<u>Buddhism and the Postmodern:</u>
<u>The Nature of Identity and Tradition in Contemporary Society.</u>

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate
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ABSTRACT

By and large, modern societies have understood themselves to be increasingly without religion. This is reflected in religion's marginalised position within academic disciplines such as sociology and philosophy and, in turn, their isolation from developments in religious studies. The discipline of religious studies itself has sometimes colluded in this process of marginalisation and isolation by a reluctance to engage with the intellectual dynamism of similarly eclectic disciplines such as cultural studies, as well as with current developments in sociology and philosophy. This is now beginning to change, and the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to this transformation by drawing upon debates surrounding the notion of 'postmodernity', and to suggest that forms of religious tradition not only persist in contemporary Western societies, but can exhibit a dynamic and challenging engagement with the cultural conditions which shape them.

Concentrating on notions of self-hood and identity, I argue that the encounter between Buddhism and Western society provides an opportunity to examine a role for the religious in the context of a modernity which appears to exhibit increasingly ephemeral aspects, culminating with the postmodern. By initially drawing on examples in colonial and post-colonial South East Asia, I argue that Western and Buddhist cultural forms interacted in a manner which presaged the formation of the complex cultural hybridities that occur in contemporary Western society. Here, through the use of what I shall call 'quasi-knowledge' and 'quasi-memory', individuals are exposed to a multiplicity of cultural phenomena in attempting to establish coherent biographies for themselves, such exposure being reflected in the ephemeral nature of self-perception which is instrumental in the formation of the postmodern self.

I suggest that both Buddhism and the postmodern operate in milieux which function on several levels of reality. These, to some extent, equate to certain dichotomies which may be found in modernity, and provide a context in which to establish a continued and significant role for religion at all of these levels. This can be reflected in my notion of a 'de-universalised' society which can encompass both secular and religious narratives - being a product of the tensions found between the two. As a consequence of this, I argue that it is possible to regard religion as a significant factor in understanding contemporary self-hood; as something which is both at the root of its development, and central to its continued evolution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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INTRODUCTION

> The real problem of *modernity* is the problem of belief. To use an unfashionable term, it is a spiritual crisis, since the new anchorages have proved illusory and the old ones have become submerged...The effort to find excitement and meaning in literature and art as a substitute for religion led to modernism as a cultural mode. Yet modernism is exhausted and the various kinds of post-modernism (in the psychedelic efforts to expand consciousness without boundaries) are simply the decomposition of the self in an effort to erase individual ego (Bell, 1976: 28-9).[1]

These comments of Daniel Bell draw our attention to a characteristic of modernity which was of great concern to many of the founding figures of modern philosophy, sociology and psychology; namely the modern world's highly ambivalent relationship with religion (Levine, 1995; Nisbet [1966] 1993). As the twentieth century has progressed, however, intellectuals have tended to simplify this relationship, focusing instead upon an assumed disappearance of religion from modern life through such notions as secularisation, 'de-traditionalisation', the 'death of the subject' and the 'end of metaphysics' (e.g. Giddens, 1990, 1991; Baudrillard, 1983; Lyotard, 1984). The concern with social and cultural fragmentation which marks much 'postmodern' thought (Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1994), has often added to this vision of modernity as some sort of spiritual vacuum, though others have heralded the collapse of the modern project as the simultaneous reappearance of the sacred (Ferguson, 1992; Maffesoli, 1996).

Bell's reduction of modernity's 'spiritual crisis' to 'the problem of belief', however, is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, his assumption that in the past most people adhered to a relatively fixed set of beliefs is highly questionable and ignores the pluralism and dynamism of pre-modern and early societies (Archer, 1988). Second, and more importantly, it fails to take account of Durkheim's ([1912] 1995) emphasis on the importance of collective practices, rituals and experiences, as well as cognitive factors such as belief, of how people make sense of the world. This emphasis is especially important when examining the development of modernity, which has tended to valorise cognitive factors, but even more so with regard to postmodernity, which is often pictured in terms of an ephemeral, aestheticised, fragmented world of shifting signs and exchanges of information (Baudrillard, 1993). Bell rightly draws our attention to the importance of a particular model of selfhood for modernity, where people saw themselves as individuals responsible for their own beliefs and action, and its apparent displacement by a postmodern awareness of fragmentation and plurality. In returning to a consideration of modernity's relationship with religion, however, and that of its postmodern offspring, these notions of selfhood can be examined again,

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[1] Cited in O'Neill (1988: 494-5).

and it is possible to question whether the modern self was as stable and the postmodern self as ephemeral as is often imagined.

