

Technê-Zen and the Spiritual Quality of Global Capitalism

R. John Williams

The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower. To think otherwise is to demean the Buddha—which is to demean oneself.

—ROBERT PIRSIG, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

The publication in 1974 of Robert Pirsig's philosophical novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* coincided with—and seemed to speak to—a number of transformative global crises. Amidst the ongoing US military invasion of Vietnam, the collapse of the Bretton Woods gold standard, the 1973–74 oil crisis, the stock market crash, and the ensuing 1973–75 recession, Pirsig's novel was immediately hailed as a trenchant diagnosis of contemporary failures to realize the aesthetic and therapeutic potential of modern technological systems.¹ W. T. Lhamon, Jr., for example, praised Pirsig's efforts to put “the garden back into the machine—art back into artifice, romantic back into classical,” pointing specifically to Pirsig's rebuke of Luddites like Henry David Thoreau for “talking to another situation, another time, just discovering the evils of technology rather than

For their invaluable insight and encouragement on this project, I would like to thank Michael Warner, Jerome Christensen, and all of my colleagues in the Yale Theory and Media Studies Colloquium.

1. A number of scholars have identified 1973–74 as a pivotal moment in a worldwide transition to more network-saturated and informational modes of capitalism. See, for example, Manuel Castells, *The Rise of Network Society* (Malden, Mass., 2010), p. 18; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C., 1991), p. xx; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Malden, Mass., 1990), p. 189; Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (New York, 1989), p. 160; and Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York, 2005), pp. 184–85.

discovering the solution.”² George Steiner penned a glowing review in *The New Yorker*, suggesting that Pirsig’s novel be canonized as the *Moby-Dick* of our time: “a book about the diverse orders of relation—wasteful, obtuse, amateurish, preemptory, utilitarian, insightful—which connect modern man to his mechanical environment.”³ It would be difficult, in fact, to overstate just how much Pirsig’s novel resonated with readers in the 1970s. It went quickly through six printings within the first year of its release, eventually selling more than five million copies. The *London Telegraph* was perhaps only slightly exaggerating when it described it as “the most widely read philosophy book, ever.”⁴

Much of the book’s popularity when it first appeared was due to the perception that *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* was a self-consciously postcountercultural text, periodizing already (as were many other authors at the time) a version of countercultural dissent that Pirsig thought was misplaced, however well intentioned. The agonistic “spirit of the sixties,” Morris Dickstein argued in his 1977 summary of the counterculture, “was surely Luddite. It saw machines everywhere, and was determined to break them or shut them down: the war was a machine, society was a machine, even the university was a machine producing cogs for society.” Pirsig’s narrator, by contrast, offered the natural flux and holism of Zen Buddhism as a more technology friendly “post-sixties perspective,” arguing for “systems-analysis rather than dropping out of the system.”⁵ Indeed, Pirsig’s book is in many ways as much about the supposedly tech-

2. W. T. Lhamon Jr., “A Fine Fiction,” review of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Robert Pirsig, *The New Republic*, 29 June 1974, p. 25.

3. “The book is inspired. . . . A detailed technical treatise on the tools, on the routines, on the metaphysics of a specialized skill; the legend of a great hunt after identity, after the salvation of mind and soul out of obsession, the hunter being hunted; a fiction repeatedly interrupted by, enmeshed with, a lengthy meditation on the ironic and tragic singularities of American man—the analogies with *Moby-Dick* are patent. Robert Pirsig invites the prodigious comparison” (George Steiner, “Uneasy Rider,” review of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Pirsig, *The New Yorker*, 15 Apr. 1974, p. 150).

4. Quoted in Pirsig, “Introduction to the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition,” *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York, 2005), p. xi; hereafter abbreviated ZMM.

5. Morris Dickstein, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties* (New York, 1977), pp. 274–75. Ed Zuckerman similarly noted, “*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is a calculated rebuttal of the anti-technological bias . . . that . . . peaked during the 1960s, when

R. JOHN WILLIAMS is assistant professor of English at Yale University. His current book manuscript, *Technology and the Meeting of East and West*, examines the role of technological discourse in representations of Asian/American aesthetics in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century literature and film.

nophobic counterculture as it is either Zen or motorcycle maintenance. As Pirsig's narrator argues near the beginning of the book, the countercultural dissidents of the sixties thought "technology has . . . a lot to do with the forces that are trying to turn them into mass people and they don't like it," even though, he continues, "their flight from and hatred of technology is self-defeating" (*ZMM*, p. 17). Pirsig's narrator, by contrast, reminds his readers that "a root word of technology, *techné*, originally meant 'art.' The ancient Greeks never separated art from manufacture in their minds, and so never developed separate words for them. . . . The real ugliness is not the result of any objects of technology. . . . The real ugliness lies in the relationship between the people who produce the technology and the things they produce" (*ZMM*, pp. 296–97).⁶ For Pirsig, it was time for the failed Luddism of the sixties to give way to a new "Zen" effort to live *with* (rather than rage against) machines, and *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* was a manifesto for this new, more cybernetic relationship with technological systems. The central argument of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, in other words, relies on a notion of what I call *techné-zen*: a discourse premised on the supposed commensurability and mutual determination of Zen Buddhism (including all of its related Taoist notions and techniques of spiritual and aestheticized practice—in short its *techné*) and the possibilities of an organic and holistic form of rationalist technocracy.

In analyzing the discourse of *techné-zen* in Pirsig's novel, its historical origins, and its ongoing role in the networked, global capitalist systems we live with today, this essay advances two main arguments, one a rather straightforward historical claim, the other a perhaps more controversial assertion. First, building on a number of recent studies on technology and

anti-technologism became a tenet of the counter-culture" (Ed Zuckerman, "Zen and the Art of Sailboat Maintenance: At Sea with Robert Pirsig," *Mother Jones Magazine* 2 [May 1977]: 58).

6. Pirsig's discussion of *techné* is, in several ways, a nod to Martin Heidegger, who had similarly turned to the etymological roots of *techné* in the late 1940s in an effort to rescue forms of thinking and "handicraft" from the systemic metaphysics of modern technology. "There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name *techné*," Heidegger argues in *The Question Concerning Technology*. "Once that revealing that brings forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearance also was called *techné*. . . . The *poiesis* of the fine arts also was called *techné*" (Martin Heidegger, "*The Question Concerning Technology*" and *Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt [New York, 1982], p. 34). Heidegger also flirted with the civilizational alterity of the East as an antidote to the Western erasure of Being. As he reportedly commented upon reading D.T. Suzuki's popular volume *Zen Buddhism*, "this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings." See William Barrett's introduction to D.T. Suzuki's *Zen Buddhism* (New York, 1956), p. xii. A number of scholars have also shown that the time Heidegger spent reflecting on the roots of *techné* overlapped directly with the time he spent translating the *Tao Te Ching* with a Chinese foreign exchange student. See Otto Pöggeler, "West-East Dialogue: Heidegger and Lao-tzu," in *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. Graham Parkes (Honolulu, 1987), pp. 50–51.

the counterculture, I argue that whereas Pirsig posits *technê-zen* as a discursive rupture from the dissident “spirit of the sixties,” *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* can be more correctly understood as both a continuation and acceleration of a discourse of “cybernetic zen” already well underway in the 1950s and 1960s; second, the forms of *technê-zen* developed in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* have come to occupy an especially privileged space in the technologically saturated realms of network capitalism and particularly the corporate management theories that currently dominate international business practice. As I intend to illustrate, the discourse of *technê-zen* picked up on and accelerated by Pirsig continues to exercise enormous power in our current era, when technological innovation (computational, organizational, pharmacological, and so on) is offered by multinational corporations as yet another path toward enlightenment—provided, that is, that these innovations are mediated by the supposedly more organic thinking of “Eastern” philosophy.⁷

Technê-Zen and the Counterculture

In a summary of the sixties published at the height of American anxieties about Vietnam and the military-industrial-university complex, Theodore Roszak argued that the “paramount struggle of our day” was against something he called the “technocracy.”⁸ Echoing Jacques Ellul’s notion of an all-encompassing “technique”⁹ (as well as Herbert Marcuse’s notion of “technological rationality”),¹⁰ Roszak argued that the technocracy was not simply the introduction of technology into society but a much more comprehensive regime of hyperrationality and organizational integration: “By the technocracy, I mean that social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration. It is the ideal men usually have in mind when they speak of modernizing, up-dating, rationalizing, planning” (*MCC*, p. 5). The real enemy, then, was not so much a specific political or economic structure (not, that is, something like capitalism or communism) but the entire “mad rationality” (*MCC*, p. 78) of what Lewis Mumford had called the “Mega-Machine,” a systematic tyranny of rationalism, gridlike regimentation, and ecocidal industrialism.¹¹

7. For the sake of readability, I will refrain in the rest of this essay from continuing to place terms like *Eastern* and *Western* in quotation marks, with the understanding that I am using these terms as discursive constructs rather than as social or cultural essences.

8. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Berkeley, 1968), p. 4; hereafter abbreviated *MCC*.

9. See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1964), pp. 3–11.

10. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston, 1964), p. 22.

11. Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine* (New York, 1967), p. 194.

Naturally, then, if one is overturning the “mad rationality” of the technocratic machine one has to have something to offer in its place, and so a number of counterculturalists promoted various forms of Eastern mysticism as an antidote to Western technocracy. It may be, Roszak argued, that some less mature youth have taken off “in the direction of strenuous frenzy and simulated mindlessness,” but there were nonetheless many who espoused, “a very different and much more mature conception of what it means to investigate the non-intellective consciousness. This emerges primarily from the strong influence upon the young of Eastern religion, with its heritage of gentle, tranquil, and thoroughly civilized contemplativeness.” In the mystical East one finds “a tradition that calls radically into question the validity of the scientific world view, the supremacy of cerebral cognition, the value of technological prowess; but does so in the most quiet and measured of tones, with humor, with tenderness, even with a deal of cunning argumentation” (*MCC*, p. 82). And in positing Eastern mysticism as an answer to the overmechanization of the West, Roszak was hardly alone. To point to only some of the most famous examples: D.T. Suzuki’s *Zen Buddhism* (1956), Alan Watts’s *The Way of Zen* (1958), Alan Ginsberg’s “Sunflower Sutra” (1955), Jack Kerouac’s *Dharma Bums* (1958), Philip Whalen’s “Vision of the Bodhisattvas” (1960), Gary Snyder’s “Buddhist Anarchism” (1961), Aldous Huxley’s *Zen Buddhist Island* (1962), John Cage’s *I Ching*-inspired *Music of Changes* (1951) and *Variations I–VII* (1958–66), and the widespread 1950s and 1960s circulation of Paul Reps’s *Zen Flesh*, *Zen Bones*, Wilhelm’s translation of the *I Ching*, P. D. Ouspansky’s *In Search of the Miraculous*, and G. I. Gurdjieff’s *All and Everything*.

It was, by all accounts, as Van Meter Ames put it, a “Zen ‘boom.’”¹² “The impact of science and technology upon traditional ways of living, thinking, and feeling has made people seek for some guiding wisdom,” and so, he explained, “the Zen ‘boom’ is on.”¹³ And it would keep on booming. In the 1970s, hundreds of Zen centers cropped up all over the US, accompanied by antitechnocratic treatises from Buddhists like Philip Kapleau Roshi, Chögyam Trungpa, and Thich Nhat Hanh—all of whom advocated the virtues of Zen Buddhism as an antidote to the dehumanizing effects of

12. Van Meter Ames, “Current Western Interest in Zen,” *Philosophy East and West* 10 (Apr.–Jul. 1960): 25. For contemporary 1960s accounts of the “Zen ‘boom,’” see Aishin Imeada, *Japanese Zen* (Tokyo, 1965), pp. 6–9, and Philip Kapleau, “Report from a Zen Monastery, ‘All Is One, One Is None, None Is All,’” *New York Times*, 6 Mar. 1966, p. 114.

13. In 1958, Stephen Mahoney argued, “Zen is a nature religion. It is booming at a time when Western man’s celebrated victory over nature is less convincing than ever—but when his alienation from nature, including his own nature, seems to be an accomplished fact” (Stephen Mahoney, “The Prevalence of Zen,” *The Nation*, 1 Nov. 1958, p. 312).

Western technology.¹⁴ As Charles Prebish's 1979 historical summary of *American Buddhism* noted, "In the 1970s the problems resulting from the monumental advances in all aspects of technology have become strategic concerns for American Buddhists."¹⁵

However, by the mid-1980s, and particularly amid the mounting excitement of the impending "PC revolution," the periodizing notion of the counterculture as uniformly antitechnocratic had begun to seem problematic. Take, for example, Roszak's startling revision to his earlier thesis offered at a San Francisco State University lecture in 1985. Whereas Roszak had in 1969 seen a coherent and unified "sensibility" of "mystic tendencies and principled funkiness" in the counterculture, he was now noticing a "deep ambiguity" in the movement. It would not be doing justice to our understanding of the counterculture, he now asserted, to overlook, "the allegiance it maintained—for all its vigorous dissent—to a certain irrepressible Yankee ingenuity, a certain world-beating American fascination with making and doing. For along one important line of descent, it is within this same population of rebels and drop-outs that we can find the inventors and entrepreneurs who helped lay the foundations of the California computer industry." What had seemed in the late 1960s like a consistently antimodernist group of neo-Luddites now seemed much more complicated: "The truth is, if one probes just beneath the surface of the bucolic hippy image, one finds this puzzling infatuation with certain forms of outré technology reaching well back into the early sixties."¹⁶ Indeed, a great deal of recent scholarship on the role of technology in the counterculture (especially those areas focusing on Stewart Brand's countercultural *Whole Earth Catalog*) has shown persuasively that the path from counterculturalism to the digital networks of "California capitalism" was marked by a deep structural continuity.¹⁷

14. The contributions of these and many other Buddhists during the 1970s are mapped out by Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America* (New York, 1999), pp. 249–65. See also Philip Kapleau, *Zen: Dawn in the West* (Norwell, Mass., 1979), p. 109; Chögyam Trungpa, *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, 8 vols. (Boston, 2004), 8:224–26; and Thich Nhat Hanh, *Zen Keys* (New York, 1974), especially the chapter "Spirituality Versus Technology," pp. 160–63. It may also be worth pointing out that Charles Reich's antitechnocratic volume *The Greening of America* (New York, 1970) never even mentions Eastern mysticism and yet was frequently characterized as advocating a Zen approach. See reviews of *The Greening of America* by Reich, *Life*, 4 Dec. 1970, p. 10, and Philip Nobile, *The Con III Controversy: The Critics Look at "The Greening of America"* (New York, 1971), pp. 55, 63, 81.

