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Pirsig's Phaedrus: The Journey of the Shaman

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PIRSIG'S PHAEDRUS: THE JOURNEY OF THE SHAMAN

(TITLE)

BY

JOSEPH E. LEVORA

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THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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For Mom and Dad, without whose continued guidance and support I would have never received the opportunity to conduct this study.
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Abstract

Robert Pirsig, in both his novels *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila*, explores the conflict one man has with the beliefs and values of the culture he is living in. This conflict leads him to mental collapse and eventually a kind of rebirth into a new outlook and way of viewing the cultural values and beliefs of the society he is living in. In this thesis, I propose that Phaedrus, the central character of both of Pirsig's novels, can be compared to a shaman. I am not suggesting that Pirsig deliberately intended the reader to view the character as a shaman figure. I am simply proposing an archetypal pattern in which to view him. I will show strong similarities between the initiation shamans must go through and the ordeals that Phaedrus is told to have experienced in the first novel. I will then illustrate how *Lila*, Pirsig's second novel, can be seen as Phaedrus' attempt at the practical application of his shamanistic vision to the world at large.
Works Cited

Primary Sources:


Secondary Sources:


An exploration into the similarities in spiritual myth between different cultures throughout the world. This first volume of the three volume set explores the similarities and differences in cultural mythology between the earliest hunting and planting tribes of primitive society.


1980. Elwood explores how the notion of mysticism relates to religious and social life.


Introduction

In Robert Pirsig's 1991 novel *Lila*, the narrator Phaedrus makes a distinction between shamans and priests by citing a reflection by the anthropologist E.A. Hobel:

Priests work in a vigorously structured hierarchy fixed in a firm set of traditions. Their power comes from and is vested in the organization itself. They constitute a religious bureaucracy.

Shamans, on the other hand, are arrant individualists. Each is on his own, undisciplined by bureaucratic control; hence a shaman is always a threat to the order of the organized church .... The struggle between shaman and priest may well be a death struggle. (130)

This struggle is not exclusive to ideas in religion, but in fact it is something deeply rooted in the psyche of each individual. Philosophers and other theorists have made careers of exploring the differences between the Apollonian and Dionysian lifestyles and how each affects the life of the individual. What happens, however, when the world of the shaman intersects with the world of the priest, when the Dionysian frame of mind interacts with the Apollonian, when the individual tries to change society?
Robert Pirsig, in both his novels, *Zen And The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila*, explores this conflict. Phaedrus, the main character/central narrative consciousness in both novels, is the shaman trying to get the priesthood to acknowledge, and ultimately accept, his ideas concerning Quality and the metaphysics he sets up to define it. The problem and the tension that arise from this are that the priesthood is not ready to accept Phaedrus’ revolutionary stance and ultimately declares him insane. What causes this unfortunate diagnosis is Phaedrus’ position of working within a Western, analytical, enlightenment-based society, founded on dualistic principles, not ready to work with his more mystic and romantic notions of quality elaborately set up and defined in both novels.

This work will show that Phaedrus can be seen as a sort of shaman for the twentieth century. I will discuss the extent to which Phaedrus’ journey, retrospectively revisited by the narrator of *ZMM*, is parallel to the kind of journey or process that a prospective shaman must go through in order to be considered an authentic shaman in a given culture. I will also argue that *Lila* is the practical application of Phaedrus’ shamanistic vision, in which he uses the minor characters more or less as test cases to see how well the ideas and concepts he has formed within the two novels apply to the culture and society at hand.

The structure of the work itself will be as follows: a chapter in which the major motifs and characteristics of shamanism, according to a cross-cultural perspective, are laid out; a chapter discussing how these motifs relate to Phaedrus’ journey as it is recalled by the narrator of *ZMM*; and finally a chapter discussing how, in *Lila*, Phaedrus attempts to use the minor characters in the novel as test
cases for his shamanistic vision. I do not propose that Pirsig has either read or been influenced by the authorities on shamanism that I will be discussing in this work. I am simply using the ideas of these experts to lay the groundwork for an archetypal pattern against which to compare Phaedrus.
Chapter 1

The phenomenon of shamanism is said to have originated in "Siberia and Central Asia" (Eliade Shamanism 4). Mircea Eliade, in his work entitled A History of Religious Ideas, states:

The term 'shamanism' is used to designate an archaic (seemingly attested since the Paleolithic) and universally dispersed (though rather exceptional in Africa) religious phenomenon. But shamanism, in the strict sense of the term, prevails especially in central and northern Asia and in the Arctic regions. (11)

As Eliade points out in this passage, shamanism has spread to other parts of the world than just the Arctic and Siberia. Indeed, even though the practice of shamanism exists in many different parts of the world, many of the characteristics of the initiation and practices of the shaman remain the same from culture to culture.

For instance, all experts seem to agree that the calling of the shaman is manifested through some sort of psychological crisis. This crisis may resemble some form of psychopathy or mental illness or other unusual behavior; however, the true shaman’s powers exist in his or her ability for ecstatic experience, and it
will soon become clear to observers that the shaman is in control of his or her mental faculties and not the other way around. In *Mysticism and Religion*, Robert Elwood describes the shamanic candidate as someone who “manifests his call by strikingly unusual behavior” (45). Elwood explains how the prospective shaman is subject to “visions” and will often desire to “prowl about in solitude, or fall into trances” (45). The candidate begins to become aware that certain spirits want to gain control over him, and Elwood goes on to note:

This awareness is a critical time in the initiation; the prospective shaman must either win control of these spirits, making them allies, or he or she will become their slave and end in madness. (45)

Eliade has said, "The only difference between a shaman and an epileptic is that the latter cannot deliberately enter into a trance" (*Shamanism* 24). Control of the spirits and the ecstatic experience is always of central concern for the future shaman. Joseph Campbell, in his work *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*, observes that the psychic crisis of the candidate is “not a pathological but a normal event for the gifted mind in these societies,” and he asserts that the mental tension created contains “the realization of something 'far more deeply interfused' inhabiting both the round earth and one’s own interior, which gives the world a sacred character; an intuition of depth” (253). These ideas will become of central importance when we reach the discussion of ZMVM, for Phaedrus' concept of Quality certainly seems to infer the "intuition of depth" Campbell is referring to, and this concept of Quality is what ultimately drives Phaderus to insanity as defined by western standards.
There are two kinds of education that a future shaman participates in on his or her journey of initiation. One form of education involves dreams, trances and other forms of mystical adventure. This component of the education, Eliade notes, is important to the pupil because it serves to "transform the profane, pre-'choice' individual into a technician of the sacred" (Shamanism 33). The other form of education is more traditional, consisting of "theoretical and practical instruction at the hands of the old masters" concerning such areas as "shamanic techniques, names and functions of the spirits, mythology and genealogy of the clan, secret language, etc." (Eliade Shamanism 13). The narrator of ZMM makes it clear that not only was Phaedrus well versed in scientific, analytical, and western versions of philosophy and thought, but he also spent time in the Far East learning much more mystic and ecstatic Eastern religion and philosophy. Broadly speaking then, it can be argued that Phaedrus had both sorts of education required to become a shaman.