The purpose of this study, in fact, is to examine various religious sources for both modern and postmodern models of self, with regard to their synchronic and diachronic dimensions. In order to pursue this, it is first of all necessary to draw attention not only to modernity's ambivalent relationship with religion, but to modernity's own inherently ambivalent character. Consequently, whilst taking into account the narratives of secularisation which still shape the perspectives of social theorists such as Giddens (1990), I shall also follow the lead of a number of other contemporary thinkers (Mestrovic, 1991, 1993; Buci-Glucksmann, 1994; Maffesoli, 1996; Mellor & Shilling, 1997), who have drawn attention to a deep ambivalence at the heart of modernity, both sides of which have roots in religious phenomena. Alongside the desacralising impulses of the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation, modernity also reflected the baroque, the Catholic Counter-Reformation and other challenges to modern rationalism (Turner, 1991); something which has largely been ignored by twentieth century thinkers until very recently. By analysing the evolution of modernity in this way I shall suggest that these 'strands' have come together in the late twentieth century to form a postmodern hybrid of the two. Furthermore, given that religion seems to have played such an important role in the development of modernity I shall assess the extent to which postmodern society is intrinsically religious.

While, as the title of this thesis suggests, I shall base my arguments on the nature of selfhood, I shall also examine the phenomenon of tradition. The marginalisation of tradition, and especially religious tradition, has been of central importance to many influential accounts of modernity and postmodernity, but its continuation in Western society underlines the need for a reassessment of these ideas. Through an analysis of tradition in varying contexts I shall attempt to analyse the patterns of selfhood which have emerged, also giving attention to the role of the collectivity in these situations. I shall concentrate on the nature of tradition in contemporary society, with a particular focus on Buddhism. Of the world's principal religions it has, in the past, proved extremely adaptable in integrating itself into various societies and cultures, and it seems that the West is no exception to this. Drawing on the way in which Buddhism has interacted in the West, I shall suggest that contemporary society is not devoid of tradition and religion, but awash with it in a series of complex cultural hybridities from which religious elements - Buddhism being only one example - are inextricable. Through this analysis I shall highlight a number of affinities which I believe Buddhism has with elements of Western society and thought. Furthermore, I shall use this equation of society and thought to argue that the persistence of religion in society in this way mirrors its persistence in the intellectual tradition. I suggest that,

while the previous *fin de siècle* proved important in the foundation of modern philosophy, sociology and psychology, as we reach the *'fin de millènaire'*, we may have come to another seminal point of intellectual thought.

Early Sources of Contemporary Identity.

Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989) is an important contribution towards the assessment of distinctively modern forms of selfhood. Taylor's basic premise is that, as modern people, our moral world is significantly different from those of our forebears (Taylor, 1989: 11). In particular, the modern person seeks human rights through the notion of autonomy (Taylor, 1989: 12), without the sense of a cosmic moral order (Taylor, 1989, 13). This can, he suggests, lead to a crisis of identity which is borne of radical uncertainty (Taylor, 1989: 27), that would have been unthinkable in former times. For Taylor, this underlines the importance of the creation of individuals' own moral spaces. Because of the individual nature of these spaces, however, a universal perception is no longer possible, since the framework itself may not be grounded in anything solid. Nevertheless, this issue of frameworks is important, coming particularly in relation to identity construction, as "it belongs to human agency to exist in a space of questions about strongly valued goods, prior to all choice or adventitious social change" (Taylor, 1989: 31).