15. Charles Prebish, *American Buddhism* (North Scituate, Mass., 1979), p. 47.

16. Roszak, *From Satori to Silicon Valley: San Francisco and the American Counterculture* (San Francisco, 1986), pp. 15, 16.

17. The most impressive articulation of this continuity is Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago, 2006), which extends and amplifies a number of arguments begun by the later

For many counterculturalists, in other words, not all forms of Western technoculture were equally “technocratic,” and, indeed, most Zen advocates (in fact, *all* of those just listed) were convinced that Eastern mysticism shared certain affinities with what Watts, in *The Way of Zen* (1958), called the “growing edge” of Western scientific thought. As Watts explains,

The egocentric attempt to dominate the world, to bring as much of the world as possible under the control of the ego, has only to proceed for a little while before it raises the difficulty of the ego’s controlling itself.

This is really a simple problem of what we now call cybernetics . . . [which] exemplifies the whole problem of action in vicious circles and its resolution, and in this respect Buddhist philosophy should have a special interest for students of communication theory, cybernetics, logical philosophy, and similar matters.¹⁸

For Watts, however, the reason Zen Buddhism had a “special interest” for students of cybernetics was not only that the two philosophies shared interests in questions of nonduality, natural flux, and the virtual spaces of networked consciousness. More importantly, Zen Buddhism offered a way

Roszak, Mark Taylor, Andrew Kirk, Mark Dery, Erik Davis, Thomas Streeter, and others. As Turner argues, it was not just that the counterculture was heterogeneous enough to encompass a certain technophilic segment. What the “New Communalists” of the 1960s were appropriating from the architects of cold war technocracy (systems thinking, cybernetics, and various other forms of military-industrial computationalism) was an already-institutionalized-yet-fundamentally-new form of networking and collaborative technology. The counterculture, in other words, was less of a break with cold war research (at least those forms developed at the Rad Labs at MIT and the Macy Conferences on cybernetics) than it was an adaptation of some of its most central and transformative ideologies. See Mark Taylor, *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (Chicago, 2001); Andrew Kirk, “Machines of Loving Grace: Alternative Technology, Environment, and the Counterculture,” in *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s*, ed. Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle (New York, 2002), p. 373; Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century* (New York, 1997), p. 29; Erik Davis, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (New York, 2004), pp. 179–81; Thomas Streeter, *The Net Effect: Romanticism, Capitalism, and the Internet* (New York, 2011); Steven Levy, *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution* (New York, 1994); Julie Stephen, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism* (New York, 1998), pp. 73–95; and Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, “The Californian Ideology,” *Alamut: Bastion of Peace and Information*, www.alamut.com/subj/ideologies/pessimism/califldeo_1.html

18. Alan W. Watts, *The Way of Zen* (New York, 1957), pp. ix, 49. Watts never actually cites Norbert Wiener in *The Way of Zen*, but there are a number of passages in *The Way of Zen* that were lifted, sometimes word for word, from Wiener’s *Cybernetics*. Compare, for example, Watts’s description of the “feedback” process of a home thermostat (Watts, *The Way of Zen*, p. 136) to the description of the same process in Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or Control and Communication In the Animal and the Machine* (New York, 1948), p. 115.

for cybernetics to transcend its own tendencies toward technocratic computationalism.¹⁹ In his regular KQED television series, *Eastern Wisdom and Modern Life*, for example, Watts would often extol the therapeutic value of Zen in discussions of cybernetics and technological regimentation. In the second episode, for instance, Watts continues with a theme he had begun in the first presentation regarding “the extraordinary conflict between man and nature that exists among almost all highly civilized peoples, and especially here in the Western world where we talk so much about our conquest of nature, our mastery of space, our subjection of the physical world.” Walking over to a large canvas to his left, Watts pulls out a paintbrush and begins to explain the Sanskrit term *māyā*, which he says comes from the root *mā*, a word that is

at the basis of all kinds of words that we use in our own tongue: at the basis of “matter” . . . of “matrix,” or “metric,” because the fundamental meaning of the root *mā* is to “measure,” and so it works in this sort of way. I was talking about our world being wiggly. You know, something like this [Watts draws a wiggly line; see fig. 1]. That is the typical sort of shape we are having to deal with all the time.²⁰

The problem with such shapes, Watts explains, is that they are extraordinarily difficult to talk about. To describe such a line over the phone or on the radio so that the person on the other end could reproduce it would require enormous effort. “But here,” he says, “you can *see* it, and you can understand it at once.” But the problem is, Watts continues, “We want to be able to describe [the wiggles] exactly so that we can control them and deal with them. I mean, supposing this were the outline of a piece of territory on a map. Then you might want to tell someone an exact spot to which he should go, and then you would have to be far more precise about it than you can be when you just get the general idea by looking at it.” Thus, Watts explains, we turn to the concept of *māyā* by introducing a “matrix.” Holding up a wooden frame with a transparent glass on which a pattern of graph lines has been printed (fig. 2), Watts continues, “the moment we do this, it becomes very easy to talk about this wiggly line, because we could, for example, number all these squares across and downwards . . . and then we can indicate the exact points on this grid which cross the wiggly line. And by numbering those points one after another, we can give an accurate

19. For definitions of computationalism, see David Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation* (Cambridge, Mass., 2009), p. 7, and Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (New York, 2010), p. 153.

20. Clips and other media from this article can be viewed on my personal website at johnwilliams.wordpress.com/



FIGURE 1. Alan Watts draws a "wiggly line." From *Eastern Wisdom and Modern Life* (1959–60).



FIGURE 2. Alan Watts illustrates the grids of *māyā*. From *Eastern Wisdom and Modern Life* (1959–60).

description of the way that line moves.” The powers of *māyā*, in other words, allow for an amazingly efficient means of communicating complicated patterns and movements. But that is not all, Watts continues,

supposing it was wiggling, in *motion*, supposing it was a flea or something dipped in ink, and was crawling across the paper, and we wanted to know where he was going to go? All we would have to do would be to plot out the positions which he has covered, and then we could calculate statistically a trend, which would indicate where he would be likely to go next. And if he went there next, we should say, “By Jove! Isn’t that incredible. This little flea crawling across the paper is obeying the laws of statistics.” Well, as a matter of fact he isn’t. . . . what we are doing is we are making a very abstract model of the way in which that line is shaped, or in which that flea is crawling. We are breaking it up into little bits, whereas in fact it is not a lot of little bits. It is a continuous sweep, but by treating it in this way as if it were broken up into bits, we are measuring it, we are making a *māyā*. . . a way of *projecting*. You see, this thing [Watts picks up the frame with the graph lines] comes out of our minds, and we *project* it upon nature, like this, and break nature into bits, so that it can be easily talked about and handled.

Watts’s point, in the end, is that the projected grids of *māyā* are useful and compelling, but one needs the holistic awareness of Zen in order to carefully balance those grids against the organic wiggles of our ecological experience.

However, to see just how close Watts’s *māyā* is here to the questions of cybernetics one need only suppose that the wiggling object in question were not a flea but an airplane. During the Second World War, for example, this was precisely the task laid out for Norbert Wiener and his associates at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Wiener later described the situation in his 1948 volume *Cybernetics*: “At the beginning of the war, the German prestige in aviation and the defensive position of England turned the attention of many scientists to the improvement of anti-aircraft artillery.” As Wiener understood his task, the mechanized speed of the airplane/weapon had to be matched by the mechanized speed of an even more powerful, computational counterweapon. If calculations of the “curvilinear” path of the airplane could be built into an automated, anti-aircraft “control apparatus,”²¹ all the mystery and danger of the object’s

21. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, p. 5.

curvilinear movements—its “wiggles”—could be made sense of, bit by bit.²²

In the end, the US Army never actually made Wiener’s apparatus (the war ended before his insights could be built into any actual anti-aircraft weaponry), but the role of these projected feedback mechanisms between the pilot and his machine, or anti-aircraft operator and his intended target, became an integral part of Wiener’s and his colleagues’ postwar efforts to employ theories of statistical mechanics and information transmission in developing new machines and understandings of the human nervous system. In 1946, along with a number of other scientists, Wiener made arrangements with the Josiah Macy Foundation in New York to host the first of a series of meetings “devoted to the problems of feed back.”²³ The idea was to bring together twenty or so leading scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists to establish a common vocabulary with which scholars could develop a greater understanding of thinking machines—including, most centrally, the human nervous system, which was understood and characterized in explicitly informational/mechanical terms.²⁴

The idea that Zen not only shared certain interests with this new cybernetic thinking but—more importantly—also offered a therapeutic means of developing and integrating it became a central underlying assumption for the entire countercultural fascination with Eastern mysticism. Consider, for example, Zen devotee Richard Brautigan’s famous 1967 poem, “All Watched over by Machines of Loving Grace,” reprinted in several issues of Stewart Brand’s countercultural *Whole Earth Catalog*:

I like to think (and
the sooner the better!)

22. Freeman Dyson has explained the development of cybernetics in precisely these terms: “To maximize the chance of destroying the airplane, the control system must take into account *the multitude of wiggly paths* that the airplane might follow” (Freeman Dyson, *The Scientist as Rebel* [New York, 2006], p. 257; emphasis added).

23. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, p. 26.

24. These meetings have been described by a number of scholars, persuasively I think, as the origins of what has come to be known as the computationalist theory of the mind (S. G. Shanker, David Golumbia), the advent of the posthuman (N. Katherine Hayles), and the generative origins of the internet (David Mindell and others). Shanker actually sees Wiener’s cybernetics as initially resistant to such full-scale computationalism, but notes that it was rather quickly “co-opted by cognitive psychologists and neurophysiologists” (S. G. Shanker, “AI at the Crossroads,” in *The Question of Artificial Intelligence*, ed. Brian P. Bloomfield [New York, 1987], p. 32). Golumbia similarly credits Wiener with resisting full-blown computationalism, even as he set the stage for its eventual hegemony; see Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, pp. 89–92. See also N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 50–112; David A. Mindell, *Between Human and Machine: Feedback, Control, and Computing before Cybernetics* (Baltimore, 2002), p. 4; and Streeter, *The Net Effect*, pp. 30–34.

of a cybernetic meadow
 where mammals and computers
 live together in mutually
 programming harmony
 like pure water
 touching clear sky.

I like to think
 (right now, please!)
 of a cybernetic forest
 filled with pines and electronics
 where deer stroll peacefully
 past computers
 as if they were flowers
 with spinning blossoms.

I like to think
 (it has to be!)
 of a cybernetic ecology
 where we are free of our labors
 and joined back to nature,
 returned to our mammal
 brothers and sisters,
 and all watched over
 by machines of loving grace.²⁵

For Brautigan, this vivid interweaving of the organic (“meadows,” “pure water,” “flowers,” and so on) and the cybernetic (“computers,” “machines,” “electronics,” and so on) reflected an explicitly Zen philosophy, and as such it mirrored the technophilic visions of many counterculturalists fascinated with both Eastern mysticism and the burgeoning field of cybernetic computationalism. Consider, for example, Snyder’s ecological treatise *Earth House Hold* (1969), which reports (in consistent, log-keeping

25. Richard Brautigan, “All Watched over by machines of Loving Grace” (1967), in *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, ed. Stewart Brand (Menlo Park, Calif., 1971), p. 240. See Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, pp. 38–39, and Levy, *Hackers*, pp. 176–77. Like Snyder, Brautigan shared an apartment in the mid-1950s with Zen poet Philip Whalen and was deeply involved in “Beat Zen.” Edward Foster has argued that Brautigan’s entire career was marked by a conscious effort to embody a “Zen vision,” citing Brautigan’s participation in a special event of the ninety-fourth annual Modern Language Association convention in 1979 on the topic of “Zen and Contemporary Poetry,” with fellow panelists Snyder, Lucien Stark, and Whalen (Edward Halsey Foster, *Richard Brautigan* [Boston, 1983], p. 24).

detail) on the mountain-to-mountain radio transmissions over his SX areal antennae between him and fellow Zen-devotees Kerouac and Whalen during two summers of fire lookout on Crater Mountain—including thoughts on adjusting his “mechanism of perception” by way of seeing the world as “a vast interrelated network.”²⁶ Or consider the sophisticated “cybernetic” experimentation of Cage’s Zen-inspired *Variations VII* (performed in collaboration with the Bell Telephone Labs in 1966), with his use of radios, electric juicers, fans, blenders, telephones, magnetic pickups, audio mixers, and contact microphones—all connected and activated in a massive control room by a series of wires and electric photocells (figs. 3–4). Cage’s close colleague, Nam June Paik, was no less interested in blurring the line between technological innovation and Eastern mysticism, as seen, for example, in *Zen for Film* (1964) and *TV-Buddha* (1974) (fig. 5). There was also the highly influential *technè-zen* promoted at Esalen, California in the late 1960s, where figures like Fritjof Capra offered seminars on the commensurability of quantum mechanics and Eastern mysticism (eventually publishing *The Tao of Physics* in 1975), and where former Macy Conference participant Gregory Bateson gave seminars on the dynamic convergence of technological experimentation, cybernetic theory, and Zen Buddhism.²⁷ Counter-cultural Zen, in other words, was an already highly technophilic endeavor, but, as I hope to show in this next section, it was Robert Pirsig’s vivid articulation of *technè-zen* that refined and amplified the discourse, providing it with the mainstream authority it exercises today.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

The opening line of Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is immediately cybernetic, weaving together feedback loops of man, machine, and ecological environment: “I can see by my watch, without taking my hand from the left grip of the cycle, that it is eight-thirty in the morning. The wind, even at sixty miles an hour, is warm and humid” (ZMM, p.

26. Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York, 1969), pp. 4, 92. Jack Kerouac would report on his own time on Desolation Mountain in *Desolation Angels* (New York, 1965).

27. On Fritjof Capra at Esalen, see Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Esalen: America and the Religion of No Religion* (Chicago, 2007), pp. 302–7. On Gregory Bateson, see Walter Truett Anderson, *The Upstart Spring: Esalen and the American Awakening* (New York, 1983), pp. 319–20. Eric Davis, who in an excellent study on the commensurate discourses of technology and Gnostic mysticism, offers a brief summary of Bateson’s ideas, and then comments, “if all this strikes you rather like cybernetic Zen, you have definitely been keeping your eye on the ball” (Davis, *TechGnosis*, p. 152); see also Joanna Macy, *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems* (Albany, N.Y., 1991), which posits specific connections between Zen and cybernetics. On Brand’s Eastern mysticism, see John Brockman, *Digerati: Encounters with the Cyber Elite* (New York, 1996), pp. 19–28.