Even though theoretical and practical instruction is necessary for the candidate, it is the more mystic, ecstatic tendencies that validate the shaman's status in the community. In ZMM, the Chautaquas the narrator presents, on subjects ranging from the scientific method to western culture's emphasis on analytical thought, validate both Phaedrus and the narrator's capacity for understanding the theoretical and practical side of human nature. There is another side to Phaedrus and the narrator, however, that allows for the conception of the rather mystical and ecstatic ideas of Quality that are formed in the first novel and tested in the second. The capacity for ecstatic experience is absolutely essential to the prospective shaman's vocation. Without the ability for these sorts of
experiences to occur, all the theoretical and practical instruction will not amount to a hill of beans.

Joseph Campbell makes an important distinction between shamanism and the priesthood that may serve to shed light on the importance of ecstatic experience in the initiation of the shaman. Campbell associates shamanism with primitive, Paleolithic hunting tribes who “emphasize in their religious life the individual fast for gaining of visions” (*Masks of God* 229). Campbell goes on to note that as time progressed into the Neolithic period, life for the tribes became more “organized around the rich and complex ceremonies of their masked gods,” these ceremonies “scheduled according to a religious calendar and conducted by societies of trained priests” (*Masks of God* 229). This is clearly in line with Pirsig’s citation of Hoebel, who also notes the distinction between shaman and society. According to Campbell, the ability for ecstatic experience is something rooted deeply in the earliest forms of shamanism. This capacity is what makes the shaman unique and able to navigate certain areas of the spirit world that the socially initiated priest cannot:

The priest is the socially initiated, ceremonially inducted member of a religious organization, where he holds a certain rank and functions as the tenet of an office that was held by others before him, while the shaman is one who, as a consequence of a personal psychological crisis, has gained a certain power of his own. The spiritual visitants who came to him in vision had never been seen before by any other; they were his particular familiars and protectors. (*Masks of God* 231)
Ninian Smart, in *The Religious Experience of Mankind*, describes shamans as “those who, often because of special traits of temperament, have a gift for ecstasy through which they mediate the commands and personalities of the spirit world” (37).

As stated earlier, the shaman receives two kinds of teaching, ecstatic and traditional. The ecstatic portion of the training is what comes first. This is what initially manifests the calling of the candidate to the shamanic profession. In most cases, this portion of the initiation involves “the symbolism of mystical death,” in which the “precariousness and solitude that are a part of every illness become aggravated” (*A History of Religious Ideas* Volume 3: 13). Eliade notes that the candidate, “in taking upon [himself] this supernatural 'election,' feels that [he] has been abandoned by the divine or demonic powers and left to an imminent death” (*A History of Religious Ideas* Volume 3: 13). This experience is a sign to the candidate that “the profane man is about to 'dissolve' himself and that a new personality is at the point of being born” (*A History of Religious Ideas* Volume 3: 13). The candidate's former personality is replaced by a new shamanic personality granted through the helping spirits that the candidate encounters during his or her initiation.

Usually, during this "spirit-illness," as it is referred to by many experts, the candidate has visions of dismemberment, where the helping spirits remove the candidate's bones or internal organs and replace them with a new set of organs or some other substance. Robert Ellwood relates that, "According to some tribes, a great white bear comes to eat away the flesh of the novice until only a skeleton
remains. He or she remains 'dead' for three days; then new flesh finds its way to the novice and he or she is reborn as a shaman" (*Mysticism and Religion* 45).

Joseph Campbell relates the story of an Australian shaman's initiation that serves to illustrate this motif of death and resurrection common in cross-cultural observations of shamanism. He writes:

> When a man of this Australian tribe feels that he has the power to become a shaman, he leaves the camp alone and proceeds to the mouth of a certain cave, where, with considerable trepidation, not venturing to go inside, he lies down to sleep. At the break of day a spirit comes to the mouth of the cave and, finding the man asleep, throws at him an invisible lance, which pierces his neck from behind, passes through his tongue, and emerges from his mouth.... A second lance then thrown by the spirit pierces his head from ear to ear, and the victim, falling dead, is immediately carried into the depths of the cave.... The spirits there remove all the man's internal organs and provide him with a completely new set, after which he presently returns to life. (*Masks of God* 254-255)

Eliade notes that, regardless of what culture is in question, the initial ecstatic experiences of the shamanic candidate almost always include one or more of the following themes:

... dismemberment of the body, followed by a renewal of the internal organs and viscera; ascent to the sky and dialogue with the gods or spirits; descent to the underworld and conversations with the souls of
the dead shamans; various revelations, both religious and shamanic.

(34)

Phaedrus' catatonia and subsequent hospitalization for insanity can be seen as a sort of ritual death and re-birth within ZMM that resembles this motif as it appears in shamanism. The narrator discusses, during the course of his motorcycle trip, how the personality of Phaedrus was extinguished and a new personality was implemented in its place.

Another important component of the initiation of the shaman, cross-culturally, is ritual ascent. The ascent, whether by tree or mountain or some other form, is symbolic of the shaman's journey "to heaven in order to be consecrated" (A History of Religious Ideas Volume 3: 13). Eliade notes that the "birch or post is comparable to the tree or pillar which stands at the center of the world and connects the cosmic zones" (A History of Religious Ideas Volume 3: 13), and that the ritual ascent is "related to the myth of an ancient time when communication between sky and earth was much easier" (Shamanism 144). Therefore, the shaman serves as a privileged being who individually returns to the fortunate condition of humanity at the dawn of time" (Shamanism 144). One may think of the ascent as the road on which the shaman travels to reach ecstasy and commune with the gods and spirits. This motif of ascent can be seen clearly in ZMM when the narrator discusses the "high country of the mind" (111-112). The discussion of this high country of the mind takes place simultaneously with a literal journey up a hill made by the narrator and his son.

The ecstatic experience, during the initiation of the shaman, is important in
the overall function that he or she serves in the community. It must be said here, however, that the community must accept the shaman and his or her ecstatic tendencies before he or she can serve any purpose within the community. As discussed earlier, one of Pirsig's central concerns focuses on the tension that arises, especially within a Western mindset, between shaman and society. To Western society, the ecstatic experience, absolutely essential to shamanism, is similar to the manifestation of insanity within an individual, and it can be written off as such very easily. In fact, this is what happens to Phaedrus in the first novel, and also what he works to dispel within the second.

Most often shamans are referred to as healers and, in order to possess the ability to heal, the shamans must be able to move freely within the bounds of the spirit worlds, whether having to contact their helping spirits or having to converse with the souls of the dead. Hyun-key Kim Hogarth notes, in her book entitled *Kut: Happiness Through Reciprocity*, "[Shamans] serve the community by moving into and out of the hidden reality when asked for help. Thus they are highly sensitive to social needs and can improvise ritual procedures as the need arises" (96).