Although the genesis of distinctively modern thought is rarely agreed upon, René Descartes's notions of the self are of vital importance in discussing the sources of contemporary individuality. For Taylor there are a number of parallels which can be drawn between Cartesian and earlier thought, and in particular Augustine's introduction of the notion of the inwardness of radical reflexivity (Taylor, 1989: 131ff). This shows that there are a number of apparently modern ideas which pre-date the Enlightenment, and point to a progression of thought in the West which suggests a considerable degree of coherence rather than radical rupture. This, I shall argue, is also apparent between the modern and the postmodern, certainly to a greater degree than is often acknowledged. As with Descartes's use of Augustinian thought, however, it can be seen as providing a radical 'twist' to that which has gone before. The twist in Descartes's case was to actually situate the sources of morality within the self, taking Augustine's language of inwardness and removing it from the cosmic moral order (Taylor, 1989: 143). Most importantly, perhaps, is the rationality which stems from this. Here the self is cast adrift from the cosmic moral order to which it was tied, leading to a demystification of the cosmos, favouring a much more mechanical process where individuals begin to feel a greater sense of control. Fundamental to this is the gaining of insight through knowledge; that is rational scientific knowledge as opposed to the insight required in a non-rational cosmic order.

As Henri Lefebvre suggests, space - along with time - was no longer a category which contributed to the appropriation of evidence received from senses. Rather it became part of the Absolute:

> As Object as opposed to Subject...space came to dominate, by containing them,
> all senses and all bodies (Lefebvre, 1991: 1).

The 'location' of knowledge changed (Lefebvre, 1991: 296-7) which facilitated a more reflexive inner search. The object of this was no longer to meet God, but to meet oneself - to achieve the clarity and fullness of self presence, which, for Taylor, prepared the way for Deism (Taylor, 1989: 157).

The sense of self-control postulated by Descartes was pushed further by John Locke's notion of the 'punctual self'. Cartesian philosophy advocates an objective, disengaged approach which Descartes kept in check by employing radical reflexivity in order to maintain control in the attainment of knowledge (Taylor, 1989: 163-4; Lefebvre, 1991: 114-5). Locke, however, goes further than Descartes in rejecting the latter's idea of the notion of innateness, removing attempts at teleological reconstruction (Taylor, 1989: 164). Locke considers the importance of external forces in the development of the self (Seidler, 1994: 52), seeing that:

> The underlying notion is that our conceptions of the world are syntheses of the
> ideas we originally received from sensation and reflection. But under the influence
> of passion, custom and education, these syntheses are made without awareness
> and without good grounds (Taylor, 1989: 165).

This, for Locke, is something which must be overcome through the disengagement of these beliefs and syntheses, subjecting them to reflexive scrutiny (Taylor, 1989: 168). Such radical disengagement not only allows Cartesian notions of individuality, but allows for the process of the remaking of a self. In other words, rational control can enable the re-creation of individuals' habits, and thus of themselves, and enables us to trace one of the principal facets of the modern self (Taylor, 1989: 177). While this does not constitute its entire development, I would argue that the dichotomy within modern thought which I have already begun to consider here, can be identified as early as the seventeenth century. This can be seen in Montaigne's notion of radical reflexivity which required individuals to explore what they are in order to establish their identity (Taylor, 1989: 178). His empirical self-assessment led him to acknowledge that the self, to a certain extent, is undergoing a process of constant change. Within this flux, however, a certain equilibrium can be achieved through the acceptance of certain patterns; although these are not of a universal nature (Taylor, 1989: 179). This is represented by Montaigne through the work of an Essayist who sees each unique experience as a reflection of the changing self (Norton, 1975: 120).

Whereas Descartes had instigated notions of modern individualism, Montaigne was more concerned with ideas of individual, and empirical, originality. His search for knowledge was much less scientific in nature. For him this was an inward quest which, through sensory mechanisms, attempted to bring some sort of order to the soul (Norton, 1975: 120; Taylor, 1989: 182). He recommended a course of 'self-absorption' where the individual could gain knowledge through empirical experience, rather than public obligation, and was later reflected the work of French thinkers (Keohane, 1977) such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These two facets of the modern self, along with a third - the individualism of personal commitment - were also increasingly evident within the religious traditions arising from the Protestant Reformation, which so radically altered the nature of Western thought.