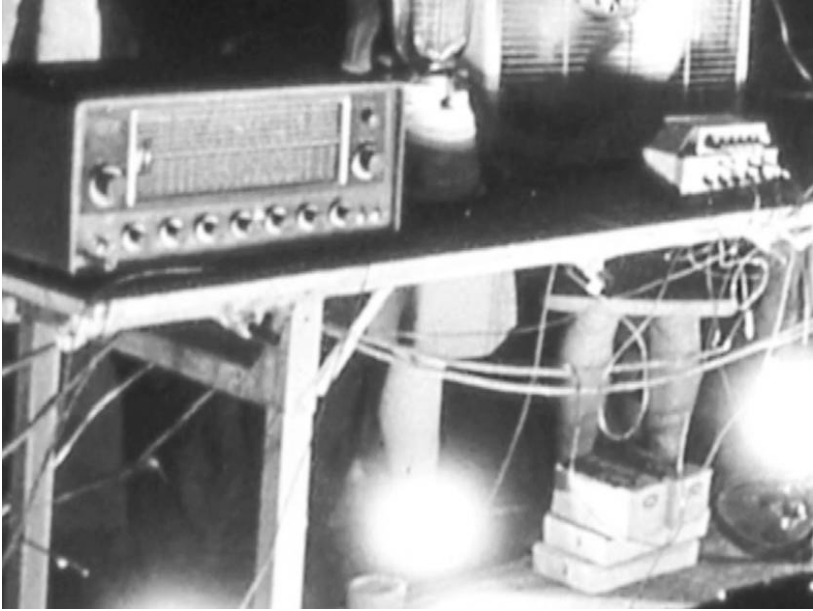


FIGURE 3-4. Scenes from John Cage's *Variations VII* (1966).

3). For the narrator (a mostly autobiographical version of Pirsig himself), the cybernetic experience of riding his motorcycle on small, out of the way rural roads is highly therapeutic: “Tensions disappear along old roads like this” (*ZMM*, p. 3). But it isn’t just the natural scenery afforded by avoiding the traffic of the “four-laner.” The motorcycle itself, we learn on the next page, is critical to this experience:

You see things vacationing on a motorcycle in a way that is completely different from any other. In a car you’re always in a compartment, and because you’re used to it you don’t realize that through that car window everything you see is just more TV. You’re a passive observer and it is all moving by you boringly in a frame. On a cycle the frame is gone. You’re completely in contact with it all. You’re *in* the scene, not just watching it anymore, and the sense of presence is overwhelming. [*ZMM*, p. 4]

The vision offered here is explicitly therapeutic; the motorcycle enables one to get outside the (*māyā*-projected?) “frame” and back into an overwhelming sense of “contact” and “presence.” Indeed, Pirsig seems to be taking a page right out of Watts’s doctrine of the wiggly. “Twisting hilly roads,” he writes, are “much more enjoyable on a cycle where you bank

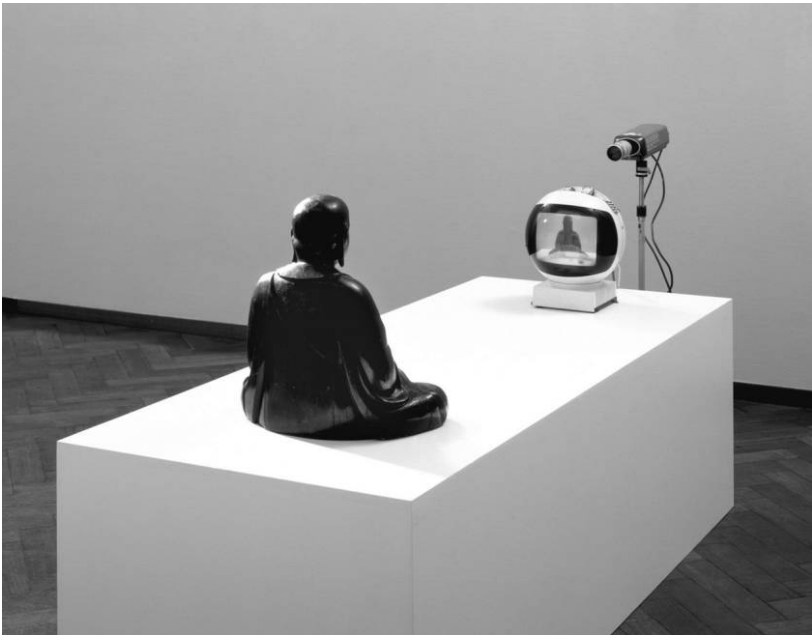


FIGURE 5. Nam June Paik, *TV-Buddha* (1974).

into turns and don't get swung from side to side in any compartment. . . . We have learned how to spot the good ones on a map, for example. If the line wiggles, that's good" (*ZMM*, pp. 5–6; emphasis added).

The motorcycle is also important because even when traveling with others it demands a certain noncommunicative meditation of its operators: "Unless you're fond of hollering you don't make great conversations on a running cycle. Instead you spend your time being aware of things and meditating on them" (*ZMM*, p. 7). The motorcycle, in other words, makes for some great *zazen* (the Zen practice of extended meditation), and this inner contemplativeness plays into the narrative in important ways as well. The plot of the novel basically involves a man (the narrator) who takes his son (Chris) on a motorcycle vacation from Minnesota to San Francisco and along the way records his philosophical musings in the form of what he calls (after the late nineteenth-century traveling lecture and entertainment assemblies) "Chautauquas" (*ZMM*, p. 7). The major difference, however, is that the narrator's chautauquas are all interior, reflective musings and not at all the public experience of those earlier traveling assemblies.²⁸ It is central to my argument, in fact, that this intense interiority is important to the discourse of *technê-zen* in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* both because it provides a vehicle for Pirsig's own fantasies of self-justification and philosophical eminence and because it lays the groundwork for the ideological agenda of the novel—which will, in turn, make it enormously useful to the corporate culturalism and postindustrial capitalism of the 1980s and 1990s.

A number of biographical and historical events provided the motivation for Pirsig to write this intensely autobiographical narrative, most of which are described in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* in roughly chronological order: the author's precocious intelligence during his early days as a student in Minnesota, his stint in Korea during his time in the army, his study at Banaras Hindu University in India, his frustrated efforts to teach composition at Montana State University in Bozeman, and his similarly aborted progress toward a degree in philosophy at the University of Chicago. The most important event in the narrative, however, is Pirsig's nervous breakdown during these later events and his subsequent time in psychiatric hospitals during the early 1960s. Having been diagnosed with clinical depression and paranoid schizophrenia, Pirsig was subjected to multiple doses of electroshock therapy. As his narrator in *Zen*

28. It is yet another measure of how much *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is a self-consciously *postcounterculturalist* text; the motorcycle is not a bus. Pirsig had no patience for the Merry Pranksters.

and the *Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* explains, “Approximately 800 mills of amperage at durations of 0.5 to 1.5 seconds had been applied on twenty-eight consecutive occasions” (*ZMM*, p. 88)—a highly transformative event, to be sure, and one that plays a central role in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. All of these experiences are processed philosophically in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by way of the narrator’s inner chautauquas, but like any good psychoanalytic session (or novel) they do not all come out at once.

The first of several conflicts to emerge in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* happens between Pirsig’s narrator and two friends, a husband and wife by the name of John and Sylvia Sutherland, who have joined him on the first leg of their motorcycle journey. The point of contention between Pirsig’s narrator and the Sutherlands has to do, at least initially, with the question of how much one should engage in one’s own motorcycle maintenance. Pirsig’s narrator argues, “it seems natural and normal to me to make use of the small tool kits and instruction booklets supplied with each machine, and keep it tuned and adjusted myself.” John and Sylvia, on the other hand, prefer to “let a competent mechanic take care of these things” (*ZMM*, p. 10). Neither view, of course, is necessarily extreme or unusual, but as the narrator contemplates this difference he begins to see it as symptomatic of a much deeper conflict:

It’s all of technology they can’t take. And then all sorts of things started tumbling into place and I knew that was it. Sylvia’s irritation at a friend who thought computer programming was “creative.” All their drawings and paintings without a technological thing in them. . . . Of course John signs off every time the subject of cycle repair comes up, even when it is obvious he is suffering for it. That’s technology. [*ZMM*, p. 23]

The Sutherlands, in other words, are neo-Luddites, and, as such, they come to serve as important cultural types for Pirsig’s more pointedly ideological arguments. Consider, for example, the most famous passage in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, which offers *technè-zen* as an organic and deeply natural way of living *with* technology rather than fighting against it:

Their flight from and hatred of technology is self-defeating. The Buddha, the Godhead, resides quite as comfortably in the circuits of a digital computer or the gears of a cycle transmission as he does at the top of a mountain or in the petals of a flower. To think otherwise is to demean the Buddha—which is to demean oneself. [*ZMM*, p. 26]

For Pirsig, to say that the Buddha “resides” in a mechanical object is not to say that some spiritual, otherworldly essence is haunting these gears and circuits. To demean technology is to demean the Buddha and the “self” because technology is merely a material manifestation of an “underlying form” of analytic thought. And, for Pirsig, there are ways of understanding and employing analytic thought (and technology) that are consistent with the aestheticized practices of Zen. Even heavy industrial systems are only extensions of human thought and, as such, not the real source of evil. The root of the problem has to do with our all-too-rational patterns of thought: “to tear down a factory or to revolt against a government or to avoid repair of a motorcycle because it is a system is to attack effects rather than causes; and as long as the attack is upon effects only, no change is possible. The true system, the real system, is our present construction of systematic thought itself, rationality itself” (*ZMM*, p. 98). The problem arises, he explains, when people portray “romantic” (that is, wiggly, hip, aesthetic, experiential, Eastern) and “classic” (that is, *māyā*-projected, square, scientific, theoretical, Western) forms of thinking as necessarily antagonistic: “in recent times we have seen a huge split develop between a classic culture and a romantic counterculture—two worlds growing alienated and hateful toward each other with everyone wondering if it will always be this way” (*ZMM*, p. 71).²⁹ This is why motorcycles are so useful to Pirsig as an ongoing point of discussion. They may be mass-produced, technological products, created by means of “classic” thinking, but they are also wonderfully “romantic” vehicles that allow for free and wiggly traveling across the grids of America (a notion already firmly established by the “rebellious motorbiker” film genre of the 1960s). As Pirsig’s narrator puts it, “although motorcycle riding is romantic, motorcycle maintenance is purely classic” (*ZMM*, p. 70). The motorcycle as a conceptual, philosophical object, then, reveals Pirsig’s more synthetic purpose: “What has become an urgent necessity is a way of looking at the world that does violence to neither of these two kinds of understanding and unites them into one” (*ZMM*, p. 80). Thus, even heavy industries and the digital circuits of a computer could become the products of a much lighter, more aesthetic process, given the proper philosophical outlook; and, as we shall see, Pirsig will claim to have discovered, by way of *technê-zen*, the philosophical answer to such a challenge.

But before we can see how this answer plays out in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and its reception, it will be necessary to note that

29. Several scholars have identified the similarity of Pirsig’s classic/romantic divide with C. P. Snow’s characterization of *The Two Cultures* (New York, 1959). However, F. S. C. Northrop’s epistemic correlate in *The Meeting of East and West* (1946) was a more direct influence (Northrop was also a member of the Macy Conferences); see *ZMM*, p. 122.

the manner in which Pirsig arrives at these insights is a very important part of his narrative. What makes *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* such an intriguing novel and, indeed, what makes it literary rather than strictly biographical or philosophical is that the narrative develops by way of a complex mystery—a ghost story of sorts. One night, after traveling through a storm, Pirsig confesses to his son that he has seen a ghost, and he knows who it is. The ghost's name, he tells Chris, is Phaedrus, but who exactly this Phaedrus is will remain a mystery until the sixth chapter, when the narrator decides that it is time, finally, to “reopen his case” (*ZMM*, p. 69). Here Pirsig's narrator confesses he has actually been getting all of his ideas about technology, Zen, and the romantic/classic split from Phaedrus, and he wants to explain how Phaedrus developed these ideas and where they eventually took him: “what Phaedrus thought and said is significant. But *no* one was listening at that time and they only thought him eccentric at first, then undesirable, then slightly mad, and then genuinely insane. There seems little doubt that he was insane, but much of his writing at the time indicates that what was driving him insane was this hostile opinion of him” (*ZMM*, p. 72). Phaedrus, the narrator explains, was a “knower of logic” (*ZMM*, P. 84). He was so intelligent that “his Stanford-Binet IQ, which is essentially a record of skill at analytic manipulation, was recorded at 170, a figure that occurs in only one person in fifty thousand” (*ZMM*, p. 84)—a real child prodigy. But his intelligence also produced isolation: “In proportion to his intelligence he was extremely isolated. . . . He traveled alone. Always. Even in the presence of others he was completely alone. . . . His wife and family seem to have suffered the most” (*ZMM*, pp. 84–85). Eventually, we learn that Phaedrus is in fact the pre-electroshock therapy narrator himself. That previous lone-wolf self, which he has come to call Phaedrus (because Pirsig thought, mistakenly, that *Phaedrus* meant “wolf”), was “destroyed by order of the court, enforced by the transmission of high-voltage alternating current through the lobes of his brain” (*ZMM*, p. 91). Thus, in what remains of the narrative, Pirsig tells of Phaedrus's grand discovery, his persecution by the academy, his insanity, and his reunion with the narrator in the final scenes of the book.

Phaedrus's initial move toward his grand discovery comes as he is stationed in Korea while serving in the Army. While there, Phaedrus encounters a particular wall, “seen from a prow of a ship, shining radiantly, like a gate of heaven, across a misty harbor.” The memory of that wall must be valuable to Phaedrus, the narrator explains, because it sticks in his mind as “symboliz[ing] something very important, a turning point” (*ZMM*, p. 122). What exactly that wall symbolizes is detailed more fully later in the narrative:

That wall in Korea that Phaedrus saw was an act of technology. It was beautiful, but not because of any masterful intellectual planning or any scientific supervision of the job, or any added expenditures to “stylize” it. It was beautiful because the people who worked on it had a way of looking at things that made them do it right unselfconsciously. They didn’t separate themselves from the work in such a way as to do it wrong. There is the center of the whole situation.