Likewise, Eliade states:

> The essential role of the shaman for the defense of the psychic integrity of the community is maintained chiefly by this trait: men are assured that one of their own kind is capable in aiding them in the critical circumstances provoked by the inhabitants of the invisible world. It is comforting and soothing to know that one member of the community is capable of seeing that which is hidden and invisible to
others, and of reporting direct and precise information about the supernatural world. (A History of Religious Ideas Volume 3: 20)

Reading both of Pirsig's novels gives the impression that Phaedrus and the narrator are capable of moving in and out of the "invisible world," solving very complex and troubling problems along the way. Campbell takes the importance of ecstatic experience, in healing, one step further, claiming that "shamans have been the particular guardians and reciters of the chants and traditions of their people" (Masks of God 250). Campbell also point out that "the realm of myth, from which, according to primitive belief, the whole spectacle of the world proceeds, and the realm of shamanistic trance are one and the same" (Masks of God 251).

Through both of his novels, Pirsig utilizes the archetypal pattern of the shaman as a vehicle for presenting his ideas and metaphysics of Quality. He is concerned with the tension that exists between Western conceptions of reason and enlightenment and the struggle to expand those conceptions to include the more mystical elements of his philosophy of Quality. He presents Phaedrus as the individual striving to create this new vision, having to transcend the oppositions of a conservative Western culture along the way.
Chapter 2

Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance clearly illustrates the narrator’s struggle to integrate his present personality with a former personality that was destroyed after mental illness drove him to a state of catatonia. The experiences of the narrator in this novel are similar to those a prospective shaman would encounter in his or her initiation. Like the shamanic candidate who is endowed, during his or her initiation, with a new personality, so too the narrator of ZMM, by the end of the novel, has achieved a new sense of himself through a synthesis of the past and present personalities of his psyche. The fact that the narrator is able to win control of his former personality, which he names “Phaedrus,” allows him to become the shaman. For, as has already been noted by Elwood, “the prospective shaman must either win control of these spirits, making them allies, or he or she will become their slave and end in madness” (Mysticism and Religion 45).

Throughout the novel, the spirit of Phaedrus haunts the narrator. Prior to the motorcycle trip, recounted in the novel, the narrator was institutionalized after his thoughts on Quality caused him to have a mental breakdown. Throughout his journey west, the narrator encounters fragments of memory involving Phaedrus, and these fragments of memory cause him to reconsider the validity of Phaedrus'
initial ideas. The first half of ZMM can easily be viewed as the beginning of the
narrator’s shamanic initiation, in which he descends into a sort of underworld,
encountering the spirit he must gain control over.

Eliade notes that, taken together, all the elements of the shamanic initiation
“represent a well organized variant of the universal theme of death and mystical
resurrection of the candidate by means of a descent to the underworld and an
ascent to the sky” (Shamanism 43). The structure of ZMM follows this motif of
ritual descent followed by ritual ascent so prevalent in the initiation of the
shamanic candidate. The first sixteen of the novel’s thirty-two chapters represent
the narrator’s ritual descent, where he encounters the spirit of Phaedrus and comes
to the realization that he must resume the search that his former self had so
diligently begun. Chapter 17 starts the ritual ascent in which the narrator takes on
the role of attempting to gain a clearer understanding of Phaedrus’ vision of
Quality. For, as Richard Rodino rightly points out in his article “The Matrix of
Journeys in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,” “Rather than threatening
Pirsig’s mental health, Phaedrus’ re-emergence and co-existence is actually
indispensable for Pirsig’s sanity” (Guidebook 306).

The descent begins very early in the novel when the reader becomes
acquainted with “Phaedrus” through the narrator’s recollection of a dream in
which he sees “an intimation of a figure” (57). The narrator relates how this figure
“disappears” when he looks at it and then “reappears in the corner of [his] vision”
when he turns away (57). The narrator is initially afraid of this apparition, stating,
“I am about to say something, to call to it, to recognize it, but then do not, knowing
that to recognize it by any gesture or action is to give it a reality which it must not have” (57). He knows that the figure is “Phaedrus,” and through this first dream the narrator comes to realize that the spirit of Phaedrus is calling him, needing to be resurrected and realized for what he was, a shaman in the making.

The narrator begins to notice that Phaedrus’ ideas about Quality are part of himself and they will not die easily. He relates feeling as if he is a “clairvoyant, a spirit medium receiving messages from another world,” and he claims the ability to see, not only with his own eyes, but also with “[Phaedrus’] eyes too” (77). The novel contains numerous incidents in which the narrator encounters his former personality through dreams, mystical visions and fragments of memory that hit him from time to time seeming to demand recognition. These sorts of encounters are similar to the sorts of encounters a shamanic candidate would experience. For, as Eliade has noted, “the shaman’s instruction often takes place in dreams. It is in dreams that the pure sacred life is encountered and direct relations with the gods, spirits and ancestral souls are reestablished” (Shamanism 103).

The narrator’s initial fear is similar to the fear a shamanic candidate would feel, not knowing at first what was causing his or her psychological crisis. Beverly Gross, in her article “A Mind Divided Against Itself: Madness in Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,” makes the assertion that the “narrator is terrified of the re-emergence of Phaedrus, which he takes to mean the return of insanity” (201). Indeed, the narrator, referring to his purpose for discussing Phaedrus early in the novel, states, “The purpose of this enlargement is not to argue for him, certainly not to praise him. The purpose is to bury him forever” (60). He does not
understand what is happening to him, and his first response is to avoid whatever it may be. The narrator, only slowly, begins to understand what is happening to him, and even then he is still not able to calm his fears, describing his recognition of Phaedrus imminent re-emergence as “real fear—the fear that comes from knowing there is nowhere to run” (78). Campbell discusses how shamans “[fear] one another’s power,” and that “real fear is a characteristic reaction whenever men and women of shamanistic power and skill have appeared” (Masks of God 249). So, one can easily view this trepidation that the narrator is feeling as the natural progression in the development of the narrator as the shaman.

Eliade has also pointed out that lightning is important in the calling of the future shaman. He notes that lightning shows the “celestial origin of shamanic powers,” and that “the gods choose the future shaman by striking him with lightning or showing him their will through stones fallen from the sky” (Shamanism 19). Very early in ZMM, a fragment of Phaedrus emerges with the coming of the storm:

A flash and *Ka-Wham!* of thunder, one right on top of the other.

That shook me and Chris has got his head against my back now. A few warning drops of rain... at this speed they are like needles. A second flash—*Wham* and everything brilliant... and then in the brilliance of the next flash that farmhouse... that windmill... oh, my God, he’s been here!... throttle off... this is his road... a fence and trees... and the speed drops to seventy, then sixty, then fifty-five and I hold there. (26)
The description of the storm and the dream mentioned earlier encapsulate the beginnings of the narrator's shamanic initiation, which culminates, by the end of the novel, in the re-integration of Phaedrus into the narrator's new personality. Integration allows the narrator to become the shaman, who will then apply his shamanistic vision, practically, in the second novel.