Of particular significance is the critique of those qualities which had been previously associated with the upper echelons of society, and had contributed towards their perceived positions of superiority; the ethic of honour and glory. As Taylor points out these had come under scrutiny before but took on new significance during the latter part of the seventeenth century "as an engine of social change...[in] the promotion of ordinary life" (Taylor, 1989: 214). It gave a new emphasis to perceptions of modern society which were to be reflected in the concentration on production. This led to a shifting of the locus of morality towards an ethic of hard work and civic responsibility, a prerequisite in any realisation of the inherent Good which was believed to underpin the rational order. As Seidler suggests, reason was the sole source of freedom and morality, giving direct access to a 'higher truth' (Seidler, 1994: 53). Mediation between individuals and the deity had been discounted. Detached by the Enlightenment from the cosmic order individuals were now adrift, and were totally reliant on God for salvation, towards whom they showed an immense amount of awe and gratitude (Taylor, 1989: 215). Possibly the most important consequence of this was the rejection of previous understandings of the sacred which were regarded as blasphemous. This was because the Reformers could not countenance any suggestion that individuals might possess within themselves the ability to attain salvation.

The Protestant Reformers not only rejected some of the principal tenets of Catholic theology, but as with later Enlightenment thinkers, they also sought to establish a direct relationship between each individual and God, effectively removing the sacred from religious life. There were no longer any individuals who enjoyed an advantageous position in relation to God. These notions of individuality were taken a stage further in the eighteenth century with the emergence of Deism, the basis of which is that "God's purposes fully respect humans' autonomous reason", so individuals become much more able to express their rational behaviour while retaining

a belief in God, although - importantly - not in God's grace (Taylor, 1989: 251). Deism is generally seen as being seminal in the development of a secular society, although Taylor warns against viewing Deists as somehow lacking religious commitment (Taylor, 1989: 266). While Deism was not wholly secular, it did represent a moral shift whereby the locus of the Good moved from God to nature. This can be seen as a reaction against Puritanism, shifting the locus of moral law to a purely anthropocentric morality which God only supported (Bernstein, 1978).

The result of this shift seems to be two-fold. On the one hand the role of nature gave a significant impetus to the status of rationality in Western society, while on the other it "brings about a revolution in the philosophical understanding of sentiment" (Taylor, 1989: 283). It was this use of philosophy which allowed for such an important turning point in the development of religious thought (Campbell, 1987: 112). In a way these two aspects of Deism[2] both reflected and furthered the development of the groundless individualism. The latter shift may be regarded as pre-eminent as through the gradual replacement of passion, sentiment becomes the norm, and is beholden to reason as part of the design of nature (Taylor, 1989: 284). This supports Taylor's belief that Deism is not to be seen as a wholly secular theory, as through sentiment it retains some element of the non-rational. This tends to be subsumed beneath the dominant themes of the Enlightenment. It was the sentiment which nature is said to awaken within individuals (Taylor, 1989: 297), which was instrumental in the musings of the Romantics (Campbell, 1987: 176), and most influentially, Rousseau:

> After Rousseau, nature becomes decidedly what it is for us moderns, a deep and confused life, where all that is inexpressible in us is poured out (Mornet, 1971: 255)[3].

In Romanticism, nature has become detached from reason, in other words it is no longer the order by which our rationality is defined (Taylor, 1989: 301). The Romantics took the ideas espoused by the Protestant Reformers and Enlightenment thinkers and reflexively interpreted them. So while they were an integral part of the Enlightenment, they were also a reaction against them - the Cartesian self could not recognise emotional or somatic experience because these were regarded as aspects of 'nature' and consequently separated off (Seidler, 1994: xii). This, to some extent, came from a recognition of the negative side of the individualism and autonomy which was becoming so part of modern life. Rousseau, for instance, came to realise in his later life that the further one got away from nature, the worse life got. Indeed, he considered that progress was going in entirely the wrong direction, and in his

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[2] Taylor particularly attributes this to what he calls Lockean Deism which he considers became the dominant form during the eighteenth century (1989: 283).
[3] Cited in, and translated by, Taylor (1989: 300).