The way to solve the conflict between human values and technological needs is not to run away from technology. That’s impossible. The way to resolve the conflict is to break down the barriers of dualistic thought that prevent a real understanding of what technology is—not an exploitation of nature, but a fusion of nature and the human spirit into a new kind of creation that transcends both. [ZMM, p. 298]

But, for Pirsig, the East is not the final destination in his new metaphysics. Indeed, after traveling to India to study “Oriental Philosophy” at Benaras Hindu University, Pirsig grows dissatisfied with the “Oriental” teachers’ refusal to engage in analytic rigor. In the end, he decides that an exclusively Eastern approach remains “hopelessly inadequate,” and so he leaves India and gives up studying for a while, eventually taking a job teaching composition at Montana State University in Bozeman (ZMM, p. 142). There, however, he becomes equally unimpressed by the all-too-*Western* thinking he encounters (the Western academy comes to be referred to at this point in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, rather disdainfully, as the “Church of Reason” [ZMM, p.145]). What seems to be missing in both the East and the West, according to Phaedrus, is a unified field vision of “Quality.” And so, at the end of the fifteenth chapter, we find Phaedrus wondering, “What the hell is Quality? What *is* it?” (ZMM, p. 184). Does it inhere in an object? Or is it merely a subjective act of judgment? Could Quality serve as a “point of common understanding between the classic and romantic worlds”? (ZMM, p. 224). That Quality seems to exist in both the romantic and classic worlds—that it is both “within” and “beyond” both forms of thinking (ZMM, p. 237)—leads Phaedrus to the notion that it “wasn’t subjective or objective either, it was beyond both of *those* categories” (ZMM, p. 237). Quality, then, becomes a kind of cosmic, third entity prior to any subjectivity or objectivity. This is the grand epiphanic insight: “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” (ZMM, p. 238). Quality becomes not a “*thing*” but an

“event” (ZMM, p. 242), something that, according to Phaedrus, “is the cause of the subjects and objects, which are then mistakenly presumed to be the cause of the Quality!” (ZMM, p. 242). Quality is revealed as embodying a kind of absolute *priority*. “He had broken the code” (ZMM, p. 258).

The remainder of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is devoted to testing out the consequences and implications of Pirsig’s great discovery. At one point, for example, Phaedrus picks up a copy of the *Tao Te Ching* and notices that if one substitutes the word *Tao* with the word *Quality*, something like the same metaphysical doctrine emerges: “*The Quality that can be defined is not the Absolute Quality. . . . Quality is all-pervading. And its use is inexhaustible!*” (ZMM, pp. 256–57). It becomes “the answer to the whole problem of technological hopelessness” (ZMM, p. 276). The most devastating consequence of this new insight, however, involves his attempt to bring it with him to the University of Chicago. Phaedrus, it turned out, had the apparent misfortune of pursuing his PhD under the direction of Richard McKeon, known in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* only and rather derisively as “The Chairman.” McKeon already had a reputation in academia for, as one of his former students put it, “a surpassing sharpness for his dialectical assaults and defenses”—a man “remorseless in the drive of his logic.”³⁰ He prided himself on teaching the classic texts with what he termed a “sympathetic literalness” that defended, somewhat fanatically, the original as if the author were present in the classroom. For someone as convinced as Phaedrus was that he had discovered *the* final nondualism to end all dyads and that “it was time Aristotle got his” (ZMM, p. 354), the coming clash with a sympathetic literalist like McKeon was perhaps inevitable. The more detached narrator of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, looking over Phaedrus’s hubris, admits that he lacked the “ability to understand the effect of what he was saying on others,” that he had become “caught up in his own world” (ZMM, p. 354). But these are portrayed as understandable offenses for one on his way to “a major breakthrough between Eastern and Western philosophy, between religious mysticism and scientific positivism” (ZMM, p. 354). In the final showdown, the narrator depicts Phaedrus humiliating “The Chairman” in the classroom for failing to see just how

30. George Kimball Plochmann, *Richard McKeon: A Study* (Chicago, 1990), p. 1. As Wayne Booth, one of McKeon’s other famous students would recall, “for some of his students, the punches were destructive, and for some, like the angry Robert Pirsig who attacked McKeon as ‘The Professor’ in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, the destruction was felt as deliberate. My own view is that McKeon never intended to destroy the arguer, only the fallacious argument or reading. His profound probing did, however, produce some personal tragedies” (Wayne C. Booth, *The Essential Wayne Booth*, ed. Walter Jost [Chicago, 2006], p. 342 n. 3).

radically Socrates had mischaracterized the Sophists.³¹ It is probably not a very fair characterization of McKeon (who comes across as petty, arrogant, and insecure), but Phaedrus's rereading of the pre-Socratics as espousing a form of *arête* closer to the dynamic notions of "Quality" and "excellence" rather than to fixed, Truth-bound notions of "virtue" is actually quite remarkable. It is a philosophical holism with echoes in the phenomenological and postmodern philosophies of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Derrida, Stanley Fish, and even—in a final, painful twist of irony—in two of Richard McKeon's less wounded students, Richard Rorty and Wayne Booth.³² Indeed, if Phaedrus had pursued his insights with a bit more patience and less megalomaniacal fervor, he might have gone on to a fine career in academia. (That he would go on to write one of the best-selling novels of the twentieth century is its own consolation, no doubt.)

In any case, the possibility of such a career is treated only with disdain in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Phaedrus recoils from his interaction with "The Chairman," feeling only "disgusted" (ZMM, p. 400). Suffering under the weight of this insight and its rejection by the academy, Phaedrus eventually goes insane, staring at his bedroom wall for days on end, urinating in bed, his cigarettes burning down into his fingers. Phaedrus isn't far, at this point, from undergoing the "liquidation" of his personality by electroshock therapy; he isn't far, that is, from becoming the narrator. But the search for a nondualistic philosophy in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is also the search for a nondualistic self in Pirsig.³³ Indeed, what is often quoted from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* as a kind of banal self-help cliché is actually a rather sophisticated metanarrative moment in the novel: "The real cycle you're working on is a cycle called yourself. The machine that appears to be 'out there' and the person that appears to be 'in here' are not two separate things. They grow

31. The text in question is appropriately *Phaedrus*, which, although it doesn't mean "wolf," does deal with questions of rhetoric, love, and the origins of written language.

32. See John Poulakos, "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," *Communication Monographs* 51, no. 3 (1984): 215–26; Jacques Derrida, "Jacques Derrida on Rhetoric and Composition: A Conversation," interview by Gary A. Olson, *Journal of Advanced Composition* 10 (Winter 1990): 1–21; Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (Durham, N.C., 1989), pp. 479–81; Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J., 1979), pp. 155–64; Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (Malden, Mass., 2004), pp. 55–84; and Susan Jarratt, *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Reconfigured* (Carbondale, Ill., 1991). See Fish on Pirsig's phenomenological holism in "Fathers, Sons, and Motorcycles," *New York Times Online*, 14 June 2009, opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/06/14/fathers-sons-and-motorcycles/

33. For an interesting reading of Pirsig's metaphysics of Quality as a synthetic "field model," see Hayles, *The Cosmic Web: Scientific Field Models and Literary Strategies in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984), pp. 63–84.

toward Quality or fall away from Quality together” (*ZMM*, p. 332). Cycle-as-self here means both the metaphorical engine/vehicle but also the *cyclical* returning to a former self, as the narrator of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* experiences with Phaedrus. For Pirsig, Quality—like the letter Q—is a metaphysical circle with a kickstand.

It seems clear, in other words, that Pirsig wants both to redeem Phaedrus and reunite him with the narrator, but one casualty of that originary rupture has also been haunting the book like a ghost: Pirsig’s son, Chris. The narrator constantly struggles with the tension created between his recognition that he failed in some crucial (which is to say *qualitative*) way as a father and his conviction that the philosophical insights he developed demanded precisely this sacrifice. The various moments when Chris enters the narrative he appears generally unhappy, perhaps even unstable, and it is not hard to see why. Chris seems more like a hostage to his father’s unrelenting inwardness than he does a young kid on a vacation. The narrator routinely insults Chris (at one point calling him a “complete bastard”), refuses to console him, and on at least a few occasions seems to physically intimidate him (see *ZMM*, pp. 59, 64, 67). For Pirsig’s narrator to be fully redeemed, then, he not only has to revisit and confirm the philosophical insights developed by his former self but also reveal that in the process of discovering these ideas he committed a number of what seem to be rather low-Quality acts. He cannot, however, allow that lack of Quality to cancel out the truth-value of his Metaphysics of Quality. To put the matter in what are the obviously intended symbolic terms, God must be all good at the same time that he tortures his Son. Thus, for Chris to become a metaphorical stand-in for Christ, he has to have at least a glimpse of the divine plan, which occurs in the final scenes of the novel:

Now the fog suddenly lifts and I see the sun on his face makes his expression open in a way I’ve never seen it before. He puts on his helmet, tightens his strap, then looks up.

“Were you really insane?”

Why should he ask that?

“No!”

Astonishment hits. But Chris’s eyes sparkle.

“I knew it,” he says.

Then he climbs on the cycle and we are off. [*ZMM*, p. 419]

With Chris now “sparkling” over this revelation, the last chapter finds Father and Son emotionally reunited, driving together along the “wiggly” path: “The road continues to twist and wind through the trees. It upswings around hairpins and glides into new scenes one after another around and

through brush and then out into open spaces where we can see canyons stretch away below” (ZMM, p. 421). And then, as the pair takes off their helmets (with hints toward casting off their mortal selves), we see, finally, Chris(t)’s ascension:

More trees and shrubs and groves. It’s getting warmer. Chris hangs onto my shoulders now and I turn a little and see that he stands up on the foot pegs. . . . After a while when we cut sharp into a hairpin under some overhanging trees he says, “Oh,” and then later on, “Ah,” and then, “Wow.” . . .

“What’s the matter?” I ask.

“It’s so different.”

“What?”

“Everything. I never could see over your shoulders before.”

The sunlight makes strange and beautiful designs through the tree branches on the road. It flits light and dark into my eyes. We swing into a curve and then up into the open sunlight. [ZMM, p. 410]

Suddenly convinced of his Father’s sanity, standing up on the foot pegs (thus suspended by the nail-like bars installed on the sides of the sacred machine), Chris transcends his Father’s torture and ascends—in curvilinear, wiggly fashion—“up into the open sunlight.”

Whether or not one finds the implied sacrifice and ascension of Chris persuasive goes a long way to determining how one feels, finally, about the novel.³⁴ Some critics see this abrupt, cathartic transformation as evidence that the narrator has “come home to a Quality that was never really lost by reaching a vastly fuller union with his son, within himself, and with the whole world.”³⁵ Others argue that after hundreds of pages of noncommunicative rudeness bordering on abuse, this sudden reconciliation feels a bit empty without any apology or promise of renewed sensitivity.³⁶ But for every critic *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* has a whole group of devotees, with a growing number of readers debating online the book’s

34. See Richard H. Rodino, “Irony and Earnestness in Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*,” *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction* 22 (1980): 21–31 and “The Matrix of Journeys in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*,” *Journal of Narrative Technique* 11 (Winter 1981): 53–63.

35. Ronald L. DiSanto, and Thomas J. Steele, *Guidebook to “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance”* (New York, 1990), p. 28.

36. Tony Wagner notes the narrator’s lack of modesty and compassion, as well as his unapologetic commitment to isolation. See Tony Wagner, “A Second Look at *Motorcycle Maintenance and Zen*,” review of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Pirsig, *Humanist* 36 (Sept.–Oct. 1976): 45–46.

philosophical assertions.³⁷ It is my contention, however, that the most powerful and influential legacy of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* can be found not in the academy (where Pirsig has received very little attention), and not in the archives of cultish web discussions (where Pirsig is fervently admired by a small and fairly inconsequential group of fans), but rather in the hallowed halls of today's corporate "campus." Breaking down *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* into its most salient themes, we see why this might have been the case. First, despite whatever ills modern technological and industrial systems have been accused of, to simply abandon them is escapist; to transform these systems, one must find a way of synthesizing "classic" and "romantic" forms of thinking. Next, the result of that synthesis, which Pirsig calls the Metaphysics of Quality, must come *prior* to any objective or subjective understanding of manufactured products. Furthermore, academia is morally bankrupt; one cannot hope to find the answers to these questions in the "Church of Reason," and so we must look to the East (but not exclusively) in our efforts at reshaping our modes of technological experience in the West. And, finally, there may be some unfortunate, but necessary personnel casualties (call them externalities) in the journey toward a greater manifestation of Quality; however, these can be remedied with a discourse of techno-transcendentalist at-one-ment. As a number of scholars of global capitalism have noticed, this particular combination of themes will eventually come to serve as a broad discursive foundation for what we know today as the corporate culture of information work.³⁸ *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* would become an active participant (whether unwittingly or not) in the effort to delineate a new *technê-zen* for the postindustrial landscape. How then did *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* get cast into this role?

Technê-Zen and the Art of Late Capitalism

If there was one overarching concern of corporate managers in the West during the 1980s, it was this: "Japanese manufacturers trounced American

37. Motorcycle enthusiasts generally love the book, and hundreds of Pirsig fans retrace his motorcycle route on their own motorcycles every year, aided now by downloadable GPS coordinates of Pirsig's major stopping points. Pirsig's follow-up book, *Lila*, has not been nearly as successful and is generally appreciated by only the most devoted fans. Discussions of both *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and *Lila* can be found at www.moq.org (MOQ is an abbreviation for Metaphysics of Quality).

38. See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 280–303; Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York, 2005); and Alan Liu, *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago, 2004), hereafter abbreviated *LC*.

ones in the 1980s because they embraced ‘quality.’”³⁹ It was an anxiety that seemed to show up everywhere: in films like Ron Howard’s *Gung Ho* (1986), TV documentaries like NBC’s *If Japan Can, Why Can’t We?* (1980) and PBS’s *Japan: The Electronic Tribe* (1987), in alarmist proclamations of “The Japanese Threat” in *Fortune* and *Business Week*, as well as in terrorist acts of violence against Asian America (detailed vividly in Renee Tajima’s 1987 documentary *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*).⁴⁰ The proposed solution to the apparent Japanese monopoly on quality involved two main manufacturing and corporate reconfigurations: (1) a reconsideration of quality as a product of statistical, systems-theory analysis, revealed most obviously in the sudden popularity of W. Edwards Deming and in calls for wide-scale adaptations of Japanese just-in-time production methods (sometimes known as Lean Production or Toyotism), and (2) a new approach in management studies geared toward counterintuitive “Zen” forms of leadership that embraced more flexible models of team culture and technological innovation.