As stressed in the previous chapter, the validity of the shaman very much depends on his or her ability to control ecstatic experience. One of the elements of this experience is what Robert Elwood describes as the ability to create "a liaison—even oneness—with the tutelary deity through whose aid the shaman can control the riot of spirits within and without" (*Mysticism and Religion* 45). This is essentially what the narrator is coming to terms with throughout this novel. His "tutelary deity" is Phaedrus, and it takes the entire novel to bridge the gap and create the "liaison" he needs to indeed become the shaman. The narrator's concluding comment in Chapter 7, "I am a pioneer now, looking onto a promised land" (79), expresses his tentative willingness to try and achieve, if not a liaison, at least a better understanding of his former self. He is done trying to run from the spirit and has come to the realization that it is time to confront Phaedrus head on.

Chapter 8 marks the beginning of "Part II" of the novel, a section in which it becomes clear that the narrator is more comfortable talking about Phaedrus and the ideas he developed. The narrator begins Chapter 10 with the declaration that he is "at a kind of beginning point in things...at which one can at least begin to talk about Phaedrus’ break from the mainstream of rational thought" (97). Beverly Gross points out that "In Part II [of the novel] the Chatauquas are dominated by
Phaedrus, whose life story totally replaces the subject of motorcycle maintenance” (205). The narrator, during this section of the novel, seems at peace with the entry of the spirit. By the end of Part II, he even seems as engrossed in the study of Quality as his former personality was, concluding Chapter 16 with the question that started it all: “What the hell is Quality? What is it?” (164). The search is far from over and the narrator still has a hunger to know the truth about what Phaedrus was on to through his search after the “ghost of rationality.”

The second half of the novel (Parts III and IV) depicts the ritual ascent. Pirsig allegorizes the spiritual ascent of the narrator through the description of a literal journey the narrator and his son make up a mountain. The narrator muses that “Mountains like these and travelers in the mountains and events that happen to them here are found not only in Zen literature but in the tales of every major religion” (167). The narrator aligns himself with those “untrusting” souls who “attempt to make their own routes” up the mountain, who “Once there...become more aware than any of the others that’s there’s no single or fixed number of routes. There are as many routes as there are individual souls” (167). This kind of thinking illustrates the individualistic spirit so necessary to become the shaman.

The narrator compares his trip up the mountain with “Phaedrus' exploration into the meaning of the term Quality, an exploration which he saw as a route through the mountains of the spirit” (168). The narrator makes it clear that his purpose is to gain a better understanding of the path that Phaedrus was on when he had his breakdown. He notes that “What’s left now is just fragments: Debris, scattered notes, which can be pieced together but which leave huge areas
unexplained” (169). The central reason for taking this spiritual journey is to try and give Phaedrus’ thoughts some coherence and form. The narrator says that once he originally got over the fear of recurring madness he began to jot down the fragments of Phaedrus’ memory “without regard to form, in the order in which they occurred” (168). He has accumulated “thousands of them... and although only a small portion of them can fit into this Chautauqua, this Chautauqua is clearly based on them” (168).

The narrator lays out Phaedrus’ initial plan early in the novel. Phaedrus believed there was a problem with how twentieth-century Westerners view reality. The problem consists of the tension created between two possible outlooks. One outlook is the “classical,” which views reality in terms of “underlying form” governed by “reason and by laws” (61). The other outlook is the “romantic,” which is more concerned with external appearance and is “primarily inspirational, imaginative, creative, intuitive” (61). The narrator creates a useful distinction to help illustrate the mindset of both the classic and romantic outlooks:

If you were to show an engine or a mechanical drawing or electronic schematic to a romantic it is unlikely he would see much of interest in it. It has no appeal because the reality he sees is its surface. Dull, complex lists of names, lines and numbers. Nothing interesting. But if you were to show the same blueprint or schematic or give the same description to a classical person he might look at it and become fascinated by it because he sees that within the lines and shapes and symbols is a tremendous richness of underlying form. (61)
Phaedrus observes this dichotomy as a problem within the psyche of the Western human being, creating disharmony in a culture and pitting one against another in a war of conflicting conceptions of reality. Phaedrus' initial goal, which the narrator comes to see as his own, is to solve this problem, to reach a point at which "these visions of reality are unified" (62).

Phaedrus has attempted to construct a new perception of reality that would resolve the division between the classic and romantic outlooks. This new vision, which Phaedrus called Quality, does not involve excluding either the classic or romantic. Quality simply involves expanding one's outlook to include both.

Phaedrus saw as a starting point for the dilemma of the dualistic outlooks Western culture's insistence on division between subject and object, and he attempted to trace this insistence all the way back to its roots. He saw, as the beginning of the problem, the emergence of the dialectic. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, in Phaedrus' opinion, were not after "truth" but rather just playing a game of constructing elaborate word traps that always talk around the real issues of what is truth and beauty. Phaedrus was of the mindset that man had "built empires of scientific capability to manipulate the phenomenon of nature into enormous manifestations of his own dreams of power and wealth" (342). For this, however, man had also sacrificed something essential and that is the "understanding of what it is to be a part of the world and not an enemy of it" (342).

Once Phaedrus realized the problem lies within the division of subject and object that has resulted from the dialectic and beyond, he attacked the problem on these grounds:
And so: He rejected the left horn. Quality is not objective, he said. It
doesn’t reside in the material world.

Then he rejected the right horn: Quality is not subjective, it doesn’t
reside merely in the mind.

And finally: Phaedrus, following a path that to his knowledge had
never been taken before in the history of Western thought, went
straight between the horns of the subjectivity-objectivity dilemma
and said Quality is neither a part of mind, nor is it a part of matter. It
is a third entity which is independent of the two. (213)

Phaedrus went even further in his reasoning and suggested that Quality is “the
cause of the subjects and objects, which are then mistakenly presumed to be the
cause of the Quality” (215). Phaedrus believed that Quality would solve the
dilemma between the classic and romantic forms of mind. This is Phaedrus’
shamanistic vision, which he will attempt to integrate into the priesthood of
Western culture. Phaedrus’ vision of Quality seems to manifest itself into a sort of
ecstatic experience, and all experts on shamanism seem to agree that the calling
manifests itself through some sort of ecstatic experience. Phaedrus seems to fit the
description perfectly when the narrator recounts his former personality’s revelation
as a “sudden mass of awareness” which “began to grow and grow into an
avalanche of thought and awareness out of control” (228).

What indeed made this experience such a climactic one for Phaedrus was the
revelation that he was on to something new, something different, and that he was
“so caught up in his own world of Quality metaphysics he couldn’t see outside it
anymore” (311). The ideas Phaedrus was forming concerning Quality were in direct opposition to the prevailing intellectual notions upon which Western culture was based. He was, in effect, trying to uproot the priesthood of analytical thought on which Western philosophy is based. Phaedrus saw Aristotle, the man responsible for beginning the subject-object split in Western philosophy, as:

a prototype for the many millions of self-satisfied and truly ignorant teachers throughout history who have smugly and callously killed the creative spirit of their students with [the] dumb ritual of analysis, the blind, rote, eternal naming of things. (325)

So it is with all of academia that Phaedrus is fighting. From this perspective, he is surely “an arrant individualist... undisciplined by bureaucratic control,” as Hobel has asserted as one of the characteristics of shamans. He is involved in that symbolic “death struggle” between priest and shaman (Lila 130).