Discourses spoke of scientific and technological advances to be a corrupting influence on human beings. As with many of the Romantics who followed, however, he did not do this through any religious affiliation as is shown in his book on the nature of education, *Émile*,[4] which was widely regarded to be anti-Christian in its stance; and for which Rousseau was forced to leave France for almost ten years.[5] From this point of view Rousseau was critiquing the Enlightenment from within, something which was accepted by many of his contemporaries, although not his bitter enemy - Voltaire. This, together with the more reflexive nature of modern thought left many individuals who were being exposed to modernity, feeling isolated and confused. In the following excerpt from Rousseau's romantic novel *The New Eloise*,[6] the hero, Alcibiades, is reflecting on his move to the city from the countryside:

> I'm beginning to feel the drunkenness that this agitated, tumultuous life plunges you into. With such a multitude of objects passing before my eyes I'm getting dizzy. Of all the things that strike me, there is none that holds the heart, yet all of them together disturb my feelings, so that I forgot what I am and who I belong to (cited in Berman, 1983: 18).

This, says Marshall Berman, "is the atmosphere in which modern sensibility is born" (Berman, 1983: 18). For Berman, Rousseau is "the archetypal modern voice in the early phase of modernity" (Berman, 1983: 17), while Taylor suggests that "he is the starting point of a transformation in modern culture towards a deeper inwardness and a radical autonomy" (Taylor, 1989: 363). The Romanticism which Rousseau espoused and inspired remained largely within the Enlightenment project. Indeed, strong continuities can be traced from the Romantic period to modernity. Art, for instance was seen as:

> ...the locus of a manifestation which brings us into the presence of something which is otherwise inaccessible, and which is of the highest moral or spiritual significance; a manifestation, moreover, which also defines or completes something, even as it reveals (Taylor: 1989: 419).

According to Taylor, this can be epitomised by the notion of 'epiphany'; an approach which appealed to artists such as Piet Mondrian and Wassily Kandinsky, who sought to represent the monistic theories of such as the Theosophical Society in their work. This could also be seen in the romantic ideals that attracted much of the literate society of Victorian Britain to Buddhism. So while Romanticism primarily begot the nature mysticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its influence on other more structured religious developments is also significant. Indeed, it is through

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[4] First published in 1762
[5] From a BBC2 Documentary in the series *The Enlightenment* entitled *Jean-Jacques Rousseau - The Retreat to Romanticism*, broadcast 13/08/96.
[6] Published in 1761 as *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

Rousseau's affinity with monism that his influence on Schopenhauer can be assessed, an influence which can be carried through to some of the great *fin de siècle* thinkers of the end of the nineteenth century.

Counter-Reformation and Anti-Enlightenment.

While the initial impetus towards individuality and autonomy provided by Descartes and Locke (furthered by Montaigne's empiricist position) and the more monistic musings of Rousseau and his fellow Romantics are in many ways anti-pathetic to each other, they are in fact two sides of the same coin. Both can be placed within the Enlightenment project. According to Mellor and Shilling (1997) there were parallel developments at this time which opposed many Enlightenment ideas. They suggest three key stages in Western forms of embodiment which are important for understanding the nature of the modern world: the 'medieval body', the 'Protestant modern body', and the 'baroque modern body' (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 8).

Beginning with the medieval body they provide a context in which to judge the changes in embodiment which have been wrought by modernity. They suggest that, in medieval times, structured approaches to the body, where they existed, tended to seek to maintain a sensual relationship with the sacred (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 37), especially in rituals which were believed to engender religious truth through:

> ...the sensuous experience of the body to the goals of an institution which had a highly developed awareness of the symbolic values of human and supernatural bodies (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 39)[7].