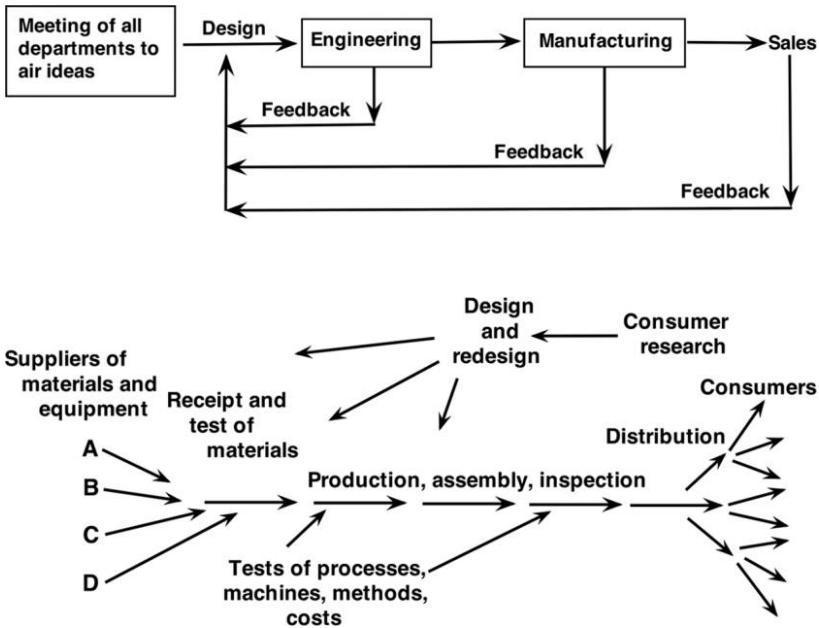
By the late 1980s, most likely no CEO in America had not heard of W. Edwards Deming. He was, as one book hailed him, *The American Who Taught the Japanese about Quality*.⁴¹ Deming’s expertise was in the area of statistical process control, and he had been invited to Japan at General Douglas MacArthur’s request to work on the first Japanese postwar census in 1947. While there he also began to consult Japanese managers on how best to rebuild their war-torn industries, and within just a few years he had helped to completely transform the Japanese economy. Toyota, to this day, hangs a large portrait of Deming in the main lobby of their headquarters in Tokyo, and the annual Deming Prize remains the most prestigious manufacturing award in Japanese industry.⁴² Deming’s theories of statistical control had quite a lot in common (both in terms of terminology and philosophical premise) with cybernetics. In the 1920s Deming had interned at the Bell Laboratories and had come in contact with many of the same individuals and theories of information that would go on to influ-

39. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors: Making Sense of the Management Gurus* (New York, 1996), p. 18.

40. See *The Information Technology Revolution*, ed. Tom Forester (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), where the US versus Japan is a dominant theme of the essays. David Morley and Kevin Robins have identified in Western panics about Japan “rising” a Saidian discourse of “Techno-Orientalism.” See David Morley and Kevin Robins, “Techno-Orientalism: Japan Panic,” *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (New York, 1995), pp. 147–73.

41. Rafael Aguayo, *Dr. Deming: The American Who Taught the Japanese about Quality* (New York, 1990). He is widely known as the “founding father of the quality movement” (John Beckford, *Quality: A Critical Introduction* [New York, 1998], p. 65).

42. See Aguayo, *Dr. Deming*, p. 6.



FIGURES 6-7. Illustrations of W. Edwards Deming's quality control flowchart as modeled in *Dr. Deming: The American Who Taught the Japanese About Quality*, p. 161.

ence Wiener's cybernetics and other systems-theories years later.⁴³ As a result, his frequent use of the quality-control flowchart, among other innovations, relied explicitly on the statistical analysis of feedback mechanisms (figs. 6-7). Indeed, Total Quality Management, as the movement adopting Deming's methods eventually came to be known, was a highly cybernetic process. It involved managing, by way of statistically monitored feedback loops, a constant flow of information and parts toward an assembly-line worker, designed to arrive just-in-time rather than to accumulate in large quantities of static storage inside the factory—all of which allowed for much greater flexibility and last-minute variation in product lines. In addition, rather than following the Fordist model of keeping the

43. The influence of the Bell Telephone Laboratories on the development of cybernetics and other systems theories has been well documented. See Wiener, *Cybernetics*, pp. 4, 10, 60, 67; Mindell, *Between Human and Machine*, pp. 105-37; and Daniel Bell, *The Social Sciences since the Second World War* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1981), p. 31. Deming also corresponded frequently with John von Neumann; see John von Neumann, *John Von Neumann: Selected Letters*, ed. Miklós Rédei (Providence, R.I., 2005), pp. 95-96. Deming's theories were similarly influential in the development of Stafford Beer's "organizational cybernetics" (Beckford, *Quality*, p. 171); see Art Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics: A History of the Radical Thinkers Who Reinvented Corporate Management* (San Francisco, 2008), p. 288.

assembly line moving at all costs (and then repairing botched products later on during quality-control inspection), Deming's system allowed any worker to bring the entire line to a halt at any time upon noticing any defect in the moving product.⁴⁴ Deming's basic philosophical premise was that considerations of quality must come *prior* to both the (objective) manufacturing of a product and (subjective) considerations of profit. That these Total Quality processes, perfected by the Japanese using quasi-cybernetic theories of statistical control, overlap in uncanny ways with Pirsig's Metaphysics of Quality has not been lost on the authors of the Total Quality Management movement. References to Pirsig and his Metaphysics of Quality appear with striking regularity in titles like *Quality and Power in the Supply Chain*, *Fundamentals of Total Quality Management*, and *Qualitative Methods in Management Research* (see appendix A for a broader sampling of Total Quality Management studies that directly cite Pirsig's Metaphysics of Quality).⁴⁵ Pirsig has become Deming's spiritual cousin.

A second transformation in US corporations in the late 1970s and early 1980s involved a massive reconsideration of corporate management theory. According to early twentieth-century Taylorist/Fordist models of scientific management, the task of the manager was to break down a worker's job into specific procedures so that even the least intelligent could understand it and to provide incentives so that even the least motivated would be willing to perform it energetically.⁴⁶ Even relatively "decentralized" theories of management during the first half of the twentieth century (for example, the Sloanism at General Motors) generally adhered to notions of command and control that might be simply described as distributed Taylorism.⁴⁷ By the early 1960s, however, a number of "countercultural" critiques of the Taylorist model began to enter management discourse.

44. See W. Edwards Deming, *Out of the Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 167–247 and *The New Economics for Industry, Government, Education* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), p. 139; Michael E. Milakovich, *Improving Service Quality in the Global Economy: Achieving High Performance in Public and Private Sectors* (Boca Raton, Fla., 2006), p. 53; Aguayo, *Dr. Deming*, pp. 19–50; and Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors*, pp. 237–57. See also the report issued by members of the MIT International Motor Vehicle Program: *The Machine That Changed the World: The Story of Lean Production*, ed. James P. Womack, Daniel T. Jones, and Daniel Roos (New York, 1990), and Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics*, pp. 288–97.

45. Nor has it been lost on Pirsig's fans; see "Lila's Child": *An Inquiry into Quality*, ed. Dan Glover (Bloomington, Ind., 2003), p. 419. See also John Douglas, review of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Pirsig, *The Academy of Management Review* 1 (July 1976): 134–35.

46. See Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors*, p. 16.

47. See Peter F. Drucker, "Management's New Paradigms," *Alfred P. Sloan: Critical Evaluations in Business and Management*, ed. John C. Wood and Michael C. Wood, 2 vols. (New York, 2003), 2:275.

Douglas McGregor, for example, contrasted the strictures of Taylorism, which he called “Theory X,” with the more humane tenets of what he called “Theory Y,” which, according to McGregor, offered integration, teamwork, and better worker/management communication as a means of allowing a corporation to “realize the potential represented by its human resources.”⁴⁸ Scattered experiments in Theory Y (or “soft”) management during the 1960s made their way into a number of corporations—for example, Proctor & Gamble, Shell Oil, and General Foods—by way of the National Training Laboratories (which, as Art Kleiner has argued, served as a basic template for the modern corporate training program).⁴⁹ But it was not until the “Japan Crisis” of the late 1970s that corporate managers in the US began to question more radically the Taylorist objectives of management discourse.

In his recent study *Zen at War*, Brian Victoria has shown that what the dozens of management scholars visiting Japanese corporations in the 1970s would have encountered was not only the quality control methods introduced by Deming in the 1950s but also an entire reconfiguration of Zen Buddhism for the Japanese corporation. Such an argument comes by way of a rather startling revelation for some American Buddhists: what had been understood in the US as a largely peace-loving religion had actually, at least until the end of WWII, contributed rather enthusiastically to some of the most egregious moments of Japanese militarism, such that even famous Buddhists like D. T. Suzuki offered a number of hawkish speculations on the commensurability of Zen and the Bushido warrior ethic of “obedience” and “conformity.”⁵⁰ After the war, when, as Brian Victoria explains, Japanese “companies realized that schools were no longer emphasizing the old virtues of obedience and conformity,” a series of Zen training programs were developed for a number of Japanese corporations (Z, p. 182). Zen Masters became frequent visitors of Japanese companies (and vice versa), where they gave sermons, arguing things like, “by carrying out our [assigned] tasks, we become part of the life of the entire universe; we realize our original True Self” (Z, p. 185). As Victoria argues, what Japan’s defeat during World War II meant was, “not the demise of imperial-way Zen and soldier Zen but only their metamorphosis and re-birth as corporate Zen” (Z, p. 186).

48. Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York, 1960), p. 48.

49. See Kleiner, *The Age of Heretics*, pp. 19–84. Perhaps not surprisingly, McGregor’s insights were almost immediately incorporated into a grid structure; see Robert R. Blake and Jane Mouton, *Corporate Excellence through Grid Organization Development: A Systems Approach* (Houston, Tex., 1968), pp. 14–16.

50. Brian A. Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York, 2006), p. 182; hereafter abbreviated Z.

Thus, in early studies like Japan business expert William Ouchi's *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* (1982), Japanese business culture is described, in a nod to McGregor's terms, as neither hard (Theory X) nor soft (Theory Y), but rather as a new Theory Z (clearly playing with *Zen*). Japanese Type Z organizations can be "most aptly described as clans in that they are intimate associations of people engaged in economic activity but tied together through a variety of bonds." Obedience and loyalty to the corporation becomes more intuitive and cultural, part of the "wholistic relation between employees" rather than something strictly enforced by a given hierarchical structure.⁵¹ In *The Art of Japanese Management* (1981), two of Ouchi's collaborators, Richard Pascale and Anthony Athos, argue (in a chapter entitled "Zen and the Art of Management") that the Japanese are "more means oriented, or process oriented, whereas Americans tend to focus more on the bottom line, on the ends. Americans are more Aristotelian. We feel if it is not white, by deduction it has to be black. The Japanese live comfortably with gray." The Japanese are "generally suspicious of too much logic." Whereas American managers might exhibit a "drive for closure," Japanese masters, by contrast, "tend to be more savvy. . . . The Japanese are regularly encouraged to reflect on their experience. Some executives even do Zen meditation with the purpose of clearing their minds so they may reflect on their experience more deeply."⁵²

Ouchi, Pascale, and Athos were highly influential in management discourse during the 1980s. With distinguished professorships at University of California, Los Angeles, Stanford University, and Harvard University respectively, all three scholars also benefited from funding by what was then (and still is) the leading management and consulting firm in the US, McKinsey & Company. Indeed, the meetings conducted at McKinsey headquarters in June 1978 with Pascale, Athos, Bob Waterman, and Tom Peters on the topic of "excellent companies" formed the basis for what would eventually become the bestselling management book of all time, Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982). That the approach advocated by Peters draws on countercultural assumptions about Zen Buddhism has been noted by a number of scholars.⁵³ It is perhaps sufficient here to point out that in Peters

51. William Ouchi, *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge* (New York, 1981), pp. 83, 82. See also Gregory A. Daneke, *Systemic Choices: Nonlinear Dynamics and Practical Management* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2002), p. 135.

52. Richard Pascale and Anthony Athos, *The Art of Japanese Management: Applications for American Executives* (New York, 1981), pp. 98, 99, 112. See also Julian Gresser, *Partners in Prosperity: Strategic Industries for the United States and Japan* (New York, 1984).

53. See Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors*, pp. 6, 80–86; Sandford Borins, "Corporate Prophets," *Globe and Mail*, 12 Apr. 1991, p. A16; Miles Maguire, "Fathoming

and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*, the authors cite one of their "favorite stories"; a certain Honda worker

on his way home each evening, straightens up windshield wiper blades on all the Hondas he passes. He just can't stand to see a flaw in a Honda!

Now, why is all of this important? Because so much of excellence in performance has to do with people's being motivated by compelling, simple—even beautiful—values. As Robert Pirsig laments in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*: "While at work I was thinking about this lack of care in the digital computer manuals I was editing. . . . They were full of errors, ambiguities, omissions and information so completely screwed up you had to read them six times to make any sense of them. But what struck me for the first time was the agreement of these manuals with the spectator attitude I had seen in the shop. These were spectator manuals. It was built into the format of them. Implicit in every line is the idea that, 'Here is the machine, isolated in time and space from everything else in the universe. It has no relationship to you, you have no relationship to it.'"⁵⁴

A more detached observer might note that what Peters and Waterman are praising here seems more like evidence of an obsessive-compulsive disorder than it does a healthy practice for the average worker (wiper blades on *all* the Hondas he passes?). But the point is that this Japanese worker is described as evidencing a devotional, cybernetic relationship with machine systems, a kind of enlightened awareness of Quality (Peters's word is *excellence*)—and, of course, Pirsig's doctrine of *technê-zen* is ushered in as *the* scriptural point of reference. In a follow-up volume, *A Passion for Excellence*, Peters would again cite Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, calling it the "most constructive book on the topic [of Qual-

Deming's Ideas on Quality," *Washington Times*, 14 Mar. 1991, p. C2; Michael McKinney "Employing New Thinking in Turbulent Times," *Leading Blog*, 8 Oct. 2008, www.leadershipnow.com/leadingblog/2008/10/employing_new_thinking_in_turb.html; and Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago, 1997), p. 54.

54. Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies* (New York, 1982), pp. 37–38. For a trenchant analysis of this passage in Peters and Waterman's book, see Hugh Willmot, "Strength Is Ignorance; Slavery Is Freedom: Managing Culture in Modern Organizations." *Journal of Management Studies* 30 (July 1993): 544.

ity].”⁵⁵ Peters’s message in subsequent decades has become increasingly antirationalist, his prose more outrageous and zany. With titles such as *Thriving on Chaos* (1987), *Crazy Times Call for Crazy Organizations* (1993), and *The Pursuit of WOW!* (1994), it is no wonder that Peters was recently dubbed the “original Zen businessman.”⁵⁶

But Peters is only one of several management “gurus” (a name that is itself rather suggestive of the discourse I am identifying) promoting *technê-zen* as the animating principle of information-age management theory. Drucker, the “undisputed alpha male” in management studies and author of more than twenty-six books and thousands of articles on management, also held a distinguished chair in Oriental art at the Claremont Graduate School (publishing a volume in 1982 entitled *The Zen Expressionists: Painting of the Japanese Counterculture, 1600–1800*).⁵⁷ Peter Senge, author of what is perhaps the most widely cited volume on the corporate centrality of knowledge work, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990), is an active Zen Buddhist and reportedly meditates regularly.⁵⁸ It is not difficult to see why these apostles of informatics and networking would gravitate toward *technê-zen*. The embracing of alternative rationalities in the ascetic reengineering of corporations in the 1990s; the de-materialization of cubicle work (as Alan Liu has argued, where once upon a time matter mattered, “postindustrial corporations must de-essentialize themselves until they are nothing but information processing” [LC, p. 43]); the celebration of flexibility, flow, chaos, virtuality, and creative destruction; the aggressive antihistoricism of the eternal corporate present—it’s all so very *Zen*. As the authors of *The Corporate Mystic* explain,

Corporations are full of mystics. Over the past 25 years we have been in many boardrooms and many cathedrals, and we have discovered that the very best kind of mystics—those who practice what they preach—can be found in the business world. We are now convinced that the qualities of these remarkable people, and the principles they live by, will be the guiding force for 21st-century enterprise.⁵⁹

55. Peters and Nancy Austin, *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference* (New York, 1985), p. 130.

56. Jenny Turner, “Far from the Last Tycoon,” *The Guardian*, 19 July 1994, p. T14.

57. Micklethwait and Wooldridge, *The Witch Doctors*, p. 63. Drucker has also been dubbed the “dean of U.S. management theory” (LC, p. 17).

