languages which determines the way we think of the real world. We can't discuss the world or even think of the world without some form of conceptual apparatus; and what provides this apparatus is language. How would you order a Whiskey without language, be it through bodily expression or verbal articulation. And if you insist on pointlessly retelling us that we can only ever know this world as an 'interior world', so be it. 'What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.'"(169)

The second twin laughs momentarily and then begins to slide helplessly along the bar getting lower and lower until agonisingly the knees begin to buckle and the legs slowly give way from underneath the body. Eventually the twin ends up collapsing upon an unyielding, gold coloured radiator that's secured to the wall at the far end of the bar.

Moments later however, the twin is leaping off of the angular object and shouting out unrepeatably expletives, whilst at the same time hopping recklessly around the pub holding the back of the left thigh. Finally the second twin comes to an ungainly stop upon a tabletop near to where I'm sitting.

"That fuckin' radiator just burnt me. Have you got those bleedin' things turned up to boiling point to parch the pallets of your patrons, Barkeep?" "How is it may I ask," says a stout fellow with a Scottish accent, whose lap the twin nearly landed in, "that you're so sure it was the radiator which caused your pain?"

"Because it's bloody hot. You feel it for yourself."

"But that still wouldn't prove that it was the radiator that caused the pain, would it?"

"Excuse me," says the second twin holding his hands out and looking around the pub, "but did I miss the sign above the door on my way in which read, 'reflective-thinkers only'? Have some compassion 'man' I've just melted the flesh off of my left buttock."

"Forgive me; all I was suggesting was that there were important points to be discussed surrounding your misadventure. One of which concerns the causal link that you have implied exists between the heat of the radiator and your pain. I would suggest that if this claim were to be scrutinised in an objective, scientific, manner it would be impossible to prove."

"This isn't some ill-defined, quasi-religious, metaphysical abstraction," rejoins the twin, "this is, or rather was, an actual experience, not just some pointless judgement about an experience. I will even predict with absolute certainty that if you sit on that radiator, right now, your system of nerve endings will send electrical impulses to the synapses in your brain informing you that the outer layers of your defence system, your flesh, is melting. Which should in turn tell you to get the hell off the radiator. I will even predict that this experience is verifiable by anyone, with an operational nervous system, either daft enough, or curious enough, to reproduce the experiment. Pain is caused by hot or sharp implements coming into contact with our flesh; it is an inevitable part of our present human condition."

"The problem here is that you're under the distinct illusion that you can prove your experiences by demonstrating the truth of the things you believe in. You can't; those beliefs that you hold on to so tightly are simply habits that you have formed and become so accustomed to, that now you accept these habits as facts. Just because we experience the same sequence of events on countless occasions does not by itself reveal something that we didn't already notice on the first occasion, specifically the causal link. However, what it does expose is the workings of our minds in an extraordinary way; it sheds light upon how we form habits from our experiences. In the particular case in question, we believe almost without question that the hot radiator will burn us when we sit upon it."

"Surely that's a good thing," says the young woman who'd recently entered the pub, "the alternative is that we'd be forever injuring ourselves. If we hadn't learnt from our mistakes and from cause and effect we would have remained forever as ignorant as cave-people."

"From a pragmatic point of view obviously I agree with you; but we are talking here about the causal link that this person," replies the stout Scotsman nodding in the direction of the second twin, "was implying exists between the radiator and the experience of pain. I can see the radiator and I also saw a reaction to sitting upon it, but I challenge anyone to show me this third entity called 'cause' which is supposedly operating between our friends' discomfort, and this, 'Ouch', hot radiator."

"So how do you account for cause and effect?" Asks the chap with the greenish backpack.

"Because we are constantly experiencing connections between events, such as the production of pain from sitting on hot radiators, we come to expect one of the pair to put us in mind of the other; effect to bring forth a cause or cause to have had an effect. Eventually through a habit of the mind, developed through experience, we come to say that sitting on a hot radiator must produce pain. However, we mistakenly cast this habit as an eternal effect of the world around us, rather than as an inference which expects things to happen in the future as they have happened in the past." "Are you implying, therefore, that cause and effect, and radiators and pain, exist only in the mind?" Inquires the second twin.

"What I'm suggesting," replies the Scotsman, "is that when you burnt yourself upon the hot radiator, you received an immediate impression; after which you became aware that you had burnt yourself and formed an idea of that event. However, an impression is more forceful and more vigorous than your reflective memory of that impression. It is the impression that is the direct cause of the idea created in the mind. Impressions form ideas but ideas do not form impressions."

I began to feel slightly nauseous and become aware that a discomfiting and distracting sound is being inflicted upon my eardrums; then I realise that the karaoke system has been activated once more.

When I was back in seminary school there was a man there who put forward the proposition that you could petition the lord with prayer. That you could petition the lord with prayer.

You cannot petition the lord with prayer!(170)

"You're arguing that our idea of causality is gathered ultimately from the sensory experience that we receive from regularly connected events," says a fellow whose voice has a heavy German accent and who is wearing a white legal wig. "I would turn this idea around and argue that we have to have the concept of causality in order to have any objective experience. Your radical empiricist claim that sense experience is the source of our beliefs is, I grant you, an attractive one; but I cannot accept the sceptical conclusion that these beliefs cannot be justified. Empiricism explains how sensations enable us to perceive matter, but I suggest that instead of knowledge conforming to objects, it is objects which conform to our knowledge. Although knowledge begins with experience it doesn't necessarily follow that it arises out of experience. There are aspects of reality which are not supplied immediately by the senses. These take place through our pure forms of intuition, such as time and space, which are in the mind a priori and ultimately form our opinion of what our knowledge of reality is. It is our modes of knowing which are universal."

Straight in front of me on the TV monitor that is fixed to an oak beam near the ceiling, I begin to read the prompt words that slide along the bottom of the screen under a white bouncing ball. It seems that for no apparent reason the karaoke machine has just kicked into gear, yet I appear to be the only one to notice.

Unless we apply the concepts of space and time to the impressions we receive, the world is unintelligible, just a kaleidoscopic jumble of colours and patterns and noises and smells and pains and tastes without meaning. We sense objects in a certain way because of our applications of a priori intuitions such as space and time, but we do not create these objects out of our imagination, as pure philosophical idealists would maintain. The forms of space and time are applied to data as they are received from the object producing them. The a priori concepts are neither caused by the sensed object nor bring it into being, but provide a kind of screening function for what sense data we will accept. When our eyes blink, for example, our sense data tells us that the world has

disappeared. But this is screened out and never gets to our consciousness because we have in our minds an a priori concept that the world has continuity. What we think of as reality is a continuous synthesis of elements from a fixed hierarchy of a priori concepts and the ever-changing data of the senses.(171)

At the same time as the bouncing ball makes its jocosely way along the sliding words at the base of the TV screen, the bartender responds to the man in the white wig. "Your main problem, it would appear, is that neither time nor space are present in themselves, they have no empirical reality. This, therefore, produces an unbridgeable gap between the so-called noumenal world of 'things in themselves' and our phenomenal world of objects and ideas translated through languages and the like. What you're proposing ultimately relies upon some invention of faith for acceptability, and surely this resorting to faith is an unacceptable way of resolving this type of dilemma."

I find myself itching to respond to this rejection of faith, yet before I've a chance to speak the second twin jumps in.

"In what you're saying proof becomes your only concern; it is logic itself which has become your all conquering faith."

"Where did you get that idea from? I don't remember mentioning either logic or proof," says the bartender.

"You may not have mentioned them by name but they lurk behind every sentence you utter."

"I'd suggest," intervenes a middle aged man, who is placing a small book with the name Lao Tzu on the cover into his motorcycle helmet, "that the first problem of empiricism, if empiricism is believed, concerns the nature of 'substance'. What exactly is this substance which is supposed to give off the sensory data?"(172)

"There is no evidence for the existence of any substance, just as there is no evidence for causality," says the stout Scot. "Substance, like causality, is just something we imagine when one thing repeatedly follows another. Substance has no real existence in the world we observe. Causation, nature, and substance are all creations of the human imagination."

"Are you saying, in effect," says the young woman, "that everything I experience, let us say for instance this table, comes to me through my senses alone?"

"It has to be, there is no other way."

"So I cannot even say that this table's legs are made from a hard, shiny, cold-to-touch substance called metal?" questions the young woman. "That you can't lass," replies the Scotsman, "because the descriptions you've given, such as hard and shiny, are all sensations. Explain to me what this substance is without referring to sensations."

The young woman thought for a moment and then made to say something but checked back. She thought for a moment more and once again she made to answer but no words came out. Eventually she sighed and shook her head.

"I have to admit that I'm stuck. Yet, if there is no substance, what are we left to say about the sense data we receive? If I hold my head to the left and look down at the table I get one pattern of sense data. If I move my head to the right I get a slightly different pattern of sense data. The two

views are different. The angles of the plains and curves of the material are different. The light strikes them differently. If there's no logical basis for substance then there is no logical basis for concluding that what's producing these two separate views is the same table."

In the background the Karaoke plays on:

Whatever gets you through the night,

It's all right(173)

"All I can add," says the Scotsman after taking a sip from his drink, "is that you cannot say for certain that these different patterns of sense data are the same table. You can have no absolute proof for this statement. The floor which the table appears to be standing on is as much a part of the equation as the table itself. Yet you have not mentioned the plains, angles, and curves made by these materials; you have simply defined the table as a separate category from the rest of the sense data you receive. This is a cultural habit of your imagination, not a product of the world."

"Surely reason is supposed to make life more intelligible," says the young woman, "not more confusing. What would be the point of that?" "Thus reason is defeating its own purpose and must be re-structured," states the man in the white wig. "The fact that there is no immediate sensing of a table as distinguished from the colours and shapes of all the other objects in existence, is no proof that there's no table there. We have in our minds a priori tables, which have continuity in time and space and are capable of changing appearance as one moves one's head from side to side. Therefore the belief in the existence of a consistent table is not contradicted by the multitude of sense-data one receives."

"Those so called a priori concepts of the mind, such as time and space," says the Bartender, "are habits we form from experience, they are not an intrinsic property of the world. An infant child has no concept of time and space and is only considered intelligent and reasonable when it finally copies our habits of assigning these created values to experience."

"Yet we are those people who have in our minds a priori tables whose existence we have little reason to doubt and whose reality can be confirmed any time."

"The sense data you receive confirms the existence of the table but the sense data isn't the table," says the Man with the motorcycle helmet. "The table that I believe in an a priori way to be outside of myself is like the cessation of light I believe to occur whenever I close the door of my fridge. I suppose that I could climb inside my fridge to investigate if indeed the light does go out when the door is shut. However, I feel my scientific curiosity would wonder what would happen the next time I shut the door of the fridge while I was standing outside. So, instead of following this paranoid pattern of behaviour, I remain satisfied in the belief that the fridge light does indeed go out whenever I close the door. I place faith(174) in the workings of electrical switches. Correspondingly, even though my sense data has never produced or detected anything that could be called 'substance' I'm satisfied that there is a capacity within the sense data which matches the a priori table in my mind."

"However, getting back to the situation concerning the hot radiator and the question of causality; I should like to suggest that when a person of any philosophical persuasion jumps off a hot [radiator] it is not because of an idea or impression but because they are in an undeniably low quality situation. 'Later that person may generate some oath to describe this low value, but the value will always come first, the oath second. Without the primary low valuation, the secondary

oaths will not follow. Our stream of cultural consciousness teaches us to think it is the hot radiator that directly causes the oaths. It teaches that the low values are a property of the person uttering the oaths. Not so. The value is between the [radiator] and the oaths. Between the subject and the object lies the value. The value is more immediate, more directly sensed than any 'self' or any 'object' to which it might be later assigned. It is more real than the [radiator]. Whether the [radiator] is the cause of the low quality or whether possibly something else is the cause is not yet absolutely certain. But that the quality is low is absolutely certain. It is the primary empirical reality from which such things as radiators and heat and oaths and self are later intellectually constructed. Once this primary relationship is cleared up an awful lot of mysteries get solved. The reason values seem so woolly-headed to empiricists is that empiricists keep trying to assign them to subjects and objects. You can't do it. You get all mixed up because values don't belong to either group. They're in a separate category all of their own."(175)

"This suggested hierarchy within your concept of 'Quality', causes me a problem," declares the Bartender. "I'm left wondering who it is that legitimises that which is to be considered high or low Quality. If it's the individual who postulates this entity does this imply that it's subjective, and to all intents and purposes, meaningless to all but the particular person who suggests it at that particular moment? Are you perhaps claiming that Quality is a universal predicate? If so, you would appear to be claiming a god-like status for your own capacity to define what Quality is for all people and all matter at all times in the universe. Or does everything hinge upon Quality being read as a transcendental signifier, a meaning existing beyond everything in the entire universe? Or are we once again confronted by the dubious placement of faith within the gaps of a weak argument?" "Why are you so hostile towards faith?" I remark, unable to hold myself back any longer, "we must all have a level of faith in our lives in order to be able to function."

"That's complete nonsensical, religious bollocks, that is!" booms a disembodied voice from behind the toilet door.

"Even atheists," I reply, somewhat fearful of the response, "must place faith in the belief that the floor will be there when they put their feet out of bed in the morning. For all we know there could be an endless chasm of darkness beneath our feet but we have faith in the knowledge that the floor will be there. We cannot know for certain that the floor will be there simply because it was there when we went to bed, because the sceptical empiricist views expressed already have shown us the fallibility of cause, effect and habits."

"I've no problem with laying faith upon the relative continuity of the world," declares the Bartender, "but I do have doubts about the religious connotations linked to the word faith."

The second twin is just about to re-enter the discussion when the door of the pub swings open and a man rushes in complaining that he has been robbed. He begins to fumble around in his jacket pocket and eventually brings out a battered leather wallet. He opens it and holds it out to reveal its rather healthy contents to the clientele of the establishment. The members of the pub, including me, look a little unsure as to our expected response. The man then claims that everything that he owns has been taken and replaced with identical replicas.

There is a short stunned silence until the Bartender asks, with a distinct lack of tact, "so, what difference does it make?"

"Sorry?"

"I said, what difference does it make? You've still got your money, right?"

"It's not just my money, my wife has also been taken," explains the alleged victim, "my children, my car and also my house have all been stolen and replaced with identical replicas."

"How are you so sure that they're replicas?" asks the young woman.

"It's the little things that gave it away at first; like the way my wife used to fix her hair, the colloquialisms my kids used to use, and the change in the ride and handling of my car. They've all changed."

"Forgive me, but I still don't understand what difference it makes." repeats the Bartender. "If they look the same then surely they must be the same; the alternatives are just too weird to be a possibility. All that can have happened is that they've simply changed their behavioural patterns, or perhaps it is you that has changed, or something about you?"

"Can't you understand; my life is shattered? Everything has altered so much that to everyone else things appear the same," blurts out this man who is now shaking and close to breaking point. He places his wallet awkwardly back into his jacket pocket and backs out of the pub with his head bowed low and is soon gone, leaving the whole place in complete silence.

Chapter Eleven **The Sweat & Spirit: Part 2**

A sound strikes up from a large black speaker above the bar breaking the silence and causing my nerves to sting the surface of my skin in a thousand different places. I look around and see that a man has taken hold of the microphone and is wailing the words from the TV monitor:

We are stardust we are golden.
And we've got to make our way back to the garden.(176)

"Did a guy just burst in here claiming to have had his whole life replaced with an identical reproduction, or did I just imagine that?" asks the Bartender, chuckling to himself. "Or perhaps he was a ghost?"