The shaman is the one who is willing to explore the unexplored territory, willing to take risks and chances that no one has ever attempted before. Similarly, Campbell has noted that shamans have a power of their own that is a result of a psychological crisis in which visions come to the shaman that no one has ever seen before (Masks of God 231). The narrator even discusses Phaedrus’ initial understanding that he must go beyond the mythos of Western culture into what he terms the “terra incognita” of the insane. Only there will he be able to find the notion of Quality he wants to explore:

The mythos is the whole train of the collective consciousness of all communicating mankind. Every last bit of it. The Quality is the
track that directs the train. What is outside the train, to either side—
that is the terra incognita of the insane. [Phaedrus] knew that to
understand Quality he would have to leave the mythos. That’s why
he felt the slippage. He knew something was about to happen. (317)

Ironically it is this awareness of Phaedrus’ difference from all other people
that allows for the successful integration of Phaedrus’ personality into the
narrator’s. With some help from his son Chris, the narrator comes to the
realization that Phaedrus was after the truth in his search for Quality, and not
allowing that back into his own life would make him nothing but a “heretic who’s
recanted” (363). The narrator states, towards the end of the novel, how he survives
mainly by “pleasing others” (363). He feels that he has compromised a part of
himself in order to escape the confines of the asylum and slowly realizes that
Phaedrus was “true to what he believed right to the end” (363). It is obvious that
the re-emergence of Phaedrus has come to a head when the narrator makes the
observation, “sometimes I feel he’s the reality and I’m the ghost” (363). He is
slowly beginning to realize that running from Phaedrus is not the right thing to do.
In the final climactic scene, as he tells his son that they must part, the narrator is
fearful that he will go insane once again. When Chris hears this, he completely
breaks down and his father is left clueless as to what to do:

I don’t know what to do now. I have no idea what to do. It’s all
over. I want to run for the cliff, but fight that. I have to get him on
the bus and then the cliff will be all right.

Everything is all right now, Chris.
That's not my voice.

*I haven't forgotten you.*

Chris stops rocking.

*How could I forget you? (368)*

This scene serves to illustrate the successful re-integration of Phaedrus into the personality of the narrator. He has successfully completed the initiation of the shaman, involving descent and ascent and finally culminating in the integration of the new personality.

What makes Phaedrus indeed the shaman is not his ecstatic experience by itself. As we will see in *Lila*, it is his willingness to use this experience for the good of the community at large. One of the most important roles that the shaman serves within his or her community is that of healer. As Eliade has pointed out, the shaman is the one person in the community responsible for defending the "psychic integrity" of the inhabitants. The narrator has a clear understanding that to simply discover Quality is "very unimportant" (230). What is important is "the relevance of such a discovery to all the valleys of this world, and all the dull dreary jobs and monotonous years that await all of us in them" (230). This is the direction that will be taken by Phaedrus in the second novel as he formulates a metaphysics for Quality and tests it on the world at large.
Chapter 3

Within Pirsig’s second novel, *Lila*, the division initially present in the narrator’s personality during *ZMM* has vanished. The story of Phaedrus is told from the third-person point of view, a fact that is critical in an understanding of Phaedrus as a shaman figure. For, as was mentioned earlier, it is essential for the shaman, after completing his or her initiation, to be in control of the ecstatic experience which gives him or her shamanistic powers. Clearly, in the first novel, the narrator is by no means in control of his mental faculties wherein the ecstatic experience resides. The initiation, as discussed earlier, is centered directly on the integration of the two personalities of Phaedrus and the narrator. From the beginning of *Lila* it becomes clear that the narrator in *ZMM* has not fallen into a state of madness, which would be the result of the shaman candidate’s failure to integrate the helping spirit who will guide him or her on the right path.

As a result of the initiation in *ZMM*, Phaedrus has come to the realization of his nature as an individual, as Campbell states of the newly elected shaman, “an adult not only of superior intelligence and refinement but also of greater physical stamina and vitality of spirit than is normal to the members of his group” (*Masks of God* 253). Phaedrus’ supreme intelligence is seen from a careful reading of
Lila. The development of an entire metaphysics is not an easy intellectual task. However, Phaedrus seems to make rather easy work of it during the course of the book. The trip recounted this time is not on a motorcycle, but down the Hudson River on a sailboat, not something to be undertaken by a character who is physically unfit for the task.

As the novel progresses, the reader finds a much calmer and more tolerant Phaedrus than was illustrated in the first novel. It is clear that the fanaticism of Phaedrus’ early quest for Quality has worn off, and he is able to contemplate and test his conception in a much more tolerant fashion. He begins to realize early that he is going to have to define what "Quality" is, something he absolutely refuses to do within the first novel, claiming that to define something of such a mystical nature would be more of a disservice than a help. Phaedrus admits early on in Lila that to define Quality "isn't anything of lasting beauty," and, in fact, the creation of any kind of metaphysics is, "in the strictest mystic sense, a degenerate act" (74). However, he comes to terms with the fact that not giving a definition is a degenerate act also, claiming this to be "the degeneracy fanatics are made of" (74). This new, more patient attitude on Phaedrus' part illustrates the absence of any kind of crisis left over from the initiation, and it in turn allows Phaedrus the ability to test his conception of Quality on society and the people around him.

Phaedrus initial recognition of the need for a metaphysics of Quality springs from an interest in anthropology ignited by a former colleague of his while he was working in Montana. This colleague of his, Dusenberry, was criticized by the rest of the faculty in Bozeman for his rather subjective approach towards
anthropological research. Dusenberry, instead of observing Indian culture from a
distanced, objective point of view, like most anthropologists, would become very
involved and close to the Indians he worked with. In fact Dusenberry "didn't think
objectivity had any place in the proper conduct of anthropological study" (35).

Phaedrus, after attending an Indian ritual with Dusenberry, comes to the
realization that Indians represent the "originators" of the American culture as it is
known today, with their "pure plains Indian dialect" and their honest attitude
towards life (44). Phaedrus observes the conflict within most Americans today as
a psychological conflict between "European and Indian values, between freedom
and order," and that this conflict "accounts for much of the restlessness and
dissatisfaction found in America today" (44, 52). This observation is what sets
Phaedrus on his search for a metaphysics of Quality, a way to integrate the study
of values back into the field of anthropology, a field dominated by the traditional
viewpoint asserting that values have no place in scientific study.