58. See Magnus Ramage and Karen Shipp, *Systems Thinkers* (London, 2009), p. 120.

59. Quoted in Gay Hendricks and Kate Ludeman, “How to Be a Corporate Mystic” *Yoga Journal* (Dec. 1997): 76.

It would be difficult to overestimate just how dramatically these corporate “mystics” have gravitated toward *technê-zen*. There are literally hundreds of books currently in print arguing for the ultimate commensurability of Zen and the healthy corporate life (see appendix B for a representative sampling).

Certainly no realm of postindustrial information work has had a better relationship with Zen than the “mystical” corporate world of Silicon Valley. Take, for example, Steve Jobs, who while still employed at Atari in the mid-1970s (and already a deeply committed fruitarian, having traveled on a kind of mystical quest throughout India in the early 1970s), began frequenting the Los Altos Zen Center, meditating and studying under Zen master Kobin Chino Ootogowa. Jobs studied for several years with Ootogowa, employed him as the official *roshi* of Jobs’s second company NeXT, and even had him officiate at Jobs’s marriage in 1991.⁶⁰ It is not irrelevant, I would argue, that the iPod, iMac, and iPad hearken back, in both aesthetic and homonymic approximation, to the *iChing*, or that the iPod stole its layout from Creative Worldwide, Inc.’s *Zen* mp3 player.⁶¹ (One could argue that the “Buddha Machine” created by Chinese-based artists known as FM3 is a stroke of genius, if only because they realize that *all* our machines are now Buddha Machines; see fig. 8). Indeed, marketing the Mac has, from the beginning, involved characterizations of the machine’s ability to both harness and transcend the “obsessive perfection of the analytical grid”—this from the author of (what else?) *Zen and the Art of the Macintosh* (1986).⁶²

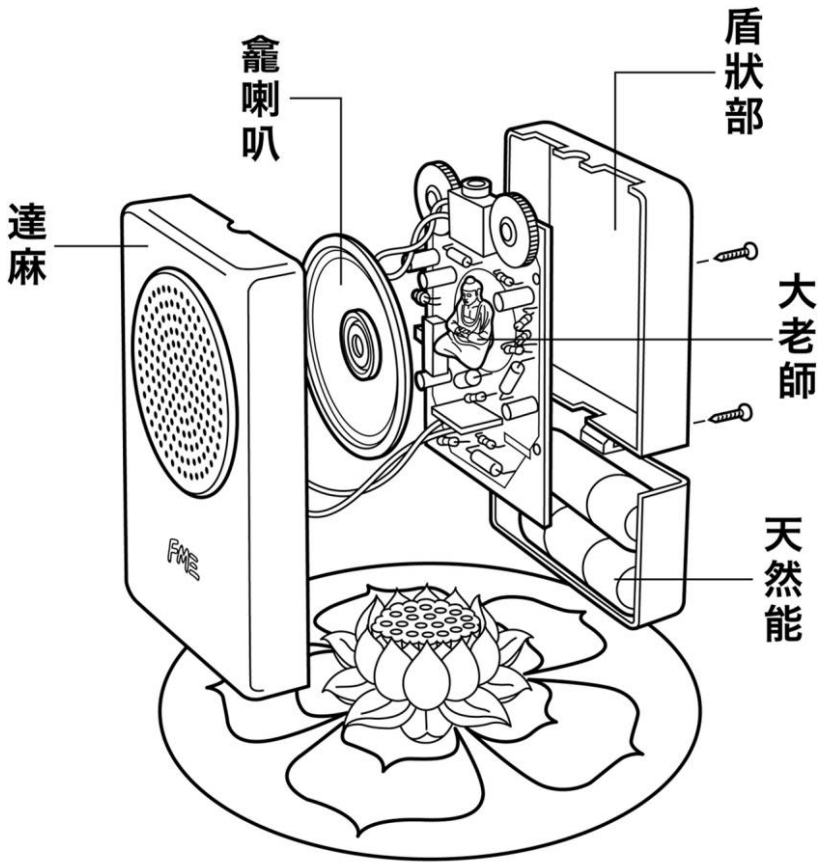
Even on the PC side of the digital revolution the ubiquity of *technê-zen* is remarkable. The IBM PC’s first killer app, for example, was Mitch Kapor’s provocatively named *Lotus 1-2-3*, a name Kapor decided on after teaching transcendental meditation at Cambridge. Oracle founder and noted Japanophile Larry Ellison has also commented that in starting Oracle he tried very hard to “replicate” Japanese Zen culture.⁶³ His palatial

60. See Jeffrey S. Young and William L. Simon, *iCon: Steve Jobs, the Greatest Second Act in the History of Business* (Hoboken, N.J., 2005), pp. 31–33.

61. Apple paid \$100 million to Creative in a settlement over allegations that it stole patents for its mp3 player design. See “Apple and Creative Announce Broad Settlement Ending Legal Disputes between the Companies,” www.apple.com/pr/library/2006/aug/23settlement.html. Given a bit more space here, one could rather easily argue that Steve Jobs is the true heir to Ezra Pound’s high modernist mix of crypto-fascistic control over the aesthetic and fascination with the East. For more on Jobs’s “Zen aesthetic,” see Carmine Gallo, *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs* (New York, 2010), pp. 87–104, and Garr Reynolds, *Presentation Zen* (Berkeley, 2008) and *Presentation Zen Design* (Berkeley, 2010), pp. 22–23, 64.

62. Michael Green, *Zen and the Art of the Macintosh: Discoveries on the Path to Computer Enlightenment* (San Francisco, 1986), p. 140.

63. See Karen Southwick, *Everyone Else Must Fail: The Unvarnished Truth about Oracle and*



FME BUDDHA MACHINE II
 exploded view by longmo.net

FIGURE 8. Diagram for FM3's *Buddha Machine*. Notice the small Buddha drawn in the center of the device). See www.fm3buddhamachine.com/

home in northern California was built as a kind of Zen-inspired compound. Or, to point to yet another example, take Novell's Desktop Managing Interface program ZENworks. Conceived in 1994 by one of Novell's senior software engineers, the point of ZENworks was (and still is) to allow

Larry Ellison (New York, 2003), and Davis, *The Visionary State* (San Francisco, 2006), pp. 172–73.

for “policy-driven automation” and remote control of Windows- or Linux-based workstations by way of centralized IT management. As Novell’s product description explains, the “ZEN” in ZENworks is an acronym for “Zero Effort Networking,” which is then associated with the “enlightened” network possibilities allowed for by “configuration management.”⁶⁴ (One wonders if Novell even anticipated situations wherein typing www.zenworks.com takes one to Novell’s home site, while typing in www.zenworks.org takes one to a Zen Buddhist site offering “high quality meditation supplies and Jizo images.”)

Perhaps no example seems as appropriate as the strange popularity of Drue Kataoka, “Master Zen Sumi-e Artist” and self-proclaimed Silicon Valley Artist in Residence. Coauthor of *ValleyZen.com*, “a blog at the intersection of Zen, Modern Life, and Technology,” Kataoka details her interactions with Silicon Valley’s digerati, asking things like, “how is the simplicity of Zen central to your company?” to which the digerati invariably and enthusiastically explain to Kataoka just how *Zen* they all are. In one of her several video blogs, for example, we find Jim Barnet, founder of the online advertising company Turn, Inc., telling Kataoka that he gets up every morning to practice Zen meditation, that Zen is all about “breaking through the clutter,” and that Zen has inspired him to “think outside the box” with greater “spontaneity.”⁶⁵ In another, Silicon Valley venture capitalist Bill Draper (who, with his son provided the initial capital for companies like Skype, Baidu, and Hotmail) comments that Zen simplicity is the “key to a breakthrough concept” and (only half-jokingly) that “my Lexus is my samurai sword.”⁶⁶ Kataoka brings in a sizeable income, apparently, by offering seminars to various corporations on the value of Zen in “Corporate Branding through Art.”⁶⁷

As Kataoka’s art implies, if there is an aesthetic inherent to network

64. ZENworks, press release, 1998; it also touted “Desktop Enlightenment.” Novell’s official statement on ZENworks compatibility with Microsoft speaks of “paravirtualization, or enlightenment” by way of “using full virtualization” (Microsoft and Novell Corporations, “Novell and Microsoft: Building Bridges,” Oct. 2008, p. 3, www.moreinterop.com/download.aspx?filePath=/upload/MediaFiles/Files/PDFs/Collaboration%20Roadmap%20White%20Paper%20English.pdf). See also Elizabeth Montalbano, “Novell, Microsoft Provide Virtualization Roadmap,” *InfoWorld*, 12 Feb. 2007, www.infoworld.com/t/platforms/novell-microsoft-provide-virtualization-roadmap-488. For more on “ZENworks Enlightenment,” see Mark Schouls, “ZENworks Enlightenment,” *Everything Zenworks*, 11 Mar. 2005, drzenworks.blogspot.com/.

65. www.youtube.com/valleyzen#p/u/5/GzSq_xhVWHw

66. www.youtube.com/valleyzen#p/u/13/hpWFcWRvCHE

67. www.drue.net/corporate-art-commissions.htm. Some of Kataoka’s art was even launched into space as part of Richard Garriot’s \$30 million “space tourism.” See www.valleyzen.com/2008/10/17/drues-art-in-the-first-in-space-art-exhibit-on-richard-garriotts-space-mission/

capitalism it relies rather openly on the principles of *technê-zen*. Ask any group of graphic designers in the design world today where the most innovative transcending of HTML grids can be found, and they will invariably point to csszengarden.com and its accompanying volume *The Zen of CSS Design* (2005). Equal parts “manifesto and gallery,” the authors of CSS Zen Garden built the site to “demonstrate what can be accomplished through CSS-based design.”⁶⁸ HTML code, they argue, may offer a nice gridlike structure for web designers, but it fails to allow for the more wiggly artistic freedom that designers need. CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) are lines of code that can be superimposed over HTML code to enable a separation between document content (HTML or some other mark-up language) and its presentation (the various fonts, colors, and layout of the digital page). Armed with CSS, a designer has greater freedom and economy to curve certain lines, move between the margins of HTML grids, and employ more aesthetically pleasing fonts and colors. Thus, designers contributing to the site “are called upon to submit their own original visions in the form of style sheets and images. The catch is that all designs must use the same base HTML file. There are no exceptions; the HTML is absolutely identical in *every single design*” (CSS, p. 2). The default CSS Zen Garden site (the structural content of which is then reproduced in dozens of iterations by the web’s top designers) invites designers to “relax and meditate on the important lessons of the masters. Begin to see with clarity. Learn to use the (yet to be) time-honored techniques in new and invigorating fashion. *Become one with the web.*”⁶⁹ The original site designers even include some Japanese characters in the top left corner, which roughly translate to “a new holistic *technê*.” As the authors of the accompanying volume explain, “If you’ve ever *felt constrained by the grid* that a table-based layout imposes, you might be delighted to learn that CSS positioning allows you to smash out of it and place elements wherever you like on a page” (CSS, p. 36; emphasis added). It is a point the authors make several times throughout the book: “Through clever design and placement of imagery, a designer can find him- or herself *transcending the grid* and thinking in more fluid, open ways. . . . Rigidly enforced grids that impede the design process are a thing of the past” (CSS, p. 137; emphasis added). What this new holistic *technê* allows for, in other words, is a more organic relationship with one’s

68. Dave Shea and Molly E. Holzschlag, *The Zen of CSS Design: Visual Enlightenment for the Web* (Berkeley, 2005), p. 2; hereafter abbreviated CSS.

69. “CSS Zen Garden,” www.csszengarden.com. The irony is that behind the scenes at “CSS Zen Garden,” such CSS coding is not always as straightforward as it seems, as designers often have to develop difficult work-around code lines in order to have their designs work in tandem with the prescribed HTML (I am indebted to Jeremy Douglass for this insight).

machine interface. Both the gridness of *māyā* and the “wiggly” are once again brought together by way of *technê-zen*.⁷⁰

Conclusion: Zen and the Art of Historiography

Slavoj Žižek has come under fire recently for his claim that “if Max Weber were to live today, he would definitely have written a second, supplementary, volume to his *Protestant Ethic*, entitled *The Taoist Ethic and the Spirit of Global Capitalism*.”⁷¹ Žižek’s argument that “Western Buddhism” has become simply “the most efficient way for us to participate fully in the capitalist dynamic,” reflecting an “attitude of total immersion in the selfless ‘now’ of instant Enlightenment,”⁷² has been described as both “incorrect” and “incoherent.”⁷³ Setting aside attacks on Žižek’s coherence, there can be little doubt, I would argue, that the assertion that a form of Eastern mysticism has become the new “ethos” of global capitalism is *correct*. As I have been arguing, the discourse of *technê-zen* was not just some late sixties fad that lent the more technophilic counterculturalists an air of cool until they could grow up and start healthy secular corporations. It has served, rather, as a continuous ideological framework for the transition to what we have now come to identify as the informatic networks of

70. For more on the supposed commensurability of internet technologies and Zen Buddhism, see Philip Toshio Sudo, *Zen Computer* (New York, 2001), and Prebish, *Luminous Passage: The Practice and Study of Buddhism in America* (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 203–32.

71. Slavoj Žižek, “The Prospects of Radical Politics Today,” *The Universal Exception*, ed. Rex Butler and Scott Stephens (New York, 2006), p. 253.

72. Žižek, “Forward to the Second Edition,” *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (New York, 2008), p. xliii.