"That's complete paranormal psychobabble,"

It's that disembodied voice behind the toilet door, once more.

"All that garbage about ghosts and spirits is for primitive cultures."

"Somebody's irony bypass operation went well," says the bartender in a low voice.

"Modern man has his ghosts and spirits too," says the motorcyclist. "The laws of physics and of logic . . .the number system . . . and the principles of algebraic substitution. These are ghosts. We just believe in them so thoroughly they seem real.(177) We must therefore come to terms with the idea that it is the ghosts of rationality which underpin all of modern science, technology and society."

"In what way?" enquires the young woman.

"One could take Isaac Newton's 17th century discovery of gravitation as an example(178), but the trust of this debate works just as well on any of our generally held modern beliefs, including the relatively modern tenet of Werner Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle'."

"Which is?" questioned the Scotsman.

"The belief that it is impossible to know simultaneously both the momentum (mass times velocity) and the position, of a sub-atomic particle with absolute certainty. In the words of Stephen Hawking, "the more accurately you try to measure the position of a particle, the less accurately you can measure its speed and vice versa."(179)

"The harder we try to pin down answers the more they will elude us," says an American woman sitting at the far end of the bar mixing a strange cocktail of liquids together. "We must, therefore, content ourselves with partial truths and ambiguities."(180)

"Exactly," says the motorcyclist, "and when Heisenberg's uncertainty principle was applied to the hydrogen atom, it became inherently impossible to know simultaneously both the precise location and precise velocity of the electron particle because when measuring its position photons were reflected from the electron, therefore, altering its momentum. Thus, it was no longer appropriate to imagine the electron circling the nucleus in well-defined orbits.(181) In the 1920s, this observation led to the new theories of 'quantum mechanics'(182) which brought randomness and unpredictability into the realm of science. Today quantum theory underlines nearly all of modern physics and technology and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is, as Hawking says, "an inescapable property of the world."(183) Therefore, does it not seem logical enough to presume that the uncertainty principle existed long before Heisenberg illuminated it?"

"Yes, that would seem fair enough," answers the guy with the green backpack.

"So when did this principle of uncertainty begin? Has it always existed?"

"I would have thought so, yes!"

"Then the uncertainty principle existed before science was invented by men and women; before the existence of our world, before the primal generation of anything, it existed? With 'no energy of its own, not in anyone's mind because there wasn't anyone, not in space because there was no space either.'(184) If this is the case then I must ask what a thing has to do to be non-existent, because before the beginning of the earth the uncertainty principle had no scientific attributes of existence yet it is 'common sense' to believe that it did exist."

"You're suggesting that the uncertainty principle only came into existence when Heisenberg invented it," says the young woman. "There's no other conclusion that makes sense. The uncertainty principle does not exist anywhere except in the minds of people. 'It's a ghost!' and like ghosts, science too is only in the mind."

"Why would the simultaneous measurement of particles have any relevance for the universe at large?" says the bartender. "These measurements only have relevance for a species who wants desperately to encapsulate and control the world within its own mind."

"Perhaps you are right, yet it is the word 'only' which bothers me, because everything exists only in the mind and surely this doesn't make it necessarily bad."

Again, I see the white ball bounce across the top of the words on the TV monitor,

Laws of nature are human inventions, like ghosts. Laws of logic, of mathematics are also human inventions like ghosts. The whole blessed thing is a human invention, including the idea that it isn't a human invention. The world has no existence whatsoever outside of the human imagination. It's run by ghosts. We see what we see because these ghosts show it to us, ghosts of Moses and Christ and the Buddha, and Plato, and Descartes, and Rousseau . . . Your common sense is nothing more than the voices of thousands and thousands of these ghosts from the past. Ghosts and more ghosts. Ghosts trying to find their place among the living.(185)

"In order to tie these ideas down to something more specific," continues the motorcycle man, "we must understand that the concept worked out in shapes of wood and steel that we call tables, are primarily mental phenomena. Steel can be made to fit any shape and all steel shapes come out of someone's mind. Even the concept of steel itself comes out of someone's mind. Nature gives us the potential for steel, but even potential 'only' exists in the mind."

"I still feel a little uncomfortable with the term ghosts," says the young woman, "it sounds so, paranormal."

"Quantum physicists of the 'Zen variety'(186) believe in them along with other phenomena possibly explained by the 'holographic paradigm'," says the American woman who is sitting at the far end of the bar. "A hologram, as you probably know, is a film showing nothing but overlapping concentric circles which when light hits its surface presents a three-dimensional image. However, a hologram's strangest property is that it can be cut up into any number of pieces, all of which, will reproduce the entire image. This indicates that the information is everywhere on the film simultaneously. It is called the 'Principle of non-locality'(187) and scientists are now observing this phenomenon almost everywhere, especially at the quantum or subatomic level where location seemingly ceases to exist."

"Is it true that the results of quantum experiments are actually effected by the presence or absence of observers?" asks the young woman. "Yes, this phenomena is named after me," says the cat that had been lying dormant upon the bar since I'd entered the pub. "You're alive!" says the Bartender, only to see the cat roll over with its feet in the air.

"It could be the case," continues the American physicist, "that all the sub-atomic particles in existence are interconnected forming a single universal, non-local consciousness of which any one piece contains all the information of the universe. Just as any living cell contains all the genetic information necessary to clone an entirely new organism."

"As fascinating as all of this is," says the first twin, "how, may I ask, does this explain ghosts?"

"One could argue that if a universal consciousness is non-local and everywhere at once, it must be all around us all of the time. Yet it becomes known to us only when a new child is born, whereupon a part of consciousness enters and animates the child."

"So, this non-local consciousness is similar to radio waves which are all around us all of the time but only become known when the radio is switched on?" questions the rambler with the backpack, who slowly gets to his feet and walks to the bar.

"Close enough."

"And the so-called collective consciousness is composed of separate identities - ghosts - akin to different radio stations?"

"Yes, with each person's life energy or 'soul' returning to the omniconsciousness upon death, there to await the birth of another child." "Reincarnation?"

"More of the Zen variety I mentioned earlier."

When I had my loft
Converted back into a loft
The neighbours came around and scoffed
And called me retro.(188)

"If no stable foundations can ever be arrived at because the truth is always suspended between differing versions, or deferred by other interpretations," says the first twin, "then there is no implicit stance or final conclusion which can be made in favour of, or against, any discourse." "And your point being, what exactly?" questions the Bartender.

"That this nihilistic position leads to a view of 'the text' as incomprehensible. One could not even say for sure anymore that two and two equals four." I hear a cough that comes from the direction of a gentleman dressed all in black and sporting a large bushy moustache that hides his entire mouth. He begins to speak in a soft lyrical German accent. "One should not understand this compulsion to construct concepts, species, forms, purposes, laws and mathematics as if they enable us to fix the 'real world'; but as a compulsion to arrange a world for ourselves in which our existence is made possible. The world seems illogical to us because we have made it logical."(189) I am afraid there is no place to hide from our lack of certainty, no final ground upon which we can rest. It is essential that we face up to and embrace reflexivity."

"And what do you mean by reflexivity?" asks the young woman.

"The self awareness which constitutes a destruction of the frame within which reality, art, science, religion, and all knowledge is placed. The complete realisation that all truths, values and metaphysical elements are no more than man-made illusions, constructed out of 'a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies and anthropomorphisms.'"(190)

"It is within the embrace of reflexivity that we are able to utilise processes of indirect communication, such as irony, fictions and pseudonymous inventions," says a young man who is sitting on the floor of the pub reading a script of Ingmar Bergman's film *The Seventh Seal*. "We can use reflexivity to make visible the leap of faith towards an ideal no matter how absurd or contradictory these claims may be."

"Herein lies the drift of my reference to Quality as the intuitive uncovering of that which is hidden," it's the motorcyclist. "However, the reflexive paradox is evident from the outset because that which is uncovered will no longer be hidden. Yet it is through signs - the created elements of the human condition, which tell us about something other than themselves - that the world is made apparent. Although the status of the sign remains obscure because of its own reflexive character, the sign makes available the resources we have at our disposal for interpreting the world. However, in announcing the world to us, the sign also announces itself, and instead of merely indicating Quality, it becomes synonymous with Quality. This misunderstanding resides in the assumption that Quality can be explained through language; it is rather through both indirect communication and poetry that the abyss of reflexivity can be embraced and a faith in

Quality can be accepted. The incorporation of reflexivity into the rhetorical elements of explaining Quality will not explain Quality, or reflexivity for that matter, but may perhaps indicate the essential character of the poetic language within which Quality is to be explained. It is within the collapsing of representation which reflexivity motivates, that one is able to catch a glimpse of Quality through the potential of poetic language."

Without going out of my door
I can know all things on earth.
Without looking out of my window
I could know the ways of heaven
The further one travels the less one knows
The less one really knows.(191)

"Aren't those words from an ancient Chinese text?" inquires an elderly fellow, who, whilst making this reference to the marks flashing up upon the karaoke screen, is constantly caressing his rather impressive facial hair.

"I believe they're taken from the forty-seventh chapter of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching," confirms the man who has this very text tucked inside his motorcycle helmet, "although it's a revised translation."

"The translation of revered texts is a task undertaken by renegades and psychopaths," declares the second twin who is now lying flat out along a tabletop looking up at the pub's ceiling.

"The appeal of the Tao Te Ching for me," says the motorcyclist, "lies in the text's ability to convey a message which transcends cultural and linguistic differences. Yet perhaps I only say this because I too, long ago, made an attempt to translate part of this text by using certain substitutions in order to find out if the concept of Quality could be both mystical as well as metaphysical."(192)

He begins to Quote;

The Quality that can be defined is not the Absolute Quality.
The names that can be given are not the Absolute names.
It is the origin of heaven and earth.
When named it is the mother of all things.
Quality [romantic Quality] and its manifestations [classic Quality] are in their nature the same. It is given different names [subject, object] when it becomes classically manifest . . .

"The problem still exists, nevertheless," says the barman, "that this Quality or Tao takes itself to be an Absolute; a truth for all people at all times, a transcendental signified. "

"Although what constitutes the Tao or Quality is as varied as the number of individuals that exist," maintains the chap with the green backpack whom I assume, because of his attire, is a rambler of some sort. "Were I to try and express what I regard as Quality, my examples would be very different from anything you might have in mind. Yet, from another perspective our very different, perhaps even opposed, moments of Quality are analogous, in that they represent our individual choices and desires. It is simply a matter of accepting each person's moment of quality as being as important for him or her as your own is for you. One should not attempt, or deem it necessary, to impose a single pattern of Quality upon everyone else." "But what of the person

who wishes to choose murder as his or her own personal moment of quality?" asks the Bartender while wiping the bar with an old wine-splattered towel.

"I said nothing about prohibiting others from expressing opinions about what they consider to be good Quality. What is to stop you from attempting to convince a person who has committed or is about to commit a murder, why you consider it a choice of extremely low Quality? The use of rhetoric is not only acceptable in this situation; it is to be positively encouraged. As long as one is not under the illusion that rhetoric can or will reveal an absolute truth. Each individual's interpretation of Quality is exactly that, an individual interpretation of Quality. You have a right to express an opinion but this opinion can never be imposed as fact."

I watch as the bartender lifts his hands into the air in a sign of complete indignation.

"Even this pious notion you call Quality contains an element of moralistic certitude. Especially when one considers that you're setting a precedent by laying out a system of values for that which you believe constitutes Quality itself."

"But the parameters that I have set forward are merely my opinions of what constitutes Quality," replies the young man with the backpack. "Exactly," says the bartender.

"I didn't suggest for one moment that you agree with my definition without question. You're more than free to make your own assessment of these issues. Then, by way of rhetoric you can inform me as to your opinion. After this we can agree to differ, we can agree to agree, or we could agree to compromise depending upon our own free will."

"However, this concept of free will is itself a discourse invented by someone and not an absolute foundation stone of existence," declares the bartender.

"If I understand you correctly you appear to be implying that the human condition is merely that of a living creature which possess among other faculties, language," says a middle aged man with a receding hairline and a truncated black moustache. "Yet surely language is but the house of being within which we exist as dwelling beings in the world. Language will always guard the truth of being to which we belong."

"A truth I might add," says the fellow with the Bergman script, "which is infinitely larger than a single being."

"Which would suggest," replies the bartender, "that if there were a timeless truth we could never know what that truth was, as we are finite beings."

"Which is exactly what I believe the Tao Te Ching to be suggesting within its many chapters," stresses the Buddhist Biker. "There is really very little difference here between what each of us is saying; the major difficulty exists within the ambiguous linguistic terminology that each of us is employing." "I believe that in order to quell this disorder we must begin by pursuing a phenomenological reduction," says the fellow with the impressive grey beard.

"What a magnificent idea," enthuses the young woman. "Because phenomenological reduction isn't ambiguous 'linguistic terminology', now is it?"

"If you will allow me a moment to explain this technique, which I strongly believe will place philosophy upon a more rigorous scientific foundation, I'm sure all will become clear. For each

one of us, one thing is unequivocally certain, and that is our own conscious awareness. This is the solid ground upon which I suggest we build our foundations for reality."

"This sounds very Cartesian," suggests the rambler.

"It is, up to a point, but we must recognise that our conscious awareness is always a conscious awareness of something and not an object-less state of mind. We must always be mindful never to distinguish between states of consciousness and objects of consciousness."

"I feel compelled to concur," the stout Scotsman affirms, "it's impossible to know whether the objects of consciousness have a separate and independent existence from consciousness itself."

"But, you would agree," tenders the bearded fellow, "that whatever existential conditions these objects may or may not have, these objects of consciousness have existence as objects of consciousness for us."

"Indeed I would."

"Therefore, we can investigate them without making any presuppositions, either positively or negatively, about their independent existence from us?"

"This would at the very least allow for a discussion of objects without first having to confirm the validity of an object's independent existence from our consciousness," ponders the Scotsman, approvingly.

"This is what I mean by the rather awkward term, 'Phenomenology'; a technique which, when employed, allows for an analysis of what we experience regardless of whether or not these things are objectively as we experience them."

"But, wouldn't this technique also allow analysis of abstract ideas such as the Easter Bunny and subjective phenomena like memories and emotions?" inquires the sober twin.

"Yes, indeed it would."

"Then I don't see the relevance in your claiming to place philosophy upon a more rigorous scientific foundation. I only see confusion resulting from this rather trivial self-indulgence."

"Then what would you suggest?" the bearded fellow asks.

"The only rigorous scientific foundations are those of observable empirical evidence," says the first twin. "And I should also like to add that it remains impossible to rest the infinite perceptions received from sense data upon a single unified self."

"What your positively illogical position suggests," counters the fellow with the grey beard, "is a reduction of the world to isolated objects in which consciousness is completely dismissed."