As Phaedrus reads more and more within the field of anthropology, it
becomes clear to him that "everything he had to say about Indians would be
unacceptable" (57). Anthropologists worked within a scientific framework in
which the values Phaedrus observed within the Indian culture would have no place
to be presented. Here then arises the tension that the shaman feels with the rest of
society. Just as Phaedrus was in conflict with traditional notions of philosophy in
ZMM, so in Lila he finds himself again on the outside, this time on the outside of
traditional notions of anthropology. As Campbell says of the shaman, the insights
that are contained within the mind of the shaman are "of greater force than those
released and directed by the group-oriented, group-contrived, visionary 
masquerade of the men's puberty rites and men's dancing ground" which are both 
rituals in primitive society relating the group rather than the individual" (Masks of 
God 253). Campbell goes on to state that these insights give a 
steadier base and larger format to the character of the individual 
concerned, and have tended, also, to endow the phenomenology of 
shamanism itself with a quality of general human validity, which the 
local rites--of whatever community--simply do not share. (Masks of 
God 253-254)

Phaedrus saw the entire problem with anthropology contained within "classical 
nineteenth-century science and its insistence that science is only a method for 
determining what is true and not a body of beliefs in itself" (60). In effect, what 
Phaedrus is attempting to do is to undermine the very foundations of Western 
conceptions of knowledge, a individualistic attitude that serves to align his beliefs 
with the shamans.

Phaedrus' concern with the place of values in the development of a society is 
illustrative of his attempt to broaden the format of external reality so that human 
beings feel a part of the reality around them rather than isolated from it. The 
prevailing attitude of science, which Phaedrus is working against, the attitude of 
the division between subject and object, is what causes the isolation that human 
beings feel. By making a value, Quality, the central guiding force in Phaedrus' 
metaphysics, he is attempting to show that both subjects and objects are part of the 
same overall force in the universe, thus uniting them once and for all. This attitude
is seen by Phaedrus as "the point of focus where he could begin an attack" on traditional notions of cultural anthropological study (62). This is also the point at which Phaedrus realized that if he is to do anything of real importance it is going to have to be within the field of metaphysics, "the general body of assumptions upon which [anthropology] rests" (71).

Phaedrus formulates the original division of his metaphysics of Quality after coming across a story of a Pueblo Indian in Ruth Benedict's book *Patterns of Culture*. The story of the Indian is a "minor anecdote [involving] a case history in which there was a conflict of morality" (126). The individual in question is branded as a witch by the rest of the Zuni society, of which he is a member, because of certain personality traits he exhibits. After being branded a witch, the individual, instead of leaving the Zuni society, succeeds in changing the culture's frame of mind, eventually becoming Governor of the Zuni culture from which he was once an outsider (126-128).

Out of the knowledge of this experience comes Phaedrus' initial division of Quality into "static quality" and "Dynamic Quality" (133). Static quality is considered the "tribal frame of values that condemned the brujo [Zuni individual] and led to his punishment" (131). Dynamic Quality is "outside any culture" and "cannot be contained by any system of precepts, but has to be continually rediscovered as a culture evolves" (131). It is Dynamic Quality that Phaedrus sees as the driving force of the brujo, and through this revelation Phaedrus also comes to see himself as following this Dynamic Quality in his search of his metaphysics. He becomes aware that to follow Dynamic Quality is to follow the "pre-
intelectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new" (133).

Both the brujo and Phaedrus are functioning as the "arrant individualists" shamans are considered to be. Phaedrus even refers to the tension between the brujo and the rest of his culture as a tension between "a priesthood and a shaman" (129). The brujo was working against the priesthood of his culture, whereas Phaedrus is also working against a sort of priesthood, namely the priesthood of traditional Western notions of what morality and knowledge are. In fact, it was the academic "priesthood" that caused Phaedrus' dissent into insanity in the first novel. Phaedrus realizes that "without wild, disreputable outcasts like the brujo, ready to seize on any new outside idea and bring it into the community, Zuni would have been too inflexible to survive," and this is what Phaedrus is afraid is happening to twentieth-century Western culture. Phaedrus asserts that a "tension between these two forces [static and Dynamic Quality] is needed to continue the evolution of life" (139).

Phaedrus utilizes the novel's namesake, Lila, to test his metaphysics of Quality. From the very first time that Phaedrus sees Lila, he observes her sensuality and dynamism. He realizes that "something about her really [holds] his attention. Sex" (14). Phaedrus notes that everything about Lila "[comes] out X-rated," and that "there is something in her expression that [looks] almost explosive" (14). It is rather fitting that Lila is the person whom Phaedrus decides to test his conceptions on considering that the term "lila" in Hindu religion refers to "the divine play; the relative" (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna 604). According
to S.K. Dey, professor of Mathematics at Eastern Illinois University, Lila is "a game of pain and pleasure, tears and triumphs," in which consciousness stays "detached from all events while transforming a sequence of causes into a sequence of events continuously" ("Vendeta Philosophy in the Light of Modern Science" 1).

Also according to Dey, "Shree Ramakrishna explained that millions of universes become manifest out of the ocean of consciousness and become unmanifest merging with the ocean. This is an on-going game or Lila" ("A Scientific Analysis of Pantheism in the Gospel of Shree Ramakrishna" 10) What one should take away from this discussion of the term Lila is not that Phaedrus is purely of Hindu persuasion, but rather that Pirsig was in fact familiar with Eastern philosophy and religion, and he obviously chose this name carefully. The term "lila," as presented in these excerpts from Dey and Ramakrishna, can be seen as the active universe itself, in other words the physical reality of the universe. This fits very well into what Phaedrus is doing in the novel, as the character on which he tests his conceptions of Quality can be viewed as a symbolic representation of reality itself.

Because her name is synonymous with the physical universe, or reality, the slow descent into insanity Lila goes through can be viewed as just another component of reality, thus giving a certain validity to insanity and madness. This allows Phaedrus to validate one of his central claims that insanity is something that is "culturally defined" and not necessarily a problem within the mind of the individual. He asserts that the "sane always know they are good because the culture tells them so. Anyone who tells them otherwise is sick, paranoid and needs
further treatment" (367). Phaedrus, however, has another idea of insanity. He remembers that when he was "insane" he had the feeling that "he hadn't entered any cataleptic trance. He had fallen out of one. He was free of a static pattern of life he thought was unchangeable" (368). He understands, as the title of the book suggests, that insanity is a normal progression of consciousness for people who need to ride the dynamic edge of reality.

It is another character in the novel, namely Richard Rigel, who starts Phaedrus thinking about the question that occupies him for the duration of the novel: Does Lila have Quality? From the earlier discussion of the term "lila," one could say that Phaedrus is asking the Question: does the physical universe have Quality? Rigel is a character in the novel who obviously serves to represent the static good that Phaedrus is working against. Rigel is a lawyer. Automatically, Rigel's choice of profession suggests that he is someone who is very concerned with adherence to precedents. Rigel is a traditionalist, believing that quality is found in "values... learned from childhood" (91). He is of the persuasion that, through common values and laws, a society of people is able to act "morally toward one another" (90). At one point, Rigel informs Phaedrus that through the writing of his first novel Phaedrus was doing "the devils work" (91), and the lawyer continues to try and persuade him to get Lila off his boat, asking Phaedrus, "Didn't anyone ever tell you about people like her?" (84). Rigel goes on to explain that he has known Lila for a long time. He refers to one instance in particular, in which he handled a divorce case for a man who cheated on his wife with Lila. Rigel explains that the man "lost his wife, his children, most of his friends--his
reputation was gone" (85). Rigel refers to Lila as a "common bar-whore" (85). Obviously Rigel has a low opinion of Lila because she happened to be involved in something that is not culturally acceptable, being an accessory to the crime of adultery.