73. In the antifestschrift that is *The Truth of Žižek*, editor Paul Bowman cites Žižek’s claim on the new “Taoist ethic” and then argues, we have “merely to ask is Žižek’s argument *correct*? At times it seems persuasive, but on what model of causality is it premised, and is this model or paradigm *sound*? Does it *think and analyze* everything, or does it rely on any unthought or even obscurantist supplements?” (Paul Bowman, “The Tao of Žižek,” *The Truth of Žižek*, ed. Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp [New York, 2007], p. 35). The implication here that Žižek’s inability to “think and analyze everything” (everything!) somehow already discounts the truth of his assertion seems a bit unfair. In fact, we have merely to notice that Bowman’s subsequent argument attacks not the accuracy of Žižek’s claim but rather the discursive coherence of Žižek’s rhetorical strategy—a much easier target to be sure. In fact, Bowman seems to have recently backtracked from the question of whether or not Žižek is “correct.” In the republication of his essay Bowman’s sentence reads, this time, we have “merely to ask: is Žižek’s argument *coherent*?” (Bowman, *Deconstructing Popular Culture* [New York, 2008], p. 138). In fairness to Bowman, however, one could point out that Žižek’s critique of Zen is somewhat shallow, relying on the strength of only a few texts. Also, as Ananda Abeysekara has argued, part of Žižek’s incoherence stems from his puzzling (perhaps even quasi-Orientalist) insistence that Christianity offers a viable alternative to the Taoist spirit of postmodern capitalism, as though Christianity has not been similarly adaptive. See Ananda Abeysekara, *The Politics of Postsecular: Mourning Secular Futures* (New York, 2008), p. 74, and William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham, N.C., 2008).

late capitalism. As a final evidence of this continuity, it is surely one of the most lasting legacies of Pirsig's famous novel that the phrase "Zen and the Art of" has become *the* quintessential signal for the informational quality of a given product or process.⁷⁴ When, for instance, Joseph A. Grundfest, former commissioner at the Securities and Exchange Commission (and former director for Oracle Corporation), wanted to discuss the informatic effects of globalizing technologies on capital markets, he did so by explicitly referring to Pirsig in an article entitled "Zen and the Art of Securities Regulation" (1993), noting "technology has already made possible computerized markets that instantaneously link traders without regard to their physical location or institutional affiliation," and so, he argues, the SEC must take a more "Zen" approach to regulation.⁷⁵ "Zen and the Art of" has become, in other words, the sloganeering ethos for postindustrial capitalism, reflecting simply the ideological and historical emptiness of informational excellence or quality. One can publish on *Zen and the Art of War* just as easily as *Zen and the Art of Peace* and find an audience either way. *Zen and the Art of Knitting* sits comfortably alongside *Zen and the Art of Harley Riding*. The subject never matters, only that informational *quality* is being conveyed (see appendix C for a sampling of "Zen and the Art of" in contemporary discourse).

For those of us in the academy and, in particular, the humanities the fact that "Zen and the Art of" became part of our Global English vocabulary just as the university was forced to give up its special role as the primary "learning organization" of society (having adopted, as Bill Readings has shown, a "techno-bureaucratic notion of excellence"),⁷⁶ should not go unnoticed. As Liu has argued, we must ask, "What *then* is the difference? What is the postindustrial, and not nineteenth-century, difference between the academy and the 'learning organization?'" (*LC*, p. 21). I would argue that we might take some comfort in the fact that Liu's answer—that is, history—has remained so far outside the pale of "Zen and the Art of." The quality of attitudinal presentism (the "instant now") implicit in the phrase has, to my knowledge, so far precluded the possibility of "Zen and the Art of *History*." Thus, any effective response to the late capitalist culture of *technê-zen* will involve a commitment to not only aesthetics and

74. It is worth pointing out that Pirsig didn't invent the phrase but was borrowing it from Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York, 1953), and Suzuki, "Zen and the Art of Tea I," *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton, N.J., 1970), pp. 269–90. It is doubtful, however, that the phrase would have made such an impact on the language without Pirsig's contribution.

75. Joseph A. Grundfest, "Zen and the Art of Securities Regulation," *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance* 5 (Winter 1993): 5.

76. Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), p. 14.

political egalitarianism (equality, we must remember, is not the same thing as e-quality) but also historiography. Even the most faithful Buddhist critiques of global capitalism today—and there are several—concede the necessity of an acute awareness of history.⁷⁷ However, we must also understand in doing so that our new global technologies of information processing are not necessarily antipathetic to the values of historical analysis (certainly they made possible, to a remarkable degree, *this* analysis). Consider, as a final example, the archival brilliance of *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. As a fake-news critic of contemporary culture, Stewart has been more adept and has had more influence than any other “legitimate” news organization at returning to the historical televised archive in detailing the hypocrisies and corruptions of our corporate and political landscape.⁷⁸ Indeed, I would argue that academics might learn something from Jon Stewart’s technologically and aesthetically brilliant historiography—in a word, his *technê*. When he signs off each night, he does so by bringing out from the recent cultural archive some ironic, contradictory snippet—something one can only “get” if one can also see that history is cool: “Now, here it is, your moment of Zen.”

Appendix A: A Sampling of Total Quality and Management Studies Citing Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and His Metaphysics of Quality

Barker, Tom, *Leadership for Results* (Milwaukee, 2006)

Bassett, Glenn, *Operations Management for Service Industries* (Westport, Conn., 1992)

Baets, Walter R, *Organizational Learning and Knowledge Technologies in a Dynamic Environment* (Norwell, Mass., 1998)

Beckford, John, *Quality: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1998)

Bhimani, Alnoor, *Contemporary Issues in Management Accounting* (New York, 2006)

Brown, Steve, *Strategic Operations Management* (Woburn, Mass., 2000)

77. See, for example, *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, ed. Christopher S. Queen (Somerville, Mass., 2000), pp. 17–25; Derek Wall, *Babylon and Beyond: The Economics of Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Globalist, and Radical Green Movements* (London, 2005), p. 191; and Simon P. James, *Zen Buddhism and Environmental Ethics* (Burlington, Vt., 2004), p. 125.

78. The historian behind Stewart’s archival brilliance is Adam Chodikoff, *The Daily Show’s* chief researcher. It’s Chodikoff’s impressive memory and ability to mine the media archive that allows the show, as it did recently on 16 June 2010, when President Barack Obama called for a long-term strategy in the search for alternative energies, to provide clips of Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush calling for, in essence, the same plan (but with a decreasing ambition that is both startling and frightening).

- Buono, Anthony F. and Flemming Poulfelt, *Challenges and Issues in Knowledge Management* (Charlotte, N.C., 2005)
- Christensen, Bruno, *From Management to Leadership* (Parkland, Fla., 1999)
- Collins, Philippa, "Approaches to Quality," *TQM Magazine* 6, no. 3 (1994): 39–42.
- Cunningham, Ian, *The Wisdom of Strategic Learning* (Brookfield, Vt., 1999)
- Dahlgaard, Jens J., *Fundamentals of Total Quality Management* (Boca Raton, Fla., 1998)
- Doherty, Tony L. and Terry Horne, eds., *Managing Public Services* (New York, 2002)
- Fink, Stephen L. *High Commitment Workplaces* (New York, 1992)
- Gluck, Frederick W. "Vision and Leadership," *Interfaces: Special Issue on Strategic Management* 14, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1984): 10–18
- Greisler, David and Ronald J. Stupak. *Handbook of Technology Management in Public Administration* (Boca Raton, Fla., 2007)
- Gummesson, Evert, *Qualitative Methods in Management Research* (Thousand Oaks, Calif., 2000)
- Haring, Christina, *Total Quality Management in a Theoretical and Practical Context* (Frankfurt, 2002)
- King, Jonathan B., "Ethical Encounters of the Second Kind," *Journal of Business Ethics* 5 (Feb. 1986): 1–11
- Khosrow-Pour, Mehdi, *Emerging Trends and Challenges in Information Technology Management* (Hershey, Pa., 2006)
- Knights, David, and Hugh Willmott, *Introducing Organizational Behavior and Management* (London, 2007)
- Kolbe, Kathy, *Pure Instinct: The M.O. of High Performance People and Teams* (Phoenix, Ariz., 1993)
- Koprowski, Eugene J., "Exploring the Meaning of 'Good' Management," *The Academy of Management Review* 6 (July 1981): 459–67
- Lamprecht, James L., *Quality and Power in the Supply Chain* (Woburn, Mass., 2000)
- Lehman, Cheryl, *Accounting's Changing Role in Social Conflict* (Princeton, N.J., 1992)
- Lessem, Ronnie, *Management Development through Cultural Diversity* (New York, 1998)
- Levy, Peter and Michael Junkar, *Technosophy: Strategic Assessment and Management of Manufacturing Technology Innovation* (Norwell, Mass., 1997)

- Loughlin, Michael, *Ethics, Management and Mythology* (Milton Keynes, 2002)
- Lowe, David and Roine Leiringer, eds., *Commercial Management of Projects* (Malden, Mass., 2006)
- Lundberg, Craig C. and Cheri A. Young, eds., *Foundations for Inquiry: Choices and Trade-Offs in the Organizational Sciences* (Stanford, Calif., 2005)
- Mansfield, Roger, *Frontiers of Management* (New York, 1989)
- Mintzberg, Henry, *Power in and around Organizations* (New York, 1983)
- Moore, David, *Project Management* (Malden, Mass., 2002)
- Nicholas, John M. and Herman Steyn, *Project Management for Business, Engineering and Technology* (Woburn, Mass., 2008)
- Peters, Thomas J. and Nancy Austin, *A Passion for Excellence* (New York, 1989)
- Peters, Thomas J. and Robert H. Waterman, Jr., *In Search of Excellence* (New York, 1982)
- Pitagorsky, George, *The Zen Approach to Project Management* (New York, 2007)
- Robey, Daniel and William Tagger, "Issues in Cognitive Style Measurement," *Academy of Management Review* 8, no. 1 (1983): 152–55
- Sallis, Edward, *Total Quality Management in Education* (Sterling, Va., 1993)
- Sherman, Joe, "The Zen of Quality," *In the Rings of Saturn* (New York, 1994)
- Stevenson, Rodney, "Corporate Power and the Scope of Economic Analysis," *Journal of Economic Issues* 19 (June 1985): 333–41
- Van de Ven, Andrew H. ed., *Research on the Management of Innovation* (New York, 1989)
- Walker, Derek and Steve Rowlinson, eds., *Procurement Systems: A Cross-Industry Project Management Perspective* (New York, 2008)
- Westwood, Robert and Stewart Clegg, *Debating Organization: Point-Counterpoint in Organization Studies* (Malden, Mass., 2003)
- Williams, Peter, "Total Quality Management: Some Thoughts," *Higher Education* 25, no. 3 (1993): 373–75
- Wright, Susan, ed., *Anthropology of Organizations* (New York, 1994)

Appendix B: Zen and Management/Corporation Studies

- Bing, Stanley, *Throwing the Elephant: Zen and the Art of Managing Up* (New York, 2002)

- Carroll, Michael, *Awake at Work: Thirty-five Practical Buddhist Principles for Discovering Clarity and Balance in the Midst of Work's Chaos* (Boston, Mass., 2006)
- Carroll, Michael, *The Mindful Leader: Awakening Your Natural Management Skills through Mindfulness Meditation* (Boston, Mass., 2008)
- Cleary, Thomas, *Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership* (Boston, Mass., 2007)
- Dreher, Diane, *The Tao of Personal Leadership* (New York, 1996)
- Field, Lloyd, *Business and the Buddha* (Somerville, Mass., 2007)
- Godden, Lee, *ZenWise Selling: Mindful Methods to Improve Your Sales and Your Self* (Signal Hill, Calif., 2004)
- Heider, John, *The Tao of Leadership* (Lake Worth, Fla., 2005)
- Heine, Steven, *White Collar Zen: Using Zen Principles to Overcome Obstacles and Achieve Your Career Goals* (New York, 2005)
- Hendricks, Gay and Kate Ludeman, *The Corporate Mystic: A Guidebook for Visionaries with Their Feet on the Ground* (New York, 1997)
- Holender, Allan, *Zentreprenurism: A Twenty-First Century Guide to the New World of Business* (San Diego, Calif., 2008)
- James, Geoffrey, *The Zen of Programming* (Georgetown, Tex., 1988)
- James, Geoffrey, *The Tao of Programming* (Georgetown, Tex., 1986)
- Kay, Les, *Zen at Work* (New York, 1997)
- Krause, Donald G., *The Book of Five Rings for Executives* (London, 1999)
- Leeds, Regina, *The Zen of Organizing* (London, 2002)
- Lesser, Marc, *Z.B.A.: Zen of Business Administration—How Zen Practice Can Transform Your Work And Your Life* (Novato, Calif., 2005)
- Low, Albert, *Zen and Creative Management* (North Clarendon, Vt., 1992)
- McClain, Gary and Eve Adamson, "Buddha in Your Cubicle," in *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Zen Living* (New York, 2001)
- McDermott, Patrick, *Zen and the Art of Systems Analysis: Meditations on Computer Systems Development* (Bloomington, Ind., 2002)
- Menon, Murli, *ZeNLP: The Power to Succeed* (Thousand Oaks, Calif., 2005)
- Metcalf, Franz, *What Would Buddha Do at Work? One Hundred and One Answers to Workplace Dilemmas* (Berkeley, Calif., 2001)
- Mindell, Arnold, *The Leader as Martial Artist* (San Francisco, 1992)
- Park, Dong J., *Management, Zen, & I: One Hundred Questions for Management Thinking* (New York, 2007)
- Philip, Karun, *Zen and the Art of Funk Capitalism* (Bloomington, Ind., 2001)
- Pitagorsky, George, *The Zen Approach to Project Management: Working from Your Center to Balance Expectations and Performance* (New York, 2007)

- Richmond, Lewis, *Work as Spiritual Practice: A Practical Buddhist Approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job* (New York, 2000)
- Schultz, Ron, *The Mindful Corporation* (Long Beach, Calif., 2000)
- Spears, Nancy, *Buddha Nine to Five: The Eightfold Path to Enlightening Your Workplace and Improving Your Bottom Line* (Avon, Mass., 2007)
- Van de Weyer, Robert, *Zen Economics* (Berkeley, Calif., 2004)
- Virc, Rizwan, *Zen Entrepreneurship: Walking the Path of the Career Warrior* (Bloomington, Ind., 2004)
- Witten, Dona, *Enlightened Management: Bringing Buddhist Principles to Work* (South Paris, Maine, 1999)