They make everything,
From guns that spark,
To flesh coloured Christs
That glow in the dark.
It seems to me

Without looking too hard
That nothing much is sacred.(193)

"I propose that scientific and mathematical discoveries are more or less artistic intuitions," says a Frenchman whose beard and glasses are reminiscent of Toulouse-Lautrec. "It may seem surprising that sensibility should be introduced in connection with mathematical demonstrations, which it would seem, can only interest the intellect. But not if we bear in mind the feeling of mathematical beauty, of the harmony in numbers and the forms of geometric elegance. These are the real aesthetic feelings that all true mathematicians recognise.(194) Intuition is the essence of all thinking. Moreover, within this concrete act of reasoning, the mind's active experience is both intuitive and intellectual. Admittedly 'it never happens that unconscious work supplies ready-made the results of a lengthy calculation in which we have only to apply fixed rules. But as for the calculations themselves, they must be made in the second period of conscious work, which follows the inspiration, and in which the result of the inspiration are verified and the consequences deduced.'(195) Therefore, the essence of what I'm proposing is that axioms, such as those of geometry, are merely conventions; they are our choice among all possible conventions which are guided by experimental facts, but remain free and are limited only by the necessity of avoiding all contradictions. One type of geometry cannot be more true than another; it can only be more convenient. Scientists do not choose at random the data they observe; instead, the interesting information breaks into the domain of consciousness by way of the 'subliminal-self', an entity that corresponds exactly with what Pirsig terms 'preintellectual awareness. Solutions are then selected by the subliminal-self based on beauty and harmony. This selection then becomes the basis for distinguishing between inconsistent empirical evidence and intuition. The quest for beauty and harmony is the journey one makes in order to be able to choose that data that will be most fitting for the description of things that result in the universal harmony that is the sole objective reality."(196) "What guarantees the objectivity of the world in which we live, is common to us with other thinking beings," says the motorcyclist. "Through the communications that we have with other beings, we receive from them ready-made harmonious reasonings. We know that these reasonings do not come from us and at the same time we recognise in them, because of their harmony, the work of reasonable beings like ourselves. And as these reasonings appear to fit the worlds of our sensations, we think we may infer that these reasonable beings have seen the same things as we; thus it is that we know we haven't been dreaming. It is this harmony, this quality if you will, that is the sole basis for the only reality we can ever know."(197)

"My own suggestion, which relates in part to what's already been said," remarks the bearded fellow again picking up the thread of his thinking. "Is that Phenomenology rests upon the radical conviction that meaning is neither in the mind alone, nor in the world alone, but in the intentional relationship between the two. All I'm doing is taking the subject matter of philosophy to be the objects of consciousness. The functional essence of these objects of consciousness are known by the coming together of the intended thing with the intentional consciousness, via a united intuition. What we know only takes on significance through the essence of how we understand it. This technique enables one to analyse such things as art and mathematics, as well as physical and mental feelings, by putting off to one side the question of their independent existential condition. This then allows the study of these things as elements of conscious awareness. I could for example perceive that radiator over there as an object seen from a side-on perspective, but I can also remember and imagine what it looks like from many other angles of perception. 'I can shift my standpoint in space and time, look this way and that. . . I can provide for myself constantly new and more or less clear and meaningful perceptions and representations . . . in which I make intuitable to myself whatever can possibly exist really or supposedly in the steadfast order of space and time.'(198) However, this is not all; I can also have certain beliefs about this radiator;

for example, if I get close to it or touch it, it may burn me. Alternatively, I could have desires about owning such a powerful radiator to warm my icy-cold house during the winter months. All these examples show how my mental content is directed towards things outside of itself. A feature which I believe is unique to the human mind."

"It is this pure phenomenological element of consciousness which the 'beginner's mind' of Zen Buddhist teaching is attempting to reach," intervenes the rambler. "When the Zen student begins to see that the existence of the object is not so different from his or her own existence he or she moves closer to a level the Zen masters call 'intimacy' or 'no separation'."

"Quite so, yet Zen is an anti-intellectual pursuit for spiritual enlightenment; pure Phenomenology is grounded in a re-evaluation of habitual intellectual ideas, such as, whether the subject-object conjunction really is the best explanation of how things are. What I'm suggesting is that one can place the doubts one has about the actual existence of objects outside of ourselves off to one side and reflect upon the intentional content of our consciousness. This allows me to reflect upon that radiator there, because I know that I am accepting that there is a radiator there. I can not be wrong about this. Therefore, I can take this incontrovertible premeditated essence of my consciousness as the pure foundation of everything; because we experience everything, people, radiators and emotions on the strength of our unambiguous mental content."

The grey haired guy, who had only just taken a swig of his drink before the last statement was made, begins to splutter and choke violently. When he's eventually able to speak, his voice has been reduced to a whisper by the strength of the spirit. I believe only his playing companions and those that really tried hard to listen actually took any notice.

"This attempt to distinguish a moment of authentic self-presence is far from ambiguous. The system of signs within which we operate, including both the written and verbal signs of language are always already caught up in a network of pre-existent codes and conventions, which enable these signs to have significance. Thus, the user of these signs can never distinguish a moment of pure self-presence because the signs are not immediately present in themselves. Each sign relies upon an infinite loop of other signs in order to gain its significance."

"This pure Phenomenology," says the motorcyclist, "is similar in many ways to the moment of pure Quality, in which there is no subject and no object, there is only a sense of Quality that produces the later awareness of subjects and objects. At the moment of pure Quality both subject and object are identical, like energy and matter or space and time, or the tat tvam asi truth of the Upanishads."(199)

Chapter Twelve

The Sweat & Spirit: Part 3

The Master makes the rules
For the madmen and the fools
But I've got nothing Ma,
To live up to.(200)

"Much of what has been said thus far raises the question of whether our basic technique of experiencing things and people requires subjective experience," says the man with the receding hairline and trimmed moustache. "You say that if we follow this phenomenological route things will be revealed as they are in themselves. Yet I suggest that if we look at the way people relate to things we will find that it is not simply as subjects related to objects."

"Then how would you describe the human relationship with the external world?" asks the first twin.

"Try to imagine, firstly, that the human contact with the world is not that of a detached observer, but rather, that of an active participant within the world. Then, secondly, envisage a situation whereby awareness and consciousness play no part within the relationship of subject to object. For example, think of a highly skilled bricklayer and the swift motion of this crafts-person's trowel at work. Try to appreciate the way in which this tool becomes transparent to the user as she or he applies cement, levels off a course of bricks and cleans and points the finished wall. This bricklayer is not a subject directed towards an object, because she is working without consciously controlling her every movement. The bricklayer is an active participant in a mode of diaphanous coping. What is in action here, is a 'primordial understanding' in which the trowel is connected to being in a way which is 'ready-to-hand'."(201)

"What you say about a bricklayer being an active participant within the world and not a spectator of the world is extremely appealing. However," the guy with the backpack intervenes, "when the bricklayer works without being consciously aware of his or her actions, it is because trivial matters are cluttering up the mind. Incidental anxieties, such as, what to eat for tea, what route to take home from work, or what song is playing on the radio, all these things get in the way. When perhaps the bricklayer's performance would improve, be of higher Quality, if he focused all of his skills towards the task at hand instead of separating himself off from the task at hand. But I'm rambling again, I'm sorry, please carry on."

"Why apologise? I accept part of your criticism. This Zen Buddhist notion of the caring, focused, individual achieving high standards within their everyday tasks and lives, is appealing."

"I would suggest that one should be mindful of the pitfalls involved in remaining complacent about the exploitation and injustice, which others may inflict upon you if you remain too 'happy with your lot' so to speak," says the motorcycle man.

"I suggest that my 'bricklayer /trowel example was an attempt to illustrate that the active use of 'tools,' both physical and mental, can become transparent, that both operator and instrument can become one. I wanted also to highlight the possibility that human activity is not guided by conscious rational choices alone, but is also connected to a form of diaphanous coping that places the human being as always already a 'being-in-the-world'. In this sense existence need not be understood in terms of mere subjectivity or mere objectivity but can be appreciated instead as a basic openness to the Being of being."

"To the what of what?" queries the fellow with the Bergman script.

"The Being of being, in which Being, with a capital B, indicates the primordial ground which allows everything else to come into existence; and being, with a small b, indicates the entities that exist in the world. It is within this Being of being, that Dasein, or 'being-there' is . . ."

"Dasein?" questioned the bartender.

"It is a term I use to denote the type of being we call human being, whose essential mode of existence is the inquiry into its own and into the primordial ground of Being itself. Is that Okay?"

"Fine."

"With these concepts in mind," continues the man with the truncated moustache, "I propose that when the bricklayer, whom we contemplated earlier, becomes fully involved with the situation and task at hand, Dasein shifts into a condition I think of as care.(202) For me this condition of caring affirms an internal relation between 'human being' and 'world'.

"I think it's important to tie this concept of care to Quality," the Buddhist biker suggests, "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."(203)

"As I see it," expresses the man with the bright shiny forehead, "the human being is thrown into an already existing world. It has no control over this 'thrown-ness' and is therefore completely shaped by the situation in which it lands. This moulding process is usually performed within the cultural and social environment Dasein finds itself thrown into. Recognition of this ultimate thrown-ness of existence leaves little room for the problematic concept of human nature; one is left rather to acknowledge that we are constituted to a far larger degree in terms of our nurturing. With this in mind, I propose that there are, broadly speaking, three different ways of existing in the world. Firstly, there is the undifferentiated mode, in which the human being never questions the mode of its existence and is unaware and perhaps unaffected by the basic thrown-ness of life. Secondly, there is the inauthentic mode in which the human being recognises the thrown-ness of existence but remains trapped within a mode of being which has been set out by its cultural and social environment. Thirdly, there is the authentic mode in which the human being not only recognises the thrown-ness of existence but also accepts, after a process of anguish, the eventual nothingness at the end of existence. This development transforms the human into a 'being-towards-death', which must also take responsibility for its own existence. This responsible, authentic, existence involves the human being realising that it must 'care' for its 'being-in-the-world' as well as caring for the world as the ground of its Being. It also brings back to Dasein the notion of the world as not merely created out of its own private subjectivity but as a concept given it by Being. This form of 'caring' encourages Dasein to deal with the world and everything in it as something that cannot fail to be of importance to Being and therefore to its own being. This does not mean seeing the world as something that exists for us to use and exploit. It is perhaps because we view the product for our manipulation and profit that we are losing touch with the question of Being. When we exclusively judge the world by what we can get from it and what it can give to us, we miss its beauty and lose sight of Being by measuring everything as a commodity."

"There appears to be a correlation between your authentic existence and the Zen Buddhist experience of Kensho," declares the rambler. "Both authenticity and Kensho, which is perhaps better known as Sartori or enlightenment, are sought through a long and difficult preparatory process; and yet each is experienced in a sudden and abrupt event. Both are also fascinated by the transparent primordial mode of being in which 'Dasein,' as you term it, makes contact with the underlying ground of existence, or Being, by interacting with the world from a perspective other than the undifferentiated, rational, intellectual mode of being."

"There also seems to be a revision of Phenomenology at work here," says the bartender, "away from the epistemological question of - what it means to know - towards the ontological question of - what it means to be."

"We must accept before anything else, before any knowledge, thing or event, that the world exists, that Being exists, that there is Being rather than nothing," says the man whose short black

moustache is covered with the froth from his beer. "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 I refer to as 'Dasein'."

"In effect this reverses Descartes Cogito by implying that "I am therefore I think," says the young woman.

"Exactly; because our existence operates at the basic level of Dasein, our existence determines our capacity for knowledge."

"Going back for a moment, if I may, to your third mode of existence, namely, 'authenticity'," says the bartender, "I'd like to ask where are, and what are, the foundations for this so-called 'authenticity'?" "Your question is a misleading one," says the man with the frothy moustache, "for the simple reason that if authenticity had any kind of foundation it would cease to be an authentic existence and would therefore have drifted back into the second mode of existence, inauthenticity."

"Yet you've described authenticity as a being-towards-death and deliberately created a link between authenticity and this other concept of yours 'care'," says the bartender. "Surely this description is founded upon a firm notion of what authenticity is, otherwise it could end up being just whatever you like, including inauthenticity."

"It would seem to be you who has the problem of inauthenticity being just whatever you like, which would suggest you have a problem with either your own or other people's freedom to choose," says the pale looking young man who slowly puts down his copy of a Bergman script.

"You also seem to have a need to control the destiny of each and every word you hear and use," adds the young man with the backpack.

"I can assure you I have no desire to control every word I come across. The idea that each word relies upon every other word for its meaning and that no single word stands apart from this axiom, is a concept I stand by. But, even within this frame it would seem ludicrous for me to suggest that each and every word can mean just whatever one would like."

"I would like to think that what these gentlemen are proposing," says the gaunt looking chap at the far end of the pub, "is that if you really want to understand the meaning of a word, don't ask for a dictionary definition, but look closely at how it is actually being used within the particular area of discourse that is under consideration. To use a handy little sound bite, 'don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use.' This being the case, we should ask how we use expressions like Quality, not what do terms like this actually mean."

"Then I would be inclined to say that the word Quality is being used to justify whatever you like, which must in both theory and practice mean that it is useless."

"I'm angered by the suggestion that Quality is just what ever you like," says the motorcycle man who doesn't sound too angry. "Why should Quality be just what you like? Why should what you like be just? What does 'just' mean in this case? It seems to me 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 you really mean 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."(204)

"I've no problem with social relativity," the bartender maintains, "quite the contrary in fact. It just seems to me that Quality is not a concept as free and open as is being suggested here. In fact I feel by its very metaphysical structure it is perceived as a guiding principle for what is considered to be 'good'; but one must ask, 'whose definition of good is this'?"

"In today's world, ideas that are incompatible with scientific knowledge don't get off the ground," says the motorcyclist, "by this criterion 'what you like' is not composed of matter or measurable by instruments, and is therefore unreal."(205)

"Quite so!" says the gaunt looking chap. "If you want to understand a particular mode of discourse, like for instance Zen Buddhism, then you must look at the part this discourse actually plays in people's lives. It is perhaps the gravest mistake of our present age that we try to treat all discourses as if they were striving to be the discourse of science. Of course science has its place but to treat things that are plainly not science and technology as though they were, is to do these particular discourses a great disservice."

Out of the corner of my eye I think that I see the dead/live cat lick its lips, but by the time I've thought about expressing this information to the other members of the pub the feline creature is completely motionless once more.

Everybody wants to go up to heaven,
But nobody wants to die,
I don't know why.(206)

Flashed the marks across the TV screen in conjunction with the heavy bass beat of the karaoke system.

I sense once more a change in the room's temperature and realise that the door of the pub is open; I look over and see a silhouette positioned in the frame of the entrance. As the door shuts, this two-dimensional shape transmogrifies into a three-dimensional figure dressed in highly polished black shoes and an impeccably well-tailored black suit. I notice that the man in the doorway is carrying a text in much the same way as a soldier carries his rifle.

I watch in astonishment as this guy tears down an advertisement from the wall of the pub, which, until this moment I'd not even noticed. After screwing up the poster, the man begins to sermonise. "You discuss social and moral relativism as though you lived in a vacuum. Might I remind you that you actually live in a world crumbling under a tidal wave of immorality and social injustice. It is moral relativism that is the cause of all the cultural uprooting and uncertainty that leaves in its wake the huge problems of social decline. Human beings must have an anchor for their thoughts and beliefs, some pattern of how they should live their lives. This pattern is created for us by The Almighty and is given to us through his word."

The man now begins to point his finger around the room and stops on the rather respectable looking gentleman whose top lip and mouth are completely hidden by his large bushy moustache.

"No one can stand without foundations and God is our foundation. Ambiguity is darkness and God is not ambiguous. Certainty is light and God is the creator of all light. Our faith in him is not ambiguous, because if it were how should I derive the strength to do all the things that I must do? Moral relativism is a fireball from the other side."

