

Pirsig, Robert. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1974. ISBN: 9780553148527. Ch. 8, Ch. 29, pp. 89 - 98, 347 - 353, (required) 296 - 319. (optional)

Pirsig uses a number of terms that he defines or elaborates on elsewhere. The "classic" view of something is its inner workings; the "romantic" view is its aesthetics. Ghosts are things that exist in our head, but not in the world. Quality is the pre-conscious qualitative assessment we have of things, which then produces either an objective or subjective awareness of them. The gumption part of the reading is good for students, but not as directly relevant to the course.

- What are the differences between a motorcycle and full set of interconnected systems of a motorcycle?
- How does the rationality that we create produce results that we don't want?
- What are "ghosts" for Pirsig?
- How does modern technology isolate us into attitudes of objectivity?
- What role does individual worth play in American culture?
- Explain the criticism that the Greeks taught us "to do what is 'reasonable' even when it isn't any good."
- Where do you encounter gumption traps? Can you add to the catalog?
- Do facts exist before our awareness of them?
- What role does boredom play in Zen Buddhism?
- Why does our culture not use the technology of "Mu"?
- What does Pirsig mean that "the real cycle you're working on is a cycle called yourself"?

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

ES.272 Culture Tech  
Spring 2003

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.