Appendix C: A Sampling of “Zen and the Art of” in Contemporary Discourse

Published Books

1948

Zen in the Art of Archery

1958

Zen and the Art of Tea

Zen and the Art of Flower Arrangement

1974

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

1977

Zen and the Art of J. D. Salinger

Zen and the Art of Reading

1981

Zen and the Art of Management

1983

Zen and the Art of Calligraphy

Zen and the Art of Enlightenment

Zen and the Art of Computing

Zen and the Art of Medicaid

1986

Zen and the Art of the Macintosh

1987

Zen and the Art of Medicaid Budgeting

1988

Zen and the Art of Windsurfing

1989

Zen and the Art of Pottery

1992

Zen and the Art of Therapy

Zen and the Art of Resource Editing

1993

Zen and the Art of the Internet

Zen and the Art of Making a Living

Zen and the Art of Modern Macroeconomics

1994

Zen and the Art of Money Management

Zen and the Art of Writing

Zen and the Art of Merchandising

1995

Zen and the Art of Climbing Mountains

1996

Zen and the Art of Fatherhood

Zen and the Art of Street Fighting

1997

Zen and the Art of Facing Life

1998

Zen and the Art of Stand-up Comedy

Zen and the Art of Dialogue

Zen and the Art of Debugging

Zen and the Art of Snowboarding

1999

Zen and the Art of Making a Living

Zen and the Art of Poker

Zen and the Art of Circle Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Murder

Zen and the Art of Anything

Zen and the Art of Tying Shoelaces

2000

Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy

Zen and the Art of the Monologue

Zen and the Art of Art

Zen and the Art of Data Pooling

2001

Zen and the Art of Piano Buying

Zen and the Art of Paradox

2002

Zen and the Art of Knitting

Zen and the Art of Course Selection

Zen and the Art of Living With Fearlessness and Grace

Zen and the Art of Diabetes Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Foosball
Zen and the Art of Systems Analysis
Zen and the Art of Whole-Home Networking
Zen and the Art of English Language Teaching
Zen and the Art of Dealing with the Difficult Patron

2003

Zen and the Art of Falling in Love
Zen and the Art of Managing Up
Zen and the Art of Fundraising
Zen and the Art of War
Zen and the Art of Fasting
Zen and the Art of Meditation
Zen and the Art of Dishwashing
Zen and the Art of Patient Placation
Zen and the Art of Not Drinking

2004

Zen and the Art of Headbutting
Zen and the Art of Creating Life
Zen and the Art of Journal Article Reviewing
Zen and the Art of Quilting

2005

Zen and the Art of Needlecraft
Zen and the Art of Water Quality
Zen and the Art of the SAT
Zen and the Art of Modern Life Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Scaling
Zen and the Art of Wholeness
Zen and the Art of Securities Regulation

2006

Zen and the Art of Trying
Zen and the Art of Harley Riding
Zen and the Art of Happiness
Zen and the Art of Performance Monitoring
Zen and the Art of Crossword Puzzles
Zen and the Art of Thinking Straight

2007

Zen and the Art of Internet Marketing
Zen and the Art of Ubuntu Networking

2008

Zen and the Art of Dying

Zen and the Art of Cylon Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Growing Older

Zen and the Art of Construction Management

2009

Zen and the Art of Staying Sane in Hollywood

Zen and the Art of Vampires

2010

Zen and the Art of Faking It

References Online (arranged alphabetically)

Zen and the Art of Abstraction Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Academic Motorcycling

Zen and the Art of Acquiring the Write Stuff

Zen and the Art of AHRB Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Alarm Clock Negligence

Zen and the Art of Alternative Reality

Zen and the Art of Anarchy

Zen and the Art of Appliance Repair and Finding Shit

Zen and the Art of Attendee Marketing

Zen and the Art of Attention

Zen and the Art of Autobiography Comics

Zen and the Art of Automation

Zen and the Art of Backyard Barbecue

Zen and the Art of Balancing Rocks

Zen and the Art of Baseball

Zen and the Art of Bathrooms

Zen and the Art of Being a Matzo Ball

Zen and the Art of Being Happy with Microsoft

Zen and the Art of Being Out Of Work

Zen and the Art of Bicycle Riding

Zen and the Art of Biking

Zen and the Art of Blueberry Picking

Zen and the Art of Boston Driving

Zen and the Art of Bouldering

Zen and the Art of Brand Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Breaking and Entering

Zen and the Art of Briefing

Zen and the Art of Building a Program

Zen and the Art of Building the City

Zen and the Art of Bully Taming

Zen and the Art of California Dreaming

Zen and the Art of Calm Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Canine Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Car Decor
Zen and the Art of Car Design
Zen and the Art of Car Rental
Zen and the Art of Car Thievery
Zen and the Art of Carpet Beating
Zen and the Art of Casting
Zen and the Art of Castle Maintenance
Zen and the Art of CD Collection Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Ceding Control of Consumer Tech to End Users
Zen and the Art of Central Heating Maintenance
Zen and the Art of CEO Driving
Zen and the Art of Checkbook Balancing
Zen and the Art of Child Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Classified Advertising
Zen and the Art of Clay & Glass
Zen and the Art of Clubbing
Zen and the Art of Coaching
Zen and the Art of Cocktails
Zen and the Art of Coffee Roasting
Zen and the Art of Color
Zen and the Art of Combining Motorcycling with Fatherhood
Zen and the Art of Communication
Zen and the Art of Competitive Eating
Zen and the Art of Condé Nast
Zen and the Art of Connecticut Brews
Zen and the Art of Contemporary Urban Design
Zen and the Art of Cooking
Zen and the Art of Cooking up Italian Mysteries
Zen and the Art of Coping with Alzheimer's
Zen and the Art of Corncrake Surveillance
Zen and the Art of Corporate Productivity
Zen and the Art of Cramming
Zen and the Art of Creating a Taste of the Orient
Zen and the Art of Crime
Zen and the Art of Culture
Zen and the Art of Curry
Zen and the Art of Cutting Grass
Zen and the Art of Cycling around Japan
Zen and the Art of Dance

Zen and the Art of Data Center Greening
Zen and the Art of Dealing with Difficult Physicians
Zen and the Art of Debunkery
Zen and the Art of Desert
Zen and the Art of Desktop Management
Zen and the Art of Dessert Perfection
Zen and the Art of Detective Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Digging a Hole
Zen and the Art of Dim Sum
Zen and the Art of Diplomacy
Zen and the Art of DNC Avoidance
Zen and the Art of Do-It-Yourself Decorating
Zen and the Art of Dog Park Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Doing Nothing
Zen and the Art of Drinking Beer
Zen and the Art of Drowning out the Neighbors
Zen and the Art of Drupal
Zen and the Art of Dual-Garden Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Dudeliness
Zen and the Art of Dump Truck Driving
Zen and the Art of Dumpster Diving
Zen and the Art of Eating
Zen and the Art of Economic Engine Maintenance.
Zen and the Art of Economics in Blissful Bhutan
Zen and the Art of Engaging The Dragon
Zen and the Art of Enterprise Search
Zen and the Art of Erectile Dysfunction
Zen and the Art of Evolving Relationships
Zen and the Art of Face Punching
Zen and the Art of Facial Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Family Gatherings
Zen and the Art of Fine Company Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Fingerpicking
Zen and the Art of Fixing a Flat Tire
Zen and the Art of Flight
Zen and the Art of Following Newcastle United
Zen and the Art of Forgetting that Your Feet Are Cold
Zen and the Art of Fridges
Zen and the Art of Frying Tiny Drumsticks.
Zen and the Art of Fuel Efficiency
Zen and the Art of Fuel Efficiency

Zen and the Art of Garden Design
Zen and the Art of Garden Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Gator Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Getting Around
Zen and the Art of Global Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Gloss Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Golden Temple Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Golf
Zen and the Art of Good Business
Zen and the Art of Good Mail List Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Guitar Playing
Zen and the Art of Hacking
Zen and the Art of Hand-to-Hand Combat
Zen and the Art of a Harmonious Abode
Zen and the Art of Health Care Facility Programming
Zen and the Art of Herb Gardening
Zen and the Art of Hi-tech Sales
Zen and the Art of Hitting a Bull's-Eye
Zen and the Art of Hitting a Little Ball
Zen and the Art of Home Building
Zen and the Art of Home Work
Zen and the Art of Home-Office Décor
Zen and the Art of Humor in Bread Making
Zen and the Art of IA
Zen and the Art of Inbox Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Incubation
Zen and the Art of Index Investing
Zen and the Art of Information Security
Zen and the Art of Ink Painting
Zen and the Art of Interior Design
Zen and the Art of an Internal Penetration Program
Zen and the Art of Internet Search
Zen and the Art of Intrusion Detection
Zen and the Art of Investigation
Zen and the Art of Investing
Zen and the Art of iPod Killing
Zen and the Art of Israeli Diplomacy
Zen and the Art of Jibber-Jabber
Zen and the Art of Joint Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Kicking the Ball
Zen and the Art of Killing

Zen and the Art of Kitsch
Zen and the Art of Laptop Battery Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Law Enforcement
Zen and the Art of Lawyer Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Lawyering
Zen and the Art of Leading
Zen and the Art of Legislating
Zen and the Art of Letting Go
Zen and the Art of Living in Delhi
Zen and the Art of Lunchbox Contentment
Zen and the Art of Mail Delivery
Zen and the Art of Making Friends
Zen and the Art of Making Noodles
Zen and the Art of Managerial Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Marketing
Zen and the Art of Mashing Potato
Zen and the Art of Mazda
Zen and the Art of Meditation Gardens
Zen and the Art of Mental Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Metalworking
Zen and the Art of Mix Tapes
Zen and the Art of Mobile Phones
Zen and the Art of Monetary Mayhem
Zen and the Art of Motherhood
Zen and the Art of Motor Neuron Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Mania
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Manuals
Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Muffling
Zen and the Art of Murder Mysteries
Zen and the Art of Murray Mania
Zen and the Art of Music and Video
Zen and the Art of Net Startups
Zen and the Art of a New Career
Zen and the Art of New Year's Eve
Zen and the Art of Nonprofit Technology
Zen and the Art of Oil Market Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Online Sweepstakes
Zen and the Art of Operating Systems
Zen and the Art of Pad Thai Generation
Zen and the Art of Paid Search Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Partial Mash Brewing

Zen and the Art of Patio Scraping
Zen and the Art of Peacekeeping
Zen and the Art of Perfect Pork
Zen and the Art of Physician Autonomy Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Piano Tuning
Zen and the Art of Pizza
Zen and the Art of Plane Deals
Zen and the Art of Playing MP3s
Zen and the Art of Political Campaigning
Zen and the Art of Political Maneuvering
Zen and the Art of Political Status Quo Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Portable Music
Zen and the Art of Portfolio Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Post Operative Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Press Management
Zen and the Art of Prison Reform
Zen and the Art of Programming
Zen and the Art of Propane Safety
Zen and the Art of Proper Bathroom Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Proposal Writing
Zen and the Art of Public Relations
Zen and the Art of Pumpkin Bombing
Zen and the Art of a Queer Icon
Zen and the Art of Raising Geopolitically-Savvy Kids
Zen and the Art of Rationality
Zen and the Art of Recycling
Zen and the Art of Relaxation
Zen and the Art of Remarkable Blogging
Zen and the Art of Retailing
Zen and the Art of Retirement Planning
Zen and the Art of Riding a Girl's Bicycle
Zen and the Art of Road Rage
Zen and the Art of Rock and Roll
Zen and the Art of Rockbolting
Zen and the Art of Rogue Employee Management
Zen and the Art of Running a Tea Business
Zen and the Art of Safe Holiday Driving
Zen and the Art of Sandcastles
Zen and the Art of Sarbanes-Oxley Compliance
Zen and the Art of Saving Gasoline
Zen and the Art of Savory Sushi

Zen and the Art of Saxophone Playing
Zen and the Art of Scrapbook Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Scrapyrd Archeology
Zen and the Art of Search Engine Optimization
Zen and the Art of Seduction
Zen and the Art of Selling Minimalism
Zen and the Art of Service-Oriented Architectures
Zen and the Art of Serving Food
Zen and the Art of Shaving
Zen and the Art of Shears Sharpening
Zen and the Art of Sheriffing
Zen and the Art of Shockwave
Zen and the Art of Shoe Shows
Zen and the Art of Shopping
Zen and the Art of Shoveling Sierra Nevada Snow
Zen and the Art of Showbiz
Zen and the Art of Sitting in One Place
Zen and the Art of Skiing
Zen and the Art of Slam Dancing
Zen and the Art of Small Claims
Zen and the Art of Soap Studies
Zen and the Art of Social Commentary
Zen and the Art of Social Networking
Zen and the Art of Software Configuration Management
Zen and the Art of Software Quality
Zen and the Art of Solo Sailing
Zen and the Art of Songwriting
Zen and the Art of Soul SA
Zen and the Art of Spa Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Space
Zen and the Art of Speedrunning
Zen and the Art of Speedskating
Zen and the Art of Street design
Zen and the Art of Strolling Past Bob Dole While Boarding a Plane
Zen and the Art of Stunt Riding
Zen and the Art of Summer Session
Zen and the Art of Summing Up the Year
Zen and the Art of Supermodel Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Superstar
Zen and the Art of Supporting John McCain
Zen and the Art of Sushi Preparation

Zen and the Art of Talisman Hunting
Zen and the Art of Team Blogging
Zen and the Art of Tech Blog Maintenance
Zen and the Art of Technology
Zen and the Art of Telemarketing
Zen and the Art of Temperature Maintenance
Zen and the Art of the Alcohol Stove
Zen and the Art of the Baby Swing
Zen and the Art of the Bull's-Eye
Zen and the Art of the Burger Chain
Zen and the Art of the Climate Ride
Zen and the Art of the Deal
Zen and the Art of the Entrepreneur
Zen and the Art of the Haiku
Zen and the Art of the House Party
Zen and the Art of the Mosh Pit
Zen and the Art of the New Data Center
Zen and the Art of the Obama-McCain Debate
Zen and the Art of the Project Log
Zen and the Art of the Scam
Zen and the Art of the Six-Figure Linux Job
Zen and the Art of the Sport Cliché
Zen and the Art of the Third Wheel
Zen and the Art of the Triathlon
Zen and the Art of the Wall
Zen and the Art of Thinking Straight
Zen and the Art of Total Fitness
Zen and the Art of ToughBooks
Zen and the Art of Tourism
Zen and the Art of Traffic Engineering
Zen and the Art of Translation
Zen and the Art of Travel in China
Zen and the Art of Tree-Climbing
Zen and the Art of Troubleshooting
Zen and the Art of TV
Zen and the Art of VMware ESX Storage
Zen and the Art of Volunteering
Zen and the Art of Volvo
Zen and the Art of Walking
Zen and the Art of Warehouse Management
Zen and the Art of Washing Machine Maintenance

Zen and the Art of Watching Recorded TV on Your Weekday Commute

Zen and the Art of *Watchmen*

Zen and the Art of Wave Riding

Zen and the Art of Website Promotion

Zen and the Art of Websites

Zen and the Art of Weeding