"I'm not in need of idols," says the sombre gentleman with the large moustache, "therefore, what need have I of Gods to tell me what is good and evil?"

"How else, except through divine instruction, can you find the right way to live? How else, except through divine forgiveness, will the weak survive the power of the strong? How else except through divine creation can you explain all the wonders of the universe? Science cannot explain these things; all science has is theories but The Almighty is the Absolute meaning of truth itself."

"When all transcendental realms are seen as narratives," says the gentleman with the bushy facial hair, "man will eventually rise up off his knees and see that standards of all kinds, such as truths, values, and rationality are not given to him by an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent being, but are created by men and women in order to meet their own pathetic needs."

"If you think like this then you're damned to self-annihilation in a world where all manner of evil is possible and where there will be no recourse to justice and no chance of escape. When that moment comes, and it will come, when you are faced with death, I know you will look back upon this day and rue the chance you threw away to make peace with your creator. I pity you all."

"Your attempt at converting my soul by scorching it with your cheap rhetoric of eternal damnation is deserving of pity. I'll grant you that."

"My Lord forgive them for they know not what they do."

With this, he is through the door and away.

- Once more, the karaoke system sparks into life.

I'm not a prophet or a Stone Age man,
I'm just a mortal with potential of a super-man.
I keep hanging on.(207)

"Any suggestion of relative values spewing forth a set of natural laws which guide us in the direction of an anarchistic utopia, is a rather confused and retrograde step back towards the unconvincing traditional arguments for a system of transcendental values," says an attractive looking French woman, whose remarkably short male companion appears to be scribbling down every word she articulates. She then begins to state uncompromisingly that: "Anguish is the very condition of action - for action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities and in choosing one of these, we relate that it has value only because it is chosen."(208)

"Can there genuinely be such a thing as values that are held without conviction?" questions the rambler. "Surely values without conviction, value free values, are not values at all. I'm inclined to believe that it is the faith we place in our values that defines much about our present human

condition. Why would we struggle for our values if they were just something that we had merely chosen for ourselves simply for the sake of it? I would urge that even though our values are at source dependent upon contingency and relativity, and even though I recognise that if we strip back the thin layers of these values a core of man-made rhetorical constructions will be revealed, it is still these values that enable our fragile communities to function in a state of order to a much greater degree than the imposed laws which uncomfortably bind us. Don't get me wrong, I'd be the first to admit that many present community values need some serious revision but you don't ban technology because someone builds a bomb. I feel your implication that values only have value because they are the ones that have been chosen, not only points to a privileging of the subject/object relationship whereby self-existence is the only certainty, but also points to a form of Cartesian solipsism. It also fails to take into account temporality and thrown-ness. Your assumption forgets that choices and values are not taken or made in a vacuum but have a relationship towards the way Dasein sees and constructs the world through a sense of past, present and future."

"If you strip away the abstract creation of mechanically measured time, we exist in a permanent now, an eternal present," says the French woman, "yet our deterministic view of experience is to see the present as endlessly running out of the past and into the future. In this sense, freedom is impossible because what we are able to choose now is constantly determined by the effects of the past. What I suggest is that as human beings living for ourselves without the weight of transcendental determinism, we are able to separate ourselves from the past by nothingness. This is in effect saying that nothing in my past can cause me to do anything now. No human action is caused or determined by the effects of the past. If we choose not to allow our past to dictate to us who we are going to be in the present and future; we should eventually realise that we are each condemned to be free. We are therefore at liberty to create our values through our choices."

"But what of the conditions into which we are thrown?" questions the man with the truncated moustache who gets to his feet and walks towards the bar. "The social environment and historical context into which we are born; not to mention the physical condition we find ourselves in. We are not free to choose these elements of our existence nor do we have any control over them."

"I've never felt comfortable with the metaphor that suggests we're born like blank sheet of paper; a better description of the human situation would be to see ourselves as free flowing ink upon a lined and headed document. Obviously I accept that there are elements of both our past and our thrown-ness, as you call it, which we cannot change, but this still doesn't make our present and future determined. We are free to choose how we exist within the limitations of these circumstances. Our thrown-ness may be undeniable but it is the individual who chooses to give a particular meaning to this thrown-ness. Without our definition, throwness is meaningless. There are always other interpretations; we are never faced with a single truth. There's always the most extreme choice of all." "Slavery," says the Bartender while serving the man with the cropped moustache.

"Ironically what you're insinuating is that life is determined," says the rambler, ignoring what he considers to be a glib remark from the Bartender. "In what you say, we are forever sentenced to the freedom of choice; the freedom to live or to die."

"If that's how you want to put it," answers the French woman.

"This dilemma betwixt free will and determinism," says the Buddhist biker, "is an opposition which we naively attempt to resolve on to one side of the argument or the other, with little or no hope of compromise or conclusion. I suggest that 'to the extent that one's behaviour is controlled

by static patterns of quality [including the thrown-ness of our existence] it is without choice. But to the extent that one follows Dynamic Quality, which is undefinable, one's behaviour is free."(209)

"Why is Dynamic Quality undefinable?" questions the Bartender, who is polishing the large neon bottle of beer on the bar.

"Because it is the pre-intellectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new. Dynamic Quality contains no patterns of fixed rewards or punishments. Its only perceived good is freedom and its only perceived evil is static quality (any pattern of one-sided fixed values that tries to contain and kill the ongoing free force of life)."(210) Dynamic Quality is the moral force that motivates existence; and although I realise that this answer does not fulfil the requirements of your sceptical needs, I will attempt, at the very least, to penetrate your cynicism before 'last orders.'"

"The Metaphysics of Quality," the motorcyclist continues, "says that if moral judgements are essentially assertions of value and if value is the fundamental ground-stuff of the world, then moral judgements are the fundamental ground-stuff of the world."

As the Motorcycle man continues to talk, I imagine that I see his words flashing across the TV monitor:

The metaphysics of Quality says that even at the most fundamental level of the universe, static patterns of value and moral judgement are identical. The 'laws of Nature' are moral laws. Of course it sounds peculiar at first and awkward and unnecessary to say that hydrogen and oxygen form water because it is moral to do so. But it is no less peculiar and awkward and unnecessary than to say chemistry professors smoke pipes and go to movies because irresistible cause-and-effect forces of the cosmos force them to do it. In the past the logic has been that if chemistry professors are composed exclusively of atoms and if atoms follow only the laws of cause and effect, then chemistry professors must follow the laws of cause and effect too. But this logic can be applied in a reverse direction. We can just as easily deduce the morality of atoms from the observation that chemistry professors are, in general, moral. If chemistry professors exercise choice, and chemistry professors are composed entirely of atoms, then it follows that atoms must exercise choice too. The difference between these two points is philosophic, not scientific.(211)

"Professor Higgs, a particle physicist from Edinburgh University, has put forward the hypothesis that predicts the finding of a fifth force(212) in the universe; a force which appears to act upon elementary particles," says the American woman sitting upon a tall stool at the bar. "In order to describe this hypothesis it may help to imagine that an elementary particle can take one of two basic paths, isolation or articulation. If the particle takes the first path, let us say for the point of the explanation, the red path, then it simply moves at a constant rate and remains in a solitary state. However, if the elementary particle chooses the second path, the blue path, then it starts to gain inertia, and begins to attract other particles towards itself. These particles then begin to bond to one another inducing more and more particles to amalgamate, eventually forming into more complex structures, such as atoms, molecules, matter and chemistry professors. Higgs believes that it is this fifth force, now known as the 'Higgs force', which produces this bonding. The reasons why elementary particles make these choices are at present a complete mystery to scientists everywhere."

"As interesting a narrative as this 'Higgs force' hypothesis may be," says the Bartender, "it's like all of science, merely a narrative fulfilling a self-contained prophecy. It has little meaning outside

of its own discourse and no significance outside of the human mind. Not to mention that your use of the term 'choice', anthropomorphises sub-atomic elements; they are particles not people."

"I would say that the formation of Hypotheses is the most mysterious of all the categories within scientific method(213)," says the motorcycle man, sounding as though he were thinking aloud. "Especially if one considers the possibility that 'the number of rational hypotheses that can be chosen to explain any given phenomena is infinite.'(214) This infinite growth in hypotheses is not a minor flaw within scientific reasoning but a catastrophic logical disproof of the general validity of all scientific method!"

"Wait one minute," says the American woman who begins to fish frantically around in a large brown bag, eventually bringing out a notebook with the hand-written words Godel's Theorem on the front cover. She opens the book and begins to read: "If it can be shown that the unprovable truths of any given formal system can be proven within an expanded system containing additional axioms, then the expanded system itself would have to contain further true but unprovable statements. Therefore, no finitely describable system, or finite language, can prove all truths. Truth cannot be fully caught in a finite net."(215)

"What seems to be motivating this growth in the number of hypotheses in recent decades seems to be nothing other than scientific method itself. The purpose of scientific method is to select a single truth from among many hypotheses but historically science has done exactly the opposite. Through multiplication upon multiplication of facts, information, theories and hypotheses, it is science itself that is leading humankind from single absolute truths to multiple, indeterminate, relative ones. The major producer of the social chaos, the indeterminacy of thought and values that rational knowledge is supposed to eliminate, is none other than science itself."(216)

"So what's to be done about the increasing conflicts within scientific method?" asks the guy with the backpack.

"A re-valuation of reason itself; an adjustment within scientific methodology away from elusive and exclusive truths, towards an evaluation of each hypothesis on the merits of the question that it is investigating. If a hypothesis is shown to have value within a particular inquiry, even when it contradicts another valid hypothesis, then it should be accepted as valuable until it is shown to be otherwise. Multiple hypotheses fit a revised rationality which seeks the best evaluation for each investigation, including multiple ways of seeing."

"What the metaphysics of Quality attempts to make known," continues the motorcycle man, "is that it isn't just life which is an ethical activity, but everything from scientific method to electron orbits. Everything in the universe is an ethical activity; there is nothing else. 'When inorganic patterns of reality create life the Metaphysics of Quality postulates that they've done so because it's 'better' and that this definition of 'betterness' - this beginning response to Dynamic Quality - is an elementary unit of ethics upon which all right and wrong can be based.'"(217)

"This sounds as though choice is determined at a sub-atomic level," says the Bartender. "Not at all. What the development within the Metaphysics of Quality displays is that there is not just one moral system but many, including, among others, the inorganic patterns of Quality, which challenge the laws of entropy(218) by attempting to triumph over chaos. Next come the biological patterns of quality which triumph over inorganic forces; then the social patterns of quality which predominate over biology; and finally the intellectual morality, which is still battling to control society."

"So what happens when an intellectual idea, choice, value, threatens society?" questions the Bartender.

"It is more moral for an idea to kill a society than it is for the society to kill an idea,(219)" says the Buddhist biker.

"This sounds suspiciously like the worst type of social Darwinism," comments the rambler, "survival of the fittest and all that."

"Survival of the fittest is one of those catch phrases like 'mutants' and 'misfits' that sounds best when you don't ask precisely what it means. Fittest for what? Fittest for survival? That reduces to 'survival of the survivors' which doesn't say anything."(220)

"So what about the Nazi idea of mass extermination to eradicate all difference? Their inhumane attempt to create a perfect race of identical, genetically superior, beings. Is this an idea for which one should destroy a society?"

"Nazism is an attempt to place society above the intellect, in that it endeavours to exterminate all ideas opposed to its own. It fears difference and seeks to bring a common identity to a so-called ruling elite of genetically engineered beings. It strives to eliminate biological diversity through eugenic practices, which it does in order to control society through power and ignorance, not to eliminate harmful disease and illness. I admit that saying 'it is more moral for an idea to kill a society than for a society to kill an idea' raises very contentious issues but to attack me as a naive Nazi is way off target. Of course a society has the right to protect itself against its own destruction, but to the extent that it would restrict the growth of the human intellect for the sake of its own social survival, this I perceive as an immoral act."

"This is sloppy liberal morality at its most pathetic," booms the disembodied voice from behind the toilet door.

"If an established social structure is not seriously threatened, let us say when an individual criminal is to be executed, then an evolutionary morality would argue that there is no moral justification for killing him."(221)

"You might not," responds the voice, "but I'd ring every bloody paedophile's neck I could lay my hands on."

"As difficult as it is to hear, appalling crimes, such as paedophilia, are often symptoms of an ailing society. What makes killing the individual immoral is that the criminal is not just a biological organism. He is not even just a defective unit of society. Whenever you kill a human being, you are killing a source of thought too. A human being is a collection of ideas, and these ideas take moral precedence over a society. Ideas are patterns of value. They are at a higher level of evolution than social patterns of value. Just as it is more moral for a doctor to kill a germ than a patient, so it is more moral for an idea to kill a society than for a society to kill an idea.(222)"

"We're the bloody patients and the perve's the bloody germs!" responds the disembodied voice. "What powers of expression there are in a limited vocabulary," says the Stout Scot.

"This would suggest that it's a society that produces the sexual deviance which must be destroyed or modified," says the young woman. "Yet surely there is a sense in which the individual should

take a proportion, and I'd be inclined to say a large proportion, of the blame and responsibility for his or her actions. Otherwise, where's the free will in life?"

"Agreed," says the motorcycle man, "but I should like to add that it is a sign of an unhealthy society which allows an individual to forsake the duties of responsibilities. Responsibility is the duty of the individual towards others; if responsibility is determined and imposed from elsewhere, free will is severely restricted."

"It is undeniable that society has not eradicated the problem of sexual deviance by murdering individuals or locking them away without help," says the guy with the backpack.

"Beyond this there is an even more compelling reason, which is, that societies, beliefs and principles are themselves no more than sets of static patterns. These patterns cannot by themselves perceive or adjust to Dynamic Quality. Only a living being can do that. The strongest moral argument against capital punishment is that it weakens a society's Dynamic capability - its capability for change and evolution.(223)"

"Perhaps it's the weight of living in a world where the god myth has been exposed, which causes people to act in an anti-social way," says the young woman. "If you can't be judged unless you're seen, who, other than yourself of course, is to stop you doing what ever you like?"

"I suppose that depends upon what people like," says the motorcycle man.

"Maybe the realisation that we are condemned to control our own destiny, will take a little time to come to terms with," remarks the man with the large bushy moustache. "Like children breaking free from the elders for the very first time."

"It would seem as through coming to terms with the inescapable consequences of making one's own choices produces a tremendous dilemma within the individual," declares the French woman, who is absently pondering the question of which end of her crisp packet to open. "One can either choose to pull back from this realisation, this anguish, and lie to oneself," she says while turning the packet over in her hands, "therefore surrendering to a mode of existence which is in terribly 'bad faith'," she pulls at the edges of the packet but nothing happens. "If an individual who feels swamped by the sheer responsibility of choosing a meaning and a value for their life accepts a stereotypical role, which provides for them a ready-made meaning to life which they have not had to create for themselves, then they may avoid life's anguish but in doing so may (a)void life itself."

I watch as the French woman clasps the two edges of the packet and gives the whole thing a sharp tug, but still it doesn't open. "Alternatively," she continues, turning over the crisp packet, "one can face up to the experiences of anguish and accept that our choices fill us with dread. We now recognise that by being made aware that there are no foundations upon which to validate our choices, we are at the mercy of contingency and relativity." A final pull on the edges of the crisp packet releases the entire contents of the receptacle into the air and over her short male companion; she giggles and continues on with her disquisition. "When an individual moves towards the authentic existence he or she will begin to embrace the inevitability of anguish and will not seek sanctuary from it."