It is this conversation that sets in motion the rest of the events that take place in the novel. Later that same day Phaedrus is alone on his boat thinking about Rigel and what he represents:

There are so many kinds of problem people like Rigel around, he thought, but the ones who go posing as moralists are the worst. Cost-free morals. Full of great ways for others to improve without any expense to themselves. There's an ego thing in there too. They use the morals to make someone else look inferior and that way look better themselves. It doesn't matter what the moral code is—religious morals, political morals, racists morals, capitalist morals, feminist morals, hippie morals—they're all the same. The moral codes change but the meanness and the egotism stay the same. (96)

This sounds reminiscent of the story of the brujo that started Phaedrus on his quest for a metaphysics of Quality. Here is the story of the Zuni brought directly into Phaedrus' experience. Rigel represents the tribe that condemned the young brujo and Phaedrus later observes that Lila is closer in character to the dynamic qualities the brujo represents. First of all, Lila is a very sexual person and Phaedrus observes, "this same attraction which is so morally condemned is what created the condemners" (230). Lila's promiscuous sexual behavior, along with
her history of insanity, illustrates the fact that she is not concerned with social norms or cultural customs, but she simply follows her own internal impulses much like the brujo followed his own impulses.

Rigel serves to represent the priesthood that Phaedrus is taking issue with as a shaman. It is the language and ideas of Rigel and what he represents that Phaedrus must transcend and get beyond in order for his shamanistic vision of the universe to have validity. Rigel is illustrative of what Phaedrus terms "the cultural immune system" (58). This cultural immune system creates a wall that separates those who are following societal norms from those who are more individualistic and prone to exhibit other behavior. Phaedrus recognizes Rigel as someone who will "not listen to you; not because what you say isn't true, but solely because you have been identified as outside that wall," the wall being the cultural immune system (58). Phaedrus becomes obsessed with the fact that somehow, someway, Lila does have Quality, and he goes about proving this through his metaphysics of Quality.

Phaedrus' metaphysics of Quality, the yardstick to which he holds Lila, consists of four distinct levels of morality that all play off of one another in an evolutionary process. First, there is a level of inorganic morality that consists of the "stable inorganic pattern of value" that serves to hold together "substance" in the atomic structure of matter. Next is a level of biological morality that serves to establish "the supremacy of biological life over inanimate nature" (187). Next, there is a social morality that serves to establish the "supremacy of the social order over biological life" (187). This social level of morality consists of things such as
"proscriptions against drugs, murder, adultery, theft and the like" (187).

Following the social level of morality is an intellectual level of morality that serves to establish the "supremacy of the intellectual order over the social order," containing such ideas and practices as "democracy, trial by jury, freedom of speech [and] freedom of the press" (187-188). The final level of morality in Phaedrus' metaphysics of Quality is a Dynamic level of morality "which isn't a code" (188). Phaedrus compares the Dynamic level of morality to "the morality of the brujo" (188). The reader is well aware that Dynamic morality is what Phaedrus himself is practicing by coming up with his metaphysics.

Through the formulation of this metaphysics, Phaedrus is able to insert "value" into every aspect of the universe, including the scientific realm that is traditionally considered to be valueless. What the Metaphysics of Quality does, according to Phaedrus, is to give "shape to all kinds of blurred and confused moral ideas that are floating around in our present day cultural heritage" (188). The Metaphysics is also what allows Phaedrus the ability to prove, once and for all, that Lila does have Quality. Phaedrus decides that he will "show the entire metaphysics in terms of one specific case" (160). In essence Phaedrus is answering two questions that have preoccupied him throughout the novel: the first pertaining to the place of value in anthropological study, and the other being Rigel's question about whether Lila has Quality. The answers that Phaedrus gives to both of these questions set him apart from traditional notions of morality and value.

Phaedrus states, regarding Lila's capacity for Quality:
Biologically she's fine, socially she's pretty far down the scale, and intellectually she's nowhere. But Dynamically... Ah! That's the one to watch. There's something ferociously Dynamic going on with her. All that aggression, that tough talk, those strange bewildered blue eyes. Like sitting next to a hill that is rumbling and letting off steam here and there... It would be interesting to talk to her more. (186)

As Lila's behavior grows stranger and stranger, Phaedrus comes to realize that her madness is essential to her dynamic character. He observes that Lila is "a complex ecology of patterns moving toward Dynamic Quality"; she is "in an evolutionary battle against the static patterns of her own life" (412).

Rigel, because of his traditional notions of what morality and value are, cannot see the Dynamic capability in Lila that Phaedrus is able to discern. Since Rigel can be seen as a symbolic representation of the static culture at large, it follows that without the shamanistic vision of Phaedrus the rest of those persons who blindly follow cultural norms will not be able to perceive the Dynamic capability of Lila either. This brings us back to Campbell's notion of the shaman as having an "intuition of depth" that "gives to the world a sacred character" (Masks of God 253). Phaedrus, like the true shaman, is able to see into another world that the layperson cannot.

When Phaedrus observes Lila on the boat dock towards the end of their journey, he recognizes, from his own experience being insane, "the style of what she was saying, the 'salad of words'" (362). Phaedrus begins to realize that he now "saw [Lila] the same way others had seen him years ago" (362), as someone who,
by traditional standards, is considered insane. However, this is what allows Phaedrus to see the Quality within Lila. The insanity is what contributes to the Dynamic capability that Phaedrus observes in Lila. He understands, like the anthropologists he is studying, that insanity is something that is "culturally defined" (380). Insanity, within the Metaphysics of Quality, is actually considered to be the most "moral" of conditions one can be in because he or she is completely in touch with the dynamic, cutting edge of reality. According to Phaedrus, "sane people don't see what a bunch of role players they are, but the insane see this role playing and resent it" (384).

This understanding of insanity is in line with the understanding of ecstatic experience prevalent in shamanism. The danger is not in the experience of insanity, but rather in the inability to control the insane experience. Madness is the result of letting the insane experience get out of control. Phaedrus seems to have come to an understanding of this through his own experience with psychiatrists. He remarks, concerning his recovery from insanity:

Phaedrus had seen that if you want to get out of an insane asylum the way to do it is no to try to persuade the psychiatrists that you know more than they do about what is "wrong" with you. That is hopeless. The way to get out is to persuade them that you fully understand that they know more than you do and that you are fully ready to accept their intellectual authority... You have to do a first class acting job and not allow any little glances of resentment to get in there. If you do they may catch you at it and you may be worse off then if you
hadn't tried. (378)

Just as the shaman is able to enter and exit the spirit world at will, one must be able to be in touch with the Dynamic realm of reality without letting it take complete control of one's mind.