"It is doubt which induces anguish," says the fellow with the Bergman script. "If you can deceive yourself as to the freedom of your own conscious thought by giving yourself over to religious, cultural or social patterns, then you'll be in a state of belief. Paradoxically however, the closure

required for certain knowledge will remain out of reach because consciousness is far from being a form of certainty, it's rather a form of uncertainty. Consciousness is a form of doubt because that which is in consciousness is always already in question. To believe in consciousness is to have already made a small leap of faith."

"Our convictions," expresses an American gentleman of practical appearance who has dark rimmed eyes and a long white beard, "command our desires and forms our behaviour. The sensation of belief is a manifestation of the existence of habit within the mind, which helps us to avoid making difficult choices at every moment of our day. Doubt is not at all like this. Doubt is an anxious and displeasing state of mind from which we struggle to free ourselves. Belief we can leave to take care of itself but doubt must be confronted until it is either defeated through destruction, or assimilated into a new belief. Thought is therefore an activity we engage with in order to move from a paralysing state of doubt to the desirable state belief."

"I suggest," says the bushy moustachioed German, who stands upon the oche preparing to throw his final dart, "that although this state you call belief is more desirable;"

"One-hundred and Eighty!" says the first twin, chalking up upon the blackboard.

"It is rather doubt," continues the dart player, "which is the more dynamic experience because of its, (how do you say,) authentic possibilities."

"Like the Zen Buddhist 'beginner's mind'," repeats the rambler.

"I'd be inclined to see this belief/doubt opposition in terms of the Apollonian and the Dionysian," says the German fellow withdrawing his darts from the board. "The Apollonian establishes the elucidation of representation, creating the possibility for communication which frees the individual from isolation. This I feel is close to your idea of belief whereby the Apollonian vanquishes the suffering that would otherwise be endured by the individual by collapsing the noumenal into the perceivable world of phenomenal entities. On the other hand, the Dionysian shatters the illusion of both the individual and communication by absorbing us into original being. We are forced to confront the pain and anguish of existence through the Dionysian, or as you call it doubt, in which we come closer to an understanding of what this gentleman here referred to as Dasein."

"Would I be right in assuming that there is an element within the Apollonian which is mediatory?" ponders the motorcycle man. "This would seem to imply a level of intellectual contemplation of the object which re-presents this reflection as the phenomenal entities we recognise as reality. Whereas the Dionysian is immediate perception, it is the pre-intellectual awareness of existence, the noumenal world of things in themselves. This separation fits my own Metaphysics of Quality, in which Dynamic Quality resides at the cutting edge of reality as we encounter it. While running counter to this is Static Quality, the patterns of reality we create in order to re-present the world to one another and ourselves." "There is a sense in which our relation to otherness is always self reflection," says a woman, with an Eastern European edge to her French accent, who is vacillating back and forth upon a large wooden rodeo horse. "Other people, things and events are only perceived by us through our own self knowledge. We project versions of our own personality outward on to other people and other things, just as we project versions of our own experience on to other events. How is it possible that we could know others as they are in themselves when our own character is a mystery to us? Perhaps this is because the construction of the 'I' rests upon an indeterminate discourse. Our relation to others is always based upon an unstable self-reflection, since everything in our world is constituted and mediated

by this vacillating self, itself. The only valid relation to the other would be immediate and as such is not part of knowledge as we would understand it. As soon as immediacy gives way to mediation, other is reduced to same."

"One could also choose to look at the other side of this situation," remarks the motorcyclist, "how reflections affect the images we have of ourselves. 'Each person you come to is a different mirror, some mirrors distort you one way and some distort you another. And since you're another person like them maybe you're another mirror too, and there is no way of ever knowing whether your own view of yourself is another distortion. Maybe all you ever see are distorted reflections. Maybe mirrors are all you ever get. First the mirrors of your parents, then friends and teachers, then bosses and officials, priests and ministers and maybe writers and painters too, because that's their job, to hold up mirrors. What controls all of these mirrors is culture: the giant (the large metropolis), and the gods (the static cultural patterns). And if you run foul of culture it will start to throw up reflections that try to destroy you, or it will withdraw the mirrors and try to destroy you that way.'"(224)

"You sound a little paranoid," declares the Bartender.

"These mirrors that you speak of," mentions a bespectacled scrabble player, "not only mould us into adulthood, but in early childhood they aid us in our creation of the 'self'. It's through the recognition of our own reflected image, or via the image of another, that we come to mistakenly recognise a false perception of ourselves which will remain with us, as an 'ideal ego,'(225) for the rest of our lives. During infancy when we first begin to identify with an image outside of ourselves, we will begin to mimic the actions and behaviour that surround us. It is here as infants that we first enter the human world of space and movement or as it was termed earlier, Dasein. However, this identification, or 'mirror stage',(226) traps the infant in a mode of existence through which it can no longer act spontaneously. The infant's relationship to the world is always mediated by way of the image; a representation, or rather re-presentation, which is essentially alien and outside of itself and Other to the world as it is in itself. Thus, our ego that is not present at birth is established by an alienating identification brought about because of our initial lack of completeness in the body's motor functions at birth. We are born prematurely which indicates that our relationship to ourselves is constructed from outside."

I then catch a few audible words coming from the Karaoke:

Psychotic builds the castle
Neurotic lives in it.(227)

"The mirror stage also contributes to the way in which we acquire languages," continues the bespectacled scrabble player. "The mirror, or Other, supplies the infant's first signified, something existing outside of the infant that has symbolic meaning. It's the infant who acts as the signifier, the recipient and chronicler of the symbolic meaning. The social structure, or symbolic order, into which the infant is born is constructed through language which inevitably structures the concept of self." "When these mirrors become distorted for whatever reason, I imagine the ideal ego is put under enormous strain," speculates the rambler.

"And considering that living with the ideal ego is similar to living with our respiratory system," says the young woman, "we exist with it rarely being conscious of it; when the ideal ego is brought to the front of our thinking it must surely induce anxiety."

"If we can succeed in realigning the mirrors and see the same reflections as the majority, live by the same symbolic order," declares the guy with the backpack, "then we can return to the social structure. However, if we succeed only in shifting our perception and seeing these distorted mirrors as perfect reflections, then our symbolic order will be out of synchronisation with the rest of society and could lead to severe psychological problems."

"What if the mirror image remains distorted for any length of time?" asks the young woman. "I suppose that the anxiety one suffers will become so great that a call to a kindly Samaritan or Paramedic will be needed; because a turning in upon one's own distorted mirrors in an attempt to shatter the image it reveals, could leave the victim out of reach from the rest of society. However, if this move towards the distorted reflections is a gradual controlled process of strict personal discipline, then one could manage to live in an endlessly dynamic state of distorted reflections and reach a form of Zen wisdom."

"It is the task of psychoanalysts to use discourse to realign the mirror's reflections back to the commonly accepted symbolic order," says the bespectacled scrabble player.

"This takes insanity to be a disease," the Buddhist biker responds, "when perhaps 'the insanity is the adjustment. Insanity isn't necessarily a step in the wrong direction, it could be part of a cure.'(228) I'm no expert but it would seem to me that 'curing' an insane person is like the problem of 'curing' a Moslem or 'curing' a communist. You're not going to make much progress by telling them how wrong you think they are. If you can convince a Mullah that everything will be of higher value if he changes his beliefs, then change is not only possible but also likely. But if you can't, forget it."(229) "Yet I submit that the unconscious is structured like a language," asserts the bespectacled scrabble player, "therefore, the psychoanalyst is able to remould the individual by striving to disclose what is malfunctioning within the internal discourse of the individual's structure of languages."

"You're indicating that the psychoanalyst is able to realign the reflections and recreate the perceptions of the insane by returning the individual to the controlling discourse and doing so by restoring the individual to the social order," says the second twin. "Yet isn't this how ideology works, by indoctrinating others into false convictions and beliefs? The recipient of a false ideology, like the members of the Hitler youth of the 1930s, is lulled or coerced into believing in an idea or social system which is presented to them as a meta-discourse; claiming itself to be the one true belief above and beyond all others. Surely this collective distortion of the mirror leads to mass insanity." "It all depends upon how many people believe in a discourse, whether it is considered sane or insane," pronounces the motorcyclist. "A group can't hold an insane delusion. 'A person isn't considered insane if there are a number of people who believe the same way. Insanity isn't supposed to be a communicable disease; if one other person starts to believe then it becomes a religion. Thus, when sane grown men in Italy and Spain carry statues of Christ through the streets, that's not an insane delusion. That's a meaningful religious activity because there are so many of them. But if a distraught person carries a statue of a child with them wherever they go, that's an insane delusion because there's only one of them. The Metaphysics of Quality identifies religious mysticism with insanity and links both to Dynamic Quality. The two are almost the same. Both lunatics and mystics have freed themselves from the conventional static intellectual patterns of their culture. The only difference is that the lunatic has shifted over to a private static pattern, whereas the mystic has abandoned all static patterns in favour of pure Dynamic Quality.'(230) Yet, it would be a mistake to think that the Metaphysics of Quality endorses the static beliefs of any particular religious sect. Sectarian religion is a static social fallout from Dynamic Quality."(231)

"I recall one of Plato's dialogues," says the rambler, "where he has Socrates say "Our greatest blessing comes to us by way of madness provided the madness is given to us by divine gift." I find it amusing that in a statement like this the psychiatric profession hasn't got a clue what he's talking about.(232)"

"Psychiatry," remarks a gentleman with a shiny bald pate, "is a part of our complex social institutions which exist to collect knowledge about individuals. However, one should remain conscious of the thought that this knowledge is far easier to collect if it is given freely by individuals who categorise themselves by allowing this body of knowledge to categorise them. This is an essential ingredient within the institutional recipe for linking knowledge to power. Through categorisation, the individual is excluded or included, perhaps even through choice, into simplifying the potential of their existence by allowing themselves to be catalogued and therefore controlled by their own behavioural 'bond'. Even the psychopath, who recognises his social position, plays the game. When he is brought to trial the institution of the law will only claim him and legitimise its own position as the rightful wielder of judgement and power if it can get the individual to categorise himself within the common perception of knowledge. In this respect, knowledge is linked to power, and each part of the institution is a tool of this power. Yet, power could easily fail if its only task were to restrain. No! Power isn't what is possessed by a few; it is a shrewd and inventive discourse and weaves its way into the fabric of all of our lives. It survives, and controls our lives by imposing itself upon the way we think and the way we desire and feel the need for a dominating narrative. We succumb to this discourse rather than take any responsibility for it."

"Not another victim of paranoia?" declares the Bartender.

"I suppose that if it weren't for institutional categorisation of recidivists, delinquents and psychopaths," says the first twin, "these people might contemplate their position in the social structure, challenge the ruling ideology and begin to write their own narrative and no doubt shatter the prevailing discourse."

"Now everybody's paranoid," reiterates the Bartender.

"Delirium introduces anxiety into social structures because it challenges the static order," expresses the motorcycle man. "As individuals we too fear the insane, not simply because they're a threat to our own fragile construction of sanity but because they're a hindrance, a waste of time and an interruption to more important purposes in life. No one admits it, but that's the real reason the insane get locked up; it's not just that they have absurd ideas that nobody else believes. What makes them insane is that they have these ideas and are a nuisance to somebody else. The pretence that we're trying to help them by getting rid of them is a cover-up. What this pretence ignores is that you cannot hide people or run away from people without injuring yourself too. The hardest thing to deal with during my own commitment was not the insanity. That came naturally. The hardest thing to deal with was the righteousness of the sane. When you're in agreement with the sane, they're a great comfort and protection, but when you disagree with them, it's a different matter. Then they're dangerous. The sane always know they are good because their culture tells them so. Anyone who tells them otherwise is sick, paranoid, and needs further treatment.'(233) I've written a book that deals with this issue and attempts to set out a solution to this problem, which is a little too long to deal with right now." "I'm interested to hear more," says the young woman.

"You'll find it in Appendix B at the back of this thesis," I inform her, holding up the document you're reading right now.

She nods over in my direction, in what I take to be a sign of acknowledgement.

Chapter Thirteen **The Sweat & Spirit: Part 4**

I don't know much about the Highway Code,
And I've never read On the Road.
I don't read I just memorise names,
So that I can stagger through bohemian games
And I'm going nowhere really slow.(234)

"In all the talk of mirrors a little earlier," remarks the Bartender, "no one mentioned that the mirror is designed to reflect rays of light and that in complete darkness the purpose of the mirror is nullified. One could argue that languages are the rays of light that allow the 'human mirror' to reflect; without languages the human situation is one spent in 'darkness' in which no comprehension of reflection exists at all."

"Aren't we more than simply mirrors that reflect light?" enquires the young woman, "more than objects that use signs? Language is senseless without an eye to see and a hand to write, without a mouth to speak and an ear to listen. What of our mind, consciousness and creative attributes?" "It's through the use of signs that we become creative; it's signs which give us a mind," says the Bartender. "The light/dark mirror analogy, although an opprobrious use of the binary opposition, isn't intended to communicate a form of mechanical materialism whereby there is no real distinction between the human body and a bath mat. Obviously, the human physical form is a means of creativity in the way a bath mat can never be, except in the films of Walt Disney. It is because the human body can sign and enter linguistic communication that it becomes a creative point of organisation for objects such as bath mats. Language creates an invented centre for the human body called the 'self' which then gives purpose to objects around it. It is this which makes the human situation distinct from the rest of the animal world. It is language which creates a sense of self, not the other way around." "However, I wonder if this whole question of Being isn't actually far larger than language taken in isolation?" comments the man with the receding hairline and shiny forehead.

"If it is, then we're not large enough to see it," returns the Bartender. "This 'house of Being' or 'universe' or whatever it is you'd like to call it, cannot be perceived as reasonable or intellectual or full of beginnings, middles and ends. It doesn't need a sense of closure, nor does it need explaining; only the present human situation finds it necessary to make sense of it all. How can we answer a question as large and absurd as the ones 'philosophers' continually ask, such as, 'what is Being?'"

"One could just as easily claim that language and theory have drawn us away from a personal correspondence with the world," says a voice from under the glare of a shiny forehead which is reflecting the rays of light from an overhead illumination straight into my eyes. "Language cannot constitute Dasein. 'In order to be who we are, we human beings remain committed to and within the being of language, and can never step out of it and look at it from somewhere else. Thus we always see the nature of language only to the extent to which language itself has us in view, has appropriated us to itself.'(235) One must not forget that an investigation is a search for, or about, something and, as such, must have at its opening a bearing of some kind; no matter how contingently based this bearing may be. Otherwise, how would the investigation ever get under

way? We must not lose sight of the idea that an enquiry into Being requires a being who is enquiring into the Being of the enquirer."

"I'm not completely sure that I followed all of that," the Bartender admits, "but an enquiry into ontological questions such as, 'what is Being', have a tendency to lead into the contradictory concept of a pre-linguistic awareness. Within these ontological concepts the philosopher becomes a mystic and seems to forget that the light of language comes first; that the light seizes us and enables us to invent the linguistic world we call reality long before the 'guru' can see the pre-linguistic world. The paradox for the guru is that the light must exist before the seeing; one first needs the light of languages in order to be enlightened to the pre-linguistic position."

"What about the moment of vision at the cutting edge of time before the intellect steps in and rationalises the world into objects and categorise and separates the viewer off as an observer, a subject, which is other to the event of seeing?" says the Buddhist biker.

"Perhaps I'll concede that it's possible to have a moment of vision before intellectualisation takes place; but this is a trivial truth. One could never know this moment, because knowing is knowledge and by its very nature, knowledge requires language. Any theory that makes a claim to knowledge without language is literally nonsense. In the moment that light reaches the eye the light of language has not formed a reflection of representation and we can only ever know the world as re-presentation." "To realise, through whatever form, an instant of pre-intellectual awareness, 'a moment of pure Quality', requires not only an understanding of the 'I' before language, but also a pure form of self communication," affirms the grey-haired Scrabble player. "Each of these presumptions demands a fixed concept, or centre, whereby the 'I' can be contained within signification yet at the same time remaining outside of the signification within which it is contained. This, as you can see, suggests a paradox in which the pre-linguistic 'I' and the pure self-communicating 'I' are each the originator which encapsulates all other."

"The moment of pure Quality is not to be understood as a conscious representation of the world but rather as an immediate intuitive reaction to the stimulus of the physical world," says the motorcycle man. "Our intellectual choice to represent the world in a homogenous form through signs is a response to Quality. It is Quality which creates the 'I' and the world, the subject and the object."

"Yet, the concept of Quality demands that the 'I' be prior to and transcend signification, just as the earlier concepts of Human Being and Dasein have done," returns the grey-haired Scrabble player.

"This takes Quality to be a concept when it isn't a concept."

"It has to be, it is an idea invented in somebody's mind."

"Quality is the reason why people have ideas."

"No, that's language."

"Language is a part of Quality."

"I can show you language, show me Quality."

"Show me a world without Quality and I'll show you a wasteland."

"Any form of transcendental signification," states the guy with grey hair, "is an illusion because signifiers and signifieds are continually breaking apart and re-coupling in new associations, which by necessity dispels any possibility of a secure, unambiguous and isolated 'trace'."

"The what?" questions the second twin.

"The trace, the opinion that all signs are in a state of chaotic dissemination; tearing the makeshift lid off the assumption that identifies both signified and signifier as attached to one another like two sides of a single sheet of paper.(236) In the light of this explosive dissemination, of word to concept so to speak, Quality is revealed as simply one more transcendental signifier within a tradition which has consumed Western thinking for three thousand years.

This tradition has sought to establish a 'metaphysics of presence'," continues the grey-haired guy, "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. However, if presence does proceed signification how could 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 which can be seen from one or the other perspective but never both together."

"The inevitable implications of this," says the American woman at the bar," are that not only are foundations, values and meanings all in a continuous state of dissemination, and therefore incapable of being at one with themselves, but also the whole concept of 'me', the 'I', also has no fixed centre or origin. Like foundations, meanings, and values, the 'I' cannot be both its own referent or origin and its own goal or end."

"Inasmuch as language constructs the whole concept of the 'I'," says the grey-haired 'Scrabbler', "rather than language being simply a convenient tool which the 'I' uses to describe the world; the whole assumption that the 'I' is a stable, unified entity becomes a fiction."

"Then what's the difference between computation and comprehension?" asks the American. "I'm not quite sure what it is you're trying say."

"Well," continues the American woman, "if it is language, and language alone, which constructs the 'I' then one is left wondering what the difference is between a human being using language and a complex computer using language. Isn't it fair to assume, from what you have said yourself, that the computer using language has as much right to the concept 'I' as a so-called 'human being'? Both the human 'I' and the computer 'I' are linguistic constructions."

"You would notice the difference," says the first twin, "if you set both a machine capable of complicated computation and a human child the task of counting whole numbers from one proceeding upwards. Because the human situation is one that sees its particular existence as finite, the child will begin counting and soon realise, a priori, that the task is infinite. If we accept that the child has come to see time as a precious and exhaustible commodity in relation to its own life, it must also seem highly unlikely that the child would want to prove the number counting hypothesis by spending its entire life counting numbers. The machine on the other hand has no such concept of finality and will continue counting until it is told to stop or until it is unplugged. Understanding involves a plurality of diverging and splintering thoughts, as well as memory,

strategy and innovation; whereas computation is focused and directed with no concept of ambiguity, paradox or irony. It follows a binary path of either/or, ones and zeros, on or off."

"A machine can be programmed to have a finite time span," says the guy with grey (Barnet Fair), "it can be programmed to see paradox and irony; it can even be programmed to make guesses in an a priori way. This is because it is programmed through a language in the same way that we are. I also question your references to time as an unambiguous concept. Many cultures different from our own, view time quite differently from the way that we see it. These concepts that we take for granted are always more enigmatic than we think. "

"Surely comprehension and understanding involves more than a disseminating language with trace-like qualities, ambiguity, irony and paradox," says the rambler; "it must also involve a biological being with an intellectual capacity to create narratives from a system of signs. Isn't it true that language requires Dasein in the same way that Dasein requires language? They're inseparable, for without the other each would cease to exist."

"This doesn't detract from an interpretation of the conceptual 'I' as a product of language," remarks the grey-haired man whilst placing the final tile of a seven-letter word upon a triple scoring square. "A so-called intuitive moment is not a point but a structure depending for its existence on its relation to a suppositious past and future. Like all linguistic signs the intuitive moment is inhabited by, and traced through with, every other sign."

I look up surprised to see marks flickering across the TV monitor; so, I begin to read:

The concept of origin or nature is nothing but the myth of addition, of supplementarity annulled by being purely additive. It is the myth of effacement of the trace, that is to say of an originary difference that is neither absence nor presence, neither negative nor positive. Originary difference is supplementarity as structure. Here structure means the irreducible complexity within which one can only shape or shift the play of presence or absence; that within which metaphysics can be produced but which metaphysics cannot think.

I look around the bar and everyone appears suddenly frozen in time. The only movement that I detect is a slight twitch from the black cat. I turn back to the TV monitor and as the words begin to move across the screen again the pub becomes animated once more.

The movement of the effacement of the trace has been, from Plato to Rousseau to Hegel, imposed upon writing in the narrow sense; the necessity of such a displacement may now be apparent. Writing is one of the representatives of the trace in general, it is not the trace itself. The trace itself does not exist. (To exist is to be, to be an entity, a being present, to on.) In a way, the displacement leaves the place of the decision hidden, but it also indicates it unmistakably.(237)

"There appears to be a similarity between this 'trace' you speak of and Quality," says the guy with the greenish backpack.

"In what way?"

"In that each encapsulates the whole while remaining indefinable."

"The trace itself does not exist," repeats the victorious Scrabble player, "because it isn't anything real. What you appear to be attempting to do with the word 'Quality' is place it within the gaps that appear in the discourse of rationality. Gaps which are an inevitable part of rational discourse

not only because of its attempts to find closure through logic and truth but also due to its inability to recognise its own narrative dependence. The 'trace' implies a connection between every sign in an inexhaustible chain, yet it is not something visible or transcendental. It is rather an attempt to show the fallacy of any sign being the creator or originator of every other signs."

"I think that you're quite mistaken in your endeavour to categorise Quality as a term which freezes the play of 'differance'," says the motorcyclist, "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," says the rambler, "in much the same way that 'Being' and 'is' have been crossed through in the past. 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' is to have both the word and the deletion on view so as 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."

Instant Karma's gonna get you,
Gonna knock you off your feet.
Better recognise your brother
Every one you meet.
Why in the world are we here,
Surely not to live in pain and fear
Why on earth are you there
When you're everywhere
Come and get your share.
Well we all shine on,
Like the moon the stars and the sun
Yeah, we all shine on
On and on and on.(238)

"So perhaps the critical question that we are faced with is one concerning choice and whether or not the individual has any choice," states the first twin.

"You have choice," says the fourth and final scrabble player, "so long as you remain included within the dance of perpetual consumption. The industrial population of the world has the ultimate freedom of choice and this we exercise through selecting whatever signs of consumption we desire, from babies to bestiality, from bodies to bananas and from celebrity to car crashes. We have individual choice on a scale never dreamed of in any past utopia; yet it is all a false consciousness, spoon-fed to us all via the electronic highway of the institutional discourse of knowledge and power. Freedom of choice is now imposed upon us through the power of signs that confront us in an unrelenting collage of pictures, posters, and pixels. As consumers, we are controlled through our own unrelenting consumption of signs. We can never get enough of them and hence we will never be satisfied with the ones that we consume, we simply feel the need to consume more and more in the hopeless pursuit of trying to fill the unquenchable thirst of our self-created and devouring void."

"Self righteous bastard," mutters the bartender to his stuffed black cat.

"Surely one has the choice to stand outside the signs of consumerism," mumbles the second twin.
"It is possible to remain upon the fringe of society."

"How?"

"I don't know, go and live in an old bus or a tepee, or something."

"The autonomous individual, guided by his or her own principles has become so unrecognisably fragmented within our technological fantasy world that even this autonomous subject, the artist, the hippie, and the revolutionary, has become so embroiled within the edifice of signs that there is no longer any inside or outside, just signs circling around one inside other in an endless play of consumption."

"The way you continuously use the term 'play' would suggest that you see everything as a game."

"Well isn't it?"

"I suppose in one sense it is but, what of starvation and disease?"

The fourth scrabble player side-steps the question like a skilled politician by suggesting that:
"The real tyranny of this game is that it is so often played as if its signs were fixed entities when they are merely representations of something other than themselves. When the game is played out over the deeply repressed fear of allowing signs to be perceived as ambivalent, you end up with our present society; where even culture becomes a system of signs driven no longer by the people and their anxieties about harvesting, hunting and story-telling, but rather driven by the production and consumption of signs themselves. Culture is thus trapped within, and therefore controlled by, the rules of a game, at the heart of which is the production of signs. There is no escape, it is an enormous devouring giant."

I hear a yell from a man standing by the toilet door and then see a body lying on the floor which I assume from probable cause and effect, has been asphyxiated by the 'limited edition' bio-degradable 'Happy Shopper' polythene carrier bag which is moulded to the contours of the anonymous head. I walk over realising this must have been the same guy who'd been shouting abuse through the toilet door. I look around and see that the dead guy is surrounded by an enormous collection of plastic shopping bags in every colour shape and size. Next to the body is a till receipt with the words "Eureka" written upon it.

You may find yourself living in a shotgun shack.
And you may find yourself living in another part of the world.
And you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile.
And you may find yourself in a beautiful house
With a beautiful wife
And you may ask yourself
How did I get here?
And you may ask yourself how do I work this?
And you may ask yourself where is that large automobile
And you may tell yourself this is not my beautiful house
This is not my beautiful wife
And you may ask yourself what is this beautiful house
And you may ask yourself where does this highway go to

And you may ask yourself am I right or am I wrong
And you may say to yourself
My god what have I done.(239)

"Last orders Ladies and gentlemen please," rings out the call of the bartender.

I finish my drink and begin to collect my things when I hear the young woman lean over and talk to her friend with the green backpack; "Doesn't this nihilistic death knell within post-structuralism destroy your faith in Quality?" I hear her ask.

"Not at all," he replies, "post-structuralist ideas strengthen the whole concept of quality. Both post-structuralism and the Metaphysics of Quality are means of disclosing our habits of categorising and centralising the diversity of existence. Obviously my own faith is one of optimism in which:

The significant philo-story, on bringing into play the craft of poetry, is capable of designing patterns for the open-minded scientist; not by way of dialectic truth but as a consequence of rhetorical 'good'. This self-corrective field of study, with its relative foundations and values, is capable of supplying a contingent support for 'malleable logic,' communication and thought. Because this 'malleable science' involves the restraint of self-reflection, this makes it a component of ethics, in that it supplies the standards for all habitual behaviour. In turn, ethics is a component of aesthetics because ethical guidance is directed towards values and values are conceived and perceived aesthetically.

Quality is a form of harmony and this is why things such as language, DNA, and the physical forces which bond particles together, survive. It is because they have beauty. Beauty, poetry, Quality, maybe this is the reason that there is something in the universe rather than nothing."

"Time! Ladies and gentleman please," shouts the bartender, "come on haven't you lot got homes to go to?."

"Good as a noun," says the motorcycle man, to the stout Scotsman, "rather than an adjective, this is all the Metaphysics of Quality is about. Of course. . .

The answer to this whole dilemma concerning Quality, choice, values, post-structuralism and the human condition rests upon. . .

"What kind of cat is that?" The American woman asks the bartender. "That's a dead cat," he replies

And the pub door closes behind me.

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Appendix A

What is in mind is a sort of Chautauqua - that's the only name I can think of for it - like the travelling tent-show Chautauquas that used to move across America, this America, the one that we are now in, an old time series of popular talks intended to edify and entertain, improve the mind and bring enlightenment to the ears and thoughts of the hearer. The Chautauquas were pushed aside by faster-paced radio, movies and TV, and it seems to me the change was not entirely an improvement. Perhaps because of these changes the stream of national consciousness moves faster now, and is broader, but it seems to run less deep. The old channels cannot contain it and in its search for new ones there seems to be a growing havoc and destruction along its banks. In this Chautauqua I would like not to cut any new channels of consciousness but simply dig deeper into old ones that have become silted in with the debris of thoughts grown stale and platitudes too often repeated. 'What's new?' is an interesting and broadening eternal question, but one which, if pursued exclusively, results only in an endless parade of trivia and fashion, the silt

of tomorrow. I would like, instead, to be concerned with the question 'What is best?' a question which cuts deeply rather than broadly, a question whose answers tend to move the silt downstream. There are eras of human history in which the channels of thought have been too deeply cut and no change was possible, and nothing new ever happened, and 'best' was a matter of dogma, but that is not the situation now. Now the stream of our common consciousness seems to be obliterating its own banks, losing its central direction and purpose, flooding the lowlands, disconnecting and isolating the highlands and to no particular purpose other than the wasteful fulfilment of its own internal momentum. Some channel deepening seems called for.(240)

Appendix B

A conventional view of insanity would be to see it as a misunderstanding of the object by the subject. The object is real, the subject is mistaken. The only problem [the conventional view can perceive] is how to change the subject's mind back to a correct comprehension of objective reality. But with a Metaphysics of Quality the empirical experience is not an experience of 'objects.' It's an experience of value patterns. When the insane person advances some explanation of the universe that is completely at odds with the current scientific reality, we do not have to believe that [they have] jumped off of the end of the empirical world. [They are simply people] valuing intellectual patterns that, because they lay outside the range of our own culture, we perceive to have very low value.

Obviously no culture wants its legal patterns violated, and when they are, an immune system takes over in ways that are analogues to a biological immune system. The deviant dangerous source of illegal cultural patterns is first identified, then isolated and finally destroyed as a cultural entity. That's what mental hospitals are partly for. And also heresy trials. They protect the culture from foreign ideas that if allowed to grow unchecked could destroy the culture itself.

That was what Phaedrus had seen in psychiatric wards, people trying to convert him back to 'objective reality.' He saw that [the psychiatrists] were representatives of the culture and they were always required to deal with insanity as cultural representatives, and he got awfully tired of the interminable role-playing. They were always playing the role of priest saving heretics. Psychiatrists seemed to fear the taint of insanity much as inquisitors once feared succumbing to the devil. Psychiatrists were not allowed to practice psychiatry if they were insane. It was required that they literally did not know what they were taking about. Admittedly you don't have to be infected with pneumonia in order to know how to cure it [but insanity is an intellectual pattern and not a biological one]. . .Insanity isn't an object of observation. It's an alternative to observation itself. There is no such thing as a 'disease' of patterns of intellect. There is only heresy. And that is what insanity really is.