The psychiatrists that Phaedrus was working with were also members of the "cultural immune system" that Phaedrus criticizes in the novel. This cultural immune system exiled Phaedrus when he was first formulating his ideas of Quality. This system is what is working to destroy Lila as well. Phaedrus finds himself faced with the task of finding out the best way to help Lila, either let her move in the direction of insanity and hope that she comes to a "Dynamic solution" or bring her back to the life of the culturally sane (413). This is a very important task, not just for Lila but also for the rest of Western culture, for as Phaedrus says, "Lila's battle is everybody's battle" (412).

Keeping with the idea of Dynamic reality, the ending of the novel seems rather spontaneous and unexpected. While Phaedrus is away from the boat getting supplies in a nearby town, Rigel returns to hear the surprising accusation from Lila that Phaedrus has been trying to "kill her" (449). In Phaedrus final confrontation with Lila before she leaves with Rigel, he thinks to himself:

Did Rigel put you up to this? Who put you up to this? Do you know what is going to happen to you back there? Is this some kind of suicide? My God, Lila, you haven't done one single solitary smart thing since the moment I met you, do you know that? When are you going to start?
But he didn't say all this. He just sat there like a child at a funeral, watching her.

There was nothing more he could say. She wanted to go back; there was nothing he could do about it. (451)

Once Lila is gone, Phaedrus comes to the realization that perhaps he should not go back to thinking about the metaphysics anymore:

since it's a lower form of evolution, intellect, trying to devour a higher mystic one....it tries to attempt to capture the Dynamic within a static pattern. But it never does. You never get it right. So why try? (457)

In a sense, what Phaedrus does is Dynamic since he does not try to impose his view of reality onto Lila. It is assumed that Lila will simply return with Rigel to the static patterns that were controlling her before she met Phaedrus. However, it was her choice, and Phaedrus let her be the one responsible for making it. When Phaedrus, at the end of the novel, buries the doll that Lila left on his boat, he is in a way burying her and the responsibility he feels towards her. During this strange scene the doll takes on a life of its own and speaks to Phaedrus about how "this is a happy ending for everyone" because "Lila gets her precious Richard Rigel, Rigel gets his precious self-righteousness, you get your precious Dynamic freedom, and I get to go swimming again" (461). By not interfering in the natural cycle of events, Phaedrus has insured that the situation is ruled only by dynamic consequences, at least on his part. Phaedrus comes to the realization that the real test for all people is not to suppress Dynamic capability in the universe wherever it
may be.

The doll also informs Phaedrus that the only reason he feels bad is that he thinks, "maybe they are going to come back and hand him a citation for merit" (461). What the doll is expressing is the idea that if one is to follow Dynamic Quality completely, one must suppress the need for social recognition, for this would simply make the person a celebrity, and being a celebrity involves a fragmentation of pure personality. As Phaedrus states earlier in the novel, when you become a celebrity "you split into two people, who [other people] think you are and who you really are" (290). What the notion of celebrity is within the Metaphysics of Quality is "Dynamic Quality within a static social level of evolution. It looks and feels like pure Dynamic Quality for a while, but it isn't" (293). Pure Dynamic Quality does not rely on the image of celebrity to give the person concerned a sense of importance in the universe around him.

Thus, the culmination of Phaedrus' shamanistic vision is simply that "Good is a noun" (468). Hope for recognition on Phaedrus' part would be seen as a sort of static procedure, for then he would be trying to impose his views of the universe on others, and that would not be Dynamic. Ultimately, everyone must decide on one's own what Dynamic Quality is and follow it wherever it may lead. Pirsig leaves his readers with the choice of whether or not to view Phaedrus as the shaman and accept his notion of Quality. This ensures freedom of the intellect which is of the highest moral good.
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Lee, Ronald J. “The Fusion of Form and Content.” Western American Literature. 14 (1979): 221-226. Lee asserts that the meaning of quality lies more within the narrative of the story and less within the philosophical digressions that Pirsig uses. This, according to Lee, is one of the reasons readers get frustrated with the novel.


Lomas, Herbert. Rev. of ZMM, by Robert Pirsig. London Magazine. 14 (1974): 136-138. Lomas suggests that ZMM is not only trying to bring out a philosophical change in the minds of people but also in peoples' senses and imagination.

Parker, Richard B. “A Review of ZMM with Some Remarks on the Teaching of Law.” *Rutgers Law Review.* 29 (1976) : 318-331. Parker notes the positive way ZMM can be used to improve teaching methods. By following Pirsig’s lead, Parker remarks, the teacher can help the student to think more independently.


Placher, William. “The Trinity and the Motorcycle.” *Theology Today.* 34 (1977) : 248-256. Placher suggests that Pirsig’s idea of Quality is too romantic. Placher suggests that a new understanding of the religious Trinity would help clear up the problems that Pirsig is exploring.


Pritscher, Conrad. “Some Comparisons Between Gestalt Educators and Pirsig’s View of Pre-socratic Philosophers.” *Philosophical Studies in Education.* (1977) : 81-86. Pritscher seems to suggest that the sophists Pirsig refers to in the novel are actually the group responsible for the subject-object split in Western conceptions of knowledge. This throws many of Phaedrus’ claims into doubt.

Raymond, Michael. “Generic Schizophrenia in ZMM.” *CEA Critic*. 43 (1981): 18-25. Raymond observes that the plethora of different types of narrative form in *ZMM* along with the blending of fiction and autobiography illustrate the split in the personality of contemporary culture.


Sacks, Michael. Rev. of *ZMM*, by Robert Pirsig. *Psychanalytic Review*. 65 (1978): 351-352. Sacks remarks on the structure of *ZMM*. He notes that in order for Phaedrus to heal completely from his mental derangement, he must come to terms with the meaning of why he was institutionalized.


Sebouhian discusses ZMM in terms of other stories about fathers killing or almost killing their sons.

Shearon, Forrest B. “Visual Imagery and Internal Awareness in Pirsig’s ZMM.” Kentuck Philological Association: Best Papers. (1983): 53-62. Shearon discusses the novel in terms of literal vision and symbolic vision. Shearon argues that the narrator has to do a better job of "seeing" and caring about other people.


Staudenmaier, John M. Rev. of ZMM, by Robert Pirsig. Technology and Culture. 1978: 257-259. Staudenmaier remarks favorably on Pirsig's ability to weave his narrative of the journey he takes with his son with his philosophical musings.

Steele notes many comparisons and contrasts between Goethe's poem and Pirsig's novel.


Steiner, George. "Uneasy Rider." *New Yorker.* 50 (1974) : 147-150. Steiner notes that the dualism present in Pirsig's novel is one of the elements that makes it distinctly American. He also discusses some of the possible mythological allusions that Pirsig might have been working with.


Wagner, Tony. "A second Look at Motorcycle Maintenance and Zen." *Humanist.* 36 (1976) : 45-46. Wagner claims that the narrator should have had a better relationship with his son. He notes that this is something that the author fails to acknowledge in full by the end of the novel.