Ask, 'if there is only one person in the world, is there any way he could be insane?' Insanity always exists in relation to others. It is a social and intellectual deviation, not a biological deviation. The only test for insanity in a court of law or anywhere else is conformity to a cultural status quo. That's why the psychiatric profession bears such a resemblance to the old priesthods. Both use physical restraints and abuse as ways of enforcing the status quo.

The Metaphysics of Quality says that it is immoral for sane people to force cultural conformity by suppressing the dynamic drives that produce insanity. Such suppression is a lower form of evolution trying to devour a higher one. Static social and intellectual patterns are only an intermediate level of evolution. They are good servants of the process of life but if allowed to turn into masters they destroy it.

Once this theoretical structure is available, it offers solutions to some mysteries in the present treatment of the insane. For example, doctors know that shock treatment 'works', but are fond of saying that no one knows why.

The Metaphysics of Quality offers an explanation. The value of shock treatment is not that it returns a lunatic to normal cultural patterns. It certainly does not do that. Its value is that it destroys all patterns, both cultural and private, and leaves the patient temporally in a Dynamic state. All the shock does is duplicate the effect of hitting the patient over the head with a baseball bat. It simply knocks the patient senseless. In fact it was to imitate the effects of hitting someone over the head with a baseball bat without the risk of skull damage that Ugo Cerletti developed shock treatment in the first place. But what goes unrecognised in a subject-object theoretical structure is the fact that this senseless unpatterned state is a valuable state of existence. Once the patient is in this state the psychiatrists of course don't know what to do with it, and so the patient often slips back into lunacy and has to be knocked senseless again and again. But sometimes the patient, in a moment of Zen wisdom, sees the superficiality of both his own contrary patterns and the cultural patterns, sees that one gets electrically clubbed day after day and the other sets him free from the institution, and thereupon makes a wise mystic decision to get the hell out of there by whatever avenue is available.(241)

Appendix C

A Commentary

This commentary is my attempt to form a rationale for the creative element of my thesis. In what follows, I shall illustrate why I've applied several characterisations and a variety of literary styles to expose interpretation; rather than adopt the more traditional approach to academic writing, such as the 'critical monologue', which has a tendency to close interpretation. Throughout the writing of this thesis, it has been my intention to make a 'Good' argument; at no point have I intentionally set out to dictate to the reader a definitive truth to any of the questions raised in the course of my research. Bearing in mind that all the voices in this thesis are brought together through me as the author of the work, I accept the basic criticism that the dialogue I have used within this thesis is actually no more than a monologue. However, I would suggest that every text in the act of being read, or perhaps I should say re-written, is exposed as an intricate lacework of woven threads. The interaction of these threads, such as the writer, the reader, culture, literature and history, transforms the text into something more than a monologue and more than a dialogue; it becomes a 'polylogue', the site upon which a multiple play of voices can be heard.

Against the claim that I have attempted to dilute the authorial voice of this thesis by using the technique of dialogue, I would claim, in my defence, that I have displayed quite openly throughout this study my use of rhetoric and rhetorical devices. The reader will quickly discover in the following pages that the whole dilemma between the rhetorical and the dialectical aspect of language, in all its many forms, is very much part of what this thesis sets out to address. I will openly declare that part of my intention, through the very texture of this thesis, is to create a critique upon the monological voice of philosophical claims to 'truth'.

In many ways, I have tried to remain close to the creative style of writing about philosophy that Robert M. Pirsig uses in both *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila*. Pirsig's technique of introducing complex ideas via everyday description and metaphor, was a significant part of what attracted me to his novels to begin with. Much of the energy in Pirsig's work emerges from his practice of disclosing ideas and then allowing these same thoughts to disseminate in the mind of the reader. This approach, I feel, acknowledges the contingency and complexity within

theoretical concepts. In my own way I've attempted to make use of these techniques, allowing the thoughts and ideas expressed in this thesis to be apprehended, yet at the same time leaving them unfettered to be transformed in the course of reading.

A significant part of my investigation also addresses the literary merits of philosophical writings; I have attempted, through an acknowledgement to past writers and to a far lesser extent through my own writing, to illustrate the view that philosophical texts have their own literary charms. Who could deny the aesthetic quality within Plato's philosophical writings, or the obvious literary achievements of writers such as Lao Tzu, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, William James or Jean-Paul Sartre, all of whom could be considered artists in the literary sense of this term.

Another point that I have wrestled with in this thesis is the problem of finding a balance between a so-called 'academic critical language' and an 'everyday language,' with which to communicate complex ideas. At times I think that I've leant, a little more than I would have liked, towards a more academic discourse, yet an avoidance of technical language is not what I set out to do. What I wanted, was to find an astute way in which to clarify technical terms, enabling them to be integrated as part of an 'everyday language', thereby expanding the popular vocabulary to enhance conversation.

The characterisations I've used in this thesis have been intentionally composed in a relatively hollow and two-dimensional fashion, not because characterisation is any less important than information but because description and personality have a tendency to confuse ideas, especially when words are at a premium. Any description of personality or place that I have used in this thesis is there to enhance the ideas rather than to advance the reader's sensual imagination. Characterisation can too often influence one's comprehension of concepts; this level of rhetoric is acceptable within the genre of the novel, but in a thesis an overemphasis upon character is, I have discovered, somewhat out of place and unnecessary.

The central characters in the first two sections of this thesis, Hannah and Martin, are introduced to provide a means of excavating and unearthing questions that will help to disclose the concepts within Pirsig's novels. I find this approach to investigation more searching than a straightforward exposition, because having two or more voices in conversation allows for a greater variety of expression. It exposes the lack of certainty that surrounds the questions metaphysics confronts and highlights the diversity of discourses and answers available.

As I travelled along the path of writing this thesis, I soon discovered that one of the basic problems of a creative approach to critical analysis is that one can never feel the aesthetic freedom of the novelist. I was forced very early on in writing this thesis to face the fact that at times, the conversational elements of the piece were a touch contrived. Academic writing often demands a lengthier explanation than conventional conversation allows. On several occasions Martin talks for what would be four or five minutes, without Hannah being given the opportunity to say a word. Yet, in order to communicate certain ideas I've found it necessary to make this unrealistic adjustment on the rare occasion when no other avenue seemed plausible.

The question this raises is, if a so-called 'creative style' fails to deliver an adequate means of presenting certain ideas within the research, why have I used such a technique? My answer is that all forms of written research are 'creative approaches'; it is just that we have come to accept the 'critical monologue' as the standard technique for presenting research. This does not however make it non-creative or the best form of expression for delivering the findings of research. As I hope to highlight with this commentary, I believe the approach that I have taken is more beneficial to my research; and this includes the occasional lengthy soliloquy by a single character.

The balance between exposition and critical analysis is always a difficult one to maintain in any form of critical writing. How much description should one give the reader? Should one assume that the primary text has been read or not? These problems are no different from within the 'creative' approach to critical analysis; perhaps the main difference exists in the way ideas and quotations from secondary texts are introduced into the writing. Sometimes a vast amount of knowledge or citation coming straight from the mouth of a single character can seem far too constructed. To compensate for this deficiency I have used several different devices, which includes everything from postcards and notebooks, to posters and karaoke screens, in an attempt to deliver quotations in a thought-provoking and stimulating manner.

The use of these devices in delivering citations has, however, led to a small minority of these quotes becoming mis-quotes. This isn't because I felt the need to govern quotations by manipulating them into saying what I wanted them to, but because the situation in which Pirsig uses these ideas differs from my own. I've not changed the ideas within these quotes, only the setting or the periphery of the situation through which the ideas are expressed.

I've divided this thesis into three main sections, entitled: *Inventio*, *Dispositio*, and *Elocutio*, the three stages of Classical Rhetoric. I felt that these titles shared a relationship to the goals I had set myself for each section of the thesis as well as structuring its overall composition. *Inventio*, which signifies finding or discovering, relates to my setting out upon a journey, discovering a voice and a style with which to communicate, and finding a structure for the ideas I wanted to express. This first section was perhaps the most problematical of all because I had chosen to write the thesis from beginning to end as if on an actual journey and, as is often appreciated, embarkation is the hardest part. What we take on the journey and the preparations we have made are crucial to its success. We are also acutely aware that the direction we chose to set off in is simply one of an infinite number, yet this initial decision, perhaps made in a moment of intuition, has huge ramifications for what happens when we confront the unknown challenges ahead.

The second section, *Dispositio*, which signifies arranging and revealing, deals, like the first section, with exposing and analysing the ideas within Pirsig's novels; however, in this section I began to bring much more of my own interpretation upon Pirsig's concepts. This section forms the path between the first and last section. Yet it would be wrong to describe it as simply a middle ground between beginning and end; I see it rather as a climb between the ground of exposition and the level of disclosure.

Elocutio, or style, the final section of this thesis, is set in the bar of rural English public house, which represents for me the perfect Postmodern theatre in which to play out the final drama of the thesis. This Postmodern scene of a pastoral pub where all is facade and simulacra, copies without originals, lends itself perfectly to my wish to entertain the reader in an eccentric game. Yet, at the same time, it allows me the opportunity to investigate Pirsig's thoughts and ideas in relation to the questions posed by Post-Modernity, a realm in which philosophy has reached an end and where philosophies and histories have begun. This, I feel, is a world into which Pirsig's writing can be dealt with as writing and not categorised into a reductive genre of novel or metaphysical tract.

All the characters that you will encounter in this thesis are aspects of a single disposition, a personality that is something of a cracked mirror. These pseudonymous creations are ghosts of past philosophers, scientists, writers, teachers etc, who breeze around in an imaginary Cyberspace of the mind-world, trying to position their ideas at the forefront of our thoughts. They are trying to claim their position in a Postmodern melting-pot of historical figures, thousands of them all

ving for recognition in a feverish fantasy of words chasing around in an endless play of difference.

In this thesis, I have tried to engage unconditionally with the complexities of Pirsig's words, ideas, and concepts, such as Quality, the Church of Reason, care, and gumption traps. I have attempted to express what these concepts mean for me as well as constantly remaining critical of them. However, I acknowledge that this thesis contains many problems and flaws. I am no academic or intellectual, and although I appreciate and admire the work of those who are, I realise that both my language and my critical abilities reflect my less than scholastic background. My hope is that I have used the distinctiveness of my own voice and observation to produce a work of interest, invention, humility, and humour. I have on reflection learnt so much about the art of writing and criticism while creating this thesis that some of its obvious defects and problems reveal, to me at least, a whole host of trials and emotions which are an essential record of the journey I have travelled and the distance I have still to go.

Appendix D

Notes on Genre

Both *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila* fit loosely within a genre of American literature that combines both philosophical and spiritual discourses with accounts of physical and metaphorical journeys. Within this literary context I place writers such as Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) and Jack Kerouac.

The writings of Thoreau can be situated within this genre because his work, especially the novel *Walden, or life in the woods*, gives both a representation of the American landscape and delivers a thought-provoking exposition upon the conditions of American life in the mid-nineteenth century. *Walden*, published in 1854 and mostly ignored in its own time, has had a huge influence upon American literature in the twentieth century and a direct influence on the style, form and content of Pirsig's work. Pirsig's narrator, in fact, is reading Thoreau's *Walden* to his son as they travel together on their journey across America.(242) The narrator is attempting to find solutions to living with the very technology by which Thoreau is so haunted and threatened in *Walden*.

The work of Jack Kerouac also has a close contextual and generic relationship to Pirsig's style. Kerouac, who is considered one of the leading members of the 'The Beat Generation', incorporated into such novels as *The Dharma Bums*, *Lonesome Traveller* and most famously, *On the Road*, characters who take to the open roads and the high peaks of the American landscape in search of spiritual knowledge and self-transcendence.

If one were to contextualize the work of these writers within a cultural milieu, the fiction of writers such as Thomas Wolf, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway and Samuel Langhorne Clemens, could also be seen to contribute to a style which combines the literature of journey, through physical and metaphorical landscapes, to the introspective literature of thoughts and ideas. In the case of each of these writers, observations about society, culture and identity are connected with a deeper ontological and epistemological contemplation. There is also a sense of individual spirituality powerfully underpinning their work through descriptions of time and place.

In the case of Pirsig and Kerouac, each writer's work combines descriptions of landscape and travel with spiritual and philosophical discussions - all flowing through a style of writing that is somewhere in between jazz rhythms and a stream of consciousness writing.

Pirsig claims for own technique a direct influence from the Chautauqua: the methodology of delivering philosophical ideas through story and narrative once practised by members of the travelling shows which moved across America before the invention of radio and television. This 'Chautauqua' method also appears to have had an influence on Karl Baedeker travel handbooks, or vade mecum, which were published in the mid nineteenth century and have remained popular even to this day. The move to place the Baedeker into the realm of philosophical thought and discourse was taken up by the early twentieth-century symbolist poets, especially Mina Loy, who, in her 1923 collection of poems entitled the Lunar Baedeker, set out to explore both the physical American landscape and the unconscious landscape of American Feminism.

When we cross back over the Atlantic, we begin to see that the notion, or perhaps one could possibly say tradition, of philosophical writing pursued through dialogue, prose and fiction is closer to a European practice of delivering ideas. This 'tradition' incorporates classical enlightenment and post-enlightenment writers and thinkers as diverse as Plato, Hume, Bishop Berkeley, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Derrida, all of whom use fictional forms to promote their philosophical ideas. It is from these writers that the style and approach in this thesis takes much of its shape.

Pirsig purposely avoids the dialogue form in his own work in an attempt to move away from what he see as the dominant Western tradition of the 'dialectic' which goes back to Plato's persuasive philosophical dialogues. Rather than perpetuate this mythology, Pirsig moves his writing in the direction of, as he puts it in a rhetorical oxymoron, a more honest form of rhetoric, whereby ideas are presented as seeds for further thought and dissemination and not as objective and eternal truths as the Platonic tradition holds.

My own style of writing in this thesis is an attempt to reflect a Postmodern hybrid of the philosophical journeys outlined above and to incorporate the prose styles of European philosophy. My reason for mixing together these styles of dialogue, fiction and philosophy is an attempt to fuse American writing of the late twentieth century to the tradition of Western philosophy in order to explore what the outcome of this fusion will be. My thesis is the result and may you be so kind as to be my judge.

(1) Pirsig, R. 1974. p. 17.

(2) The post-structuralist perspective that I am referring to is mainly that of Jacques Derrida and especially the views that he expresses in his work entitled *Of Grammatology*, written in 1967. I have dealt in detail with the connection between Pirsig's work and post-structuralism in the last section of this thesis.

(3) Pirsig R. 1974 p. 242. Interestingly Martin Heidegger, in his later writings, also talks about the 'event' in much the same way as Pirsig. I will go on to discuss this at greater length in the last section of the thesis.

(4) William Wordsworth. *The Prelude*, ed. T Hutchinson & E. de Selincourt, 1950.

(5) James Joyce, *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, New York, B.W. Huebsch, 1916.

(6) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 294.

(7) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 252-254.

(8) Alan Watts. Taken from *The Penguin Book Of The Beats* Edited by A. Chartes. 1992. p.606-614.

(9) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 221.

(10) Pirsig 1974. p. 222.

(11) *Ibid.* p. 19.

(12) *Ibid.* p. 303.

- (13) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 416. These being the very last words of the novel.
- (14) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 150-156. See also chapter six of this thesis entitled The Church Of Reason.
- (15) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 85.
- (16) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 294.
- (17) I'm referring principally here to the Existentialist philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre. See also the last section of this thesis for a more in-depth analysis of Pirsig's work in relation to Existentialism.
- (18) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 18.
- (19) Natalie Goldberg Writing Down The Bones Boston, Shambhala publications 1986, p. 82.
- (20) Barnett singer, 'Reflections on Robert Pirsig' Durham University Journal, #73, June 1981. p. 213.
- (21) Francis Fukuyama. The End Of History And The Last Man. New York and London: Penguin, 1992.
- (22) See Appendix A
- (23) Pirsig R. 1974. P. 243.
- (24) Rene Descartes procedure of 'methodological doubt' is explained principally in the Discourse on Method (1637) and in the Meditations (1642).
- (25) Heraclitus is believed to have been the first to use the term logos in a metaphysical sense. He asserted that the world is governed by fire-like logos, a divine force that produces the order and pattern discernible in the flux of nature. He believed that this force is similar to human reason and that his own thought partook of the divine logos.
- (26) Nietzsche's 'eternal recurrence' is the basic concept behind Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883, 1884,1885): trans. R.J. Hollingdale, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974. A link between Pirsig and Nietzsche is dealt with in the final section of this thesis.
- (27) The surviving fragments of Parmenides On Nature where translated in 1965 by L. Tar (n.
- (28) Plato's distrust of the artist is explained in The Republic (book X). Trans. Desmond Lee, Penguin. Harmondsworth. 1987.
- (29) Ibid., Book IV, section 514. p. 316.
- (30) See 'Dilemma' Chambers English Dictionary 7th edition 1992.
- (31) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 242.
- (32) Ibid., p. 250.
- (33) See chapter four, entitled 'A ghostly figure in the landscape'.
- (34) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 17.
- (35) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 14.
- (36) Pirsig R 1991. p. 476.
- (37) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 15.
- (38) Ibid., p. 15.
- (39) Ibid., p.13.
- (40) James Joyce. Finnegans Wake Faber & Faber, London: 1939.
- (41) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 355.
- (42) Taken from the King James Bible: The gospel according to St. John Ch. 1: 1-14.
- (43) Bakhtin, M. Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics, trans. Caryl Emerson, Manchester University press 1984.
- (44) An in-depth discussion of Pirsig's application of rhetoric can be found in chapter five of the thesis.
- (45) John Lechte. Fifty: Key Contemporary Thinkers. Routledge 1994. p.10
- (46) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 29.
- (47) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 125.
- (48) Ibid. p. 145.
- (49) D T, Suzuki An Introduction to Zen Buddhism, Ballatine Books N.Y. 1973. p. 102.

- (50) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 324.
- (51) Zen Flesh Zen Bones compiled by Paul Repts. Pelican Books. 1971. p. 92.
- (52) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 323.
- (53) The connection between Pirsig's use of the term 'care' and Heidegger's own use of this same term are discussed in the final section of the thesis.
- (54) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 279.
- (55) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 280.
- (56) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 285.
- (57) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 289.
- (58) Pirsig 1974 p.287.
- (59) For an in-depth analysis and critique of Plato's Phaedrus, see Chapter Seven of this thesis.
- (60) Xenophon's memoirs about Socrates can be found in three works entitled Apology, Memorabilia, and Symposium. There is an English translation of the complete works of Xenophon by H.G. Dakyns, 4 vol. (1890-97); and by W. Miller in the "Loeb Series," 7 vol. (1918-25, reprinted 1960-68), with a parallel Greek text.
- (61) Rhetoric is the central theme of the next Chapter.
- (62) Prince Gautama Siddhartha also known as Buddha.
- (63) Herman Hesse. 1965. p. 22. The use of the word herd to describe the mass of society suggests a clear indication of Nietzsche's influence upon Hesse's thinking.
- (64) Ibid. p. 21.
- (65) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 72.
- (66) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 28.
- (67) Pirsig R. p. 37.
- (68) I'm referring to pictures such as Turner's Fisherman at Sea (1796) Tate Gallery London and Wreck of a Transport Ship (1805-10) Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.
- (69) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 45.
- (70) Ibid. p. 92.
- (71) Ibid. p. 94.
- (72) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 255.
- (73) Ibid. p. 257
- (74) Casper David Friedrich's From the Summit: Traveller Looking over the Sea of Fog is in the Hamburg Kunsthalle, Germany.
- (75) Automatic writing is a technique that attempts to dispense with conscious control by writing immediately the motivations of the unconscious mind.
- (76) Cut-up is a technique whereby a text is cut into segments, shuffled and then randomly placed out to produce an illogical, accidental text.
- (77) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 276.
- (78) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 333.
- (79) Ibid. p. 410.
- (80) Ibid. p. 410-411.
- (81) Micheal Billig. Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach To Social Psychology. Cambridge University Press. 1987. p. 48.
- (82) Plato The Republic Book X
- (83) Derrida J. Of Grammatology. 1976. p. 165.
- (84) Norris C. 1987. p. 110.
- (85) Norris C. 1882. p. 32.
- (86) Aristotle The Art Of Rhetoric trans by J.H. Freese. Loeb Classical Library. London. 1959. p. 14.
- (87) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 364.
- (88) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 366.
- (89) Pirsig R. 1974 p. 368.

- (90) Ibid. p. 369.
- (91) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 374.
- (92) Pirsig R. 1974 p. 24.
- (93) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 24.
- (94) Pirsig R 1974. p.25.
- (95) Pirsig R. 1974. p. .26
- (96) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 27.
- (97) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 63.
- (98) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 118.
- (99) Rorty R. 1982. p. xiii.
- (100) Damien Hirst
- (101) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 127.
- (102) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 130.
- (103) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 130.
- (104) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 209.
- (105) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 218.
- (106) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 395.
- (107) Plato Phaedrus trans by Hamilton W. Penguin Classics. 1973. p. 50.
- (108) Plato Phaedrus trans by Hamilton W. Penguin Classics. 1973. p.56.
- (109) Plato Phaedrus trans by Hamilton W. Penguin Classics. 1973. p. 56.
- (110) Pirsig R. 1974. p.393
- (111) Pirsig R. 1974.. p. 394.
- (112) Rorty R. Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980) Harvester Wheatsheaf. London. 1982. p. 153.
- (113) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 423.
- (114) Christopher Norris from within Conquest of Faculties (Philosophy and Theory expresses a related interpretation after Deconstruction). Methuen. London. 1985. Chapter four.
- (115) Plato Phaedrus trans by Hamilton W. 1973. P. 73. In a footnote, Hamilton remarks upon the notion that the Spartans were renowned for their dislike of rhetoric. They much preferred physical violence as a solution to disagreement, but then again I suppose you don't give up your homeland without a struggle simply because someone loses an argument.
- (116) Ibid. p. 71.
- (117) Ibid. p. 77.
- (118) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 375.
- (119) As expressed in Plato's dialogue Phaedo.
- (120) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 376.
- (121) Ibid. p. 377.
- (122) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 377.
- (123) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 378.
- (124) Norris C. 1982. p. 64.
- (125) Plato Phaedrus trans by Hamilton W. 1973. p. 66-103.
- (126) Derrida J. 1967. P. 17.
- (127) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 378.
- (128) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 380-381.
- (129) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 380.
- (130) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 382. This passage comes from H. D. F. Kitto's Book The Greeks Pelican books.
- (131) Pirsig R. 1974.. p. 381.
- (132) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 383.
- (133) Graves R. The Greek Myths: vol. 1. Pelican Books. 1964. P. 151-154.
- (134) Capra F. The Tao of Physics Flamingo 1976. Glasgow. p. 21.

- (135) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 133.
- (136) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 138.
- (137) Ibid. p. 138.
- (138) Ibid. p. 138.
- (139) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 140.
- (140) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 140.
- (141) See Chapter Nine.
- (142) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 79.
- (143) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 81.
- (144) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 220.
- (145) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 220.
- (146) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 166.
- (147) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 167.
- (148) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 171.
- (149) See Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason trans by Norman Kemp Smith. Macmillian. London. 1978.
- (150) Abraham Pais Niels Bohr's Times Oxford University Press. 1991.
- (151) Rorty R. Contingency, Irony and Solidarity p. 5.
- (152) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 172.
- (153) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 189.
- (154) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 188.
- (155) I continue the main thrust of this argument in the following chapters.
- (156) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 311. This question also will form much of the basis for discussion in the final section of this thesis.
- (157) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 122.
- (158) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 123.
- (159) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 125.
- (160) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 124.
- (161) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 125.
- (162) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 126.
- (163) Rorty R. Contingency, Irony and Solidarity. P. 10
- (164) Ibid. p. 7.
- (165) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 127.
- (166) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 128.
- (167) David Bowie. 'Quicksand' from the album Hunky Dory RCA Victor SF8244, 1972.
- (168) Much of this section is based upon ideas expressed by Robert Maynard Pirsig on pages 80-85 of Lila 1991.
- (169) L, Wittgenstein. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus Routledge and Kegan Paul London 1961. p. 70.
- (170) Jim Morrison 'The Doors' In Concert 'Petition the Lord with Prayer', Elektra 2665 002. 1970.
- (171) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 135-6.
- (172) The ideas expressed in this paragraph and the following few are based closely upon pages 136-139 of Robert Pirsig's 1974 novel.
- (173) John Lennon 'Whatever Gets You Through the Night' from the album Shaved Fish Apple PSC 7173, 1974.
- (174) Pirsig uses the word 'Faith' in this secular sense on page 138. 1974.
- (175) Pirsig R. 1991. p. 84.
- (176) Joni Mitchell's 'Woodstock' from the Album Ladies of the Canyon, Reprise RSLP 6376, 1970.
- (177) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 41.

- (178) Ibid. p. 42-43.
- (179) Hawking S. A Brief History of Time. p. 61. Bantam Books, London, 1988.
- (180) Zohar D. Who's afraid of Schrodinger's cat? Bloomsbury, London, 1997. A paraphrasing of page p. 182.
- (181) Polkinghorne JC. The Quantum World Penguin 1990.
- (182) Glimm J, & Jaffe A. Quantum Physics (2nd edition) Springer-Verlag. London. 1987.
- (183) Hawking S. 1988. p. 61.
- (184) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 42.
- (185) Pirsig R, 1974, p. 43.
- (186) In reference to Fritjof Capra and his popular book The Tao of Physics Flamingo, Glasgow, 1976.
- (187) Zohar D. The Quantum self, Flamingo, London, 1991, p. 18-21.
- (188) Half-man Half-biscuit. 'Friday Night and The Gates are Low', from the album Some Call it Godcore Probe Plus, Probe 41: 1995.
- (189) Taken from Nietzsche's Will to Power trans. by Kaufmann, W. New York: Random House 1968 Sec. 521, p. 282.
- (190) Nietzsche Cited in the 'Preface' of Spivak G. trans Derrida J. Of Grammatology 1976 p. xxii.
- (191) J.Lennon & P.McCartney 'The Inner Light' from the album The Beatles (Past Masters vol II) (1967-1970) Apple.
- (192) Pirsig, R. 1974. p. 255.
- (193) Dylan B. 'It's All right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)', from the album Brining it All Back Home, CBS, BPG 62515, 1965.
- (194) Poincare, J.H. Science and Method. 1913. p. 58.
- (195) Poincare, J.H. Science and Method. 1913. p. 62-63.
- (196) This is a reworking of Pirsig's citation of Poincare's work. p. 262-272. 1974.
- (197) Pirsig, R. 1974. P. 271.
- (198) Husserl, E. Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology. 1913. p. 27.
- (199) Pirsig, R. 1974. p. 294.
- (200) Dylan B. 'It's All right Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)', from the album Brining it All Back Home, CBS, BPG 62515, 1965.
- (201) Heidegger M. Being and Time trans Macquarrie J. and Robinson E. Basil Blackwell, Oxford: 1962. Sect 12-13.
- (202) Heidegger M. Being and Time trans. Macquarrie J. and Robinson E. Basil Blackwell Oxford: 1962. Sect 39-42 & 56-68.
- (203) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 279.
- (204) This whole paragraph is a re-working of Robert Pirsig's ideas expressed on pages 235-236. 1974.
- (205) Pirsig R. 1974. p. 235.
- (206) Peter Tosh 'Equal Rights' taken from the album Captured Live: EMI, EG2401671: 1984.
- (207) David Bowie Quicksand from the album Hunky Dory, RCA Victor SF8244, 1972.
- (208) Sartre, JP. Existentialism & Humanism. (1946) Trans. Mairet, P. Methuen, London: 1957.
- (209) Pirsig R, p. 187. 1991.
- (210) Ibid. p. 140.
- (211) Pirsig R, p. 187-188, 1991.
- (212) The other four forces of the universe along with Higgs' fifth force are the electro magnetic force, the weak nuclear force (responsible for radioactive decay), the strong nuclear force (which holds atomic nuclei together), and the force of gravity.
- (213) Pirsig R, p. 116. 1974.

- (214) Pirsig R, p. 118, 1974.
- (215) A very short description of Godel's theorem from Zohar D, p. 176. 1997.
- (216) Taken from p. 119. Pirsig R. 1974.
- (217) Pirsig R, p. 188, 1991.
- (218) Entropy is the spontaneous movement from order to disorder. The second law of Thermodynamics, which dictates that in every change entropy, meaning disorder, decay, dissipation and the breaking down of patterns and structures, must either increase or remain the same. Pirsig's description of the inorganic pattern of quality is earthly life's challenging to this universal second law.
- (219) Pirsig R, p. 192, 1991.
- (220) Ibid. p. 173.
- (221) A reworking of a short passage on page 192, from Pirsig R, 1991.
- (222) Pirsig R, p. 192. 1991.
- (223) Pirsig R, p. 192. 1991.
- (224) Pirsig R, 1991, p. 298.
- (225) Lacan J. The mirror stage as formative of the 'I' in *Ecrits: A selection*. p. 1-7. Translated by Sheridan A, Routledge. London, 1977.
- (226) Ibid. p1-7.
- (227) Yoko Ono, 'O Sanity' taken from the album *Milk and Honey* Polydor, POLH 5 1984.
- (228) Pirsig R, p. 432, 1991.
- (229) Ibid. p. 1991.
- (230) This section is based upon p. 430-434, of Pirsig's 1991 novel.
- (231) Ibid. p. 438.
- (232) Ibid. p. 434.
- (233) This section is a re-working of pages 371-373 of Pirsig's 1991 novel.
- (234) Half-man half-biscuit. 'Lets Not', taken from the album *McIntyre, Treadmore & Davitt, Probe Plus, Probe 30*.
- (235) Heidegger M, *On the way to Language* translated by Hertz P and Stamburg J. Harper and Row. 1971, p. 134.
- (236) Derrida's attack upon Saussure and the tradition of Structuralism.
- (237) Derrida J. *Of Grammatology* 1967, translated by Spivak G C, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1976, p. 167.
- (238) J Lennon, Y Ono, and The Plastic Ono Band, *Instant Karma*, Apple, APPLES 1003, 1970.
- (239) Byrne D. Eno B, Franz C, Harrison J, Weymouth T, (Talking Heads), *Once in a Lifetime*, EMI records limited, 1980.
- (240) Robert M. Pirsig, p. 17-18, 1974.
- (241) Robert M. Pirsig, pp. 381-384 & pp.345-346, 1991. (See also the rest of page 346-347).
- (242) Pirsig, R. 1989. p. 228.1977