These relationships between the body and religious fundamentals had the consequence of creating anxieties which were in themselves similar to those of modernity, but which had sacred rather than profane sources. Here, as with other Enlightenment notions of the self, there were elements of the modern body which pre-dated it, but, as Mellor and Shilling suggest, Protestant attitudes towards the body proved to be a catalyst for these processes (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42). Nowhere was this more the case, arguably, than in the individualisation of the body which was separated from the ritual mediation of the sacred:

> ...as Protestant believers stood alone before God, they also became separated from effervescent forms of sociality; a separation symbolised by the increasingly hostile attitude toward ritual (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 43).

Ritual was replaced by the Word of God as the primary locus of religious belief. Consequently, the words themselves became the inspiration for the "construction and maintenance of righteous self-identities" a focus which, "prioritised the linguistic signs

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[7] See also Asad (1983).

of the scriptures above all other sensory knowledge" (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 66). By concentrating on the individualisation of the self, Protestant Reformers were advocating that individuals look more inwards for their identity. Individuals were urged to become reflexive in their attitudes both to their minds and their bodies. Such attitudes towards the body may be seen as rational developments which were concomitant with the early Enlightenment, though perhaps not the later Romanticism of Rousseau. The Protestant Reformers eschewed any notion of feeling such as sensuality, something which Rousseau clearly felt in his relationship with nature. For Taylor, this is why writers in the eighteenth century distinguish between two forms of imagination, the reproductive and the creative. This seems to have been the case for Coleridge, who, in the following passage, seems to suggest that there was something ineffable and non-rational at the root of true imagination, representing an individuality which is able to manifest reality through the creation of new forms (Taylor, 1989: 379):

> The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.[8]

The simultaneous sensitivity to the non-rational and the acknowledgement of the ideas of reflexive thought and individuality is something which has more in common with Mellor and Shilling's third notion of embodiment, the 'baroque modern body' (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 47ff). A number of social theorists and sociologists (Turner (1991, 1994a), van Reijen (1992), Buci-Glucksmann (1994), Maffesoli (1996)) have discerned certain affinities between the baroque and a number of aspects of contemporary thought, particularly with regard to notions of sensuality (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 47) which can be discerned in the Counter-Reformation:

> What is especially significant about the Counter Reformation's use of baroque culture is that its manipulation of the sensuous experience of the sacred was accompanied not by attacks on certain forms of discursive, but by an increasing emphasis on others. This reintroduced a greater level of cognitive apprehension and visuality to carnal knowing within Catholic communities, and provided another reason for early modern Protestants to be concerned by, and fearful of, the 'shadow kingdom' of human sensuality (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 132).

This notion of carnal knowing in the Catholic communities - a term coined by Margaret Miles to denote the inextricable links which medieval people are believed to make between thinking, sensing and understanding (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 23) - is of particular importance for Mellor and Shilling since it suggests certain epistemological connections between the rational and the non-rational which the Protestant Reformers sought to sever, but which nevertheless endure. This points to a relationship between the sacred and the profane which can be traced to back through developments in

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[8] S. T. Coleridge - 1954 *Biographia Literaria* (London: OUP), cited in Taylor (1989: 379).

modernity from before the Enlightenment to the present day. In fact, I shall argue, that a connection with the non-rational within the modern project - which has often been masked by notions of individuality, secularisation and reason - has persisted into postmodernity.

Schopenhauer, Buddhism, and Non-Rational Modernity.

An understanding of the work of Schopenhauer is of particular importance in analysing the development of non-rational elements in modernity. While influenced by Romanticism, he can help us to understand the emergence of sociology, through his position as *the* philosopher of the *fin de siècle* (Mestrovic, 1991: 42). He also showed a considerable interest in Buddhism sharing what he perceived to be its pessimistic world-view. Although, as Abelsen comments, compared with Schopenhauer, the Buddhist outlook seems "almost cheerful" (Abelsen, 1993: 255)[9]. Similarities may be seen, however, in the context of their respective views on reality, which both suggest ambiguity. For Schopenhauer the centrality of this lies in his attitude towards the will - the 'lower' half of what Durkheim ([1914] 1973) calls the *homo duplex*. This occurred as part of the realisation that individuals were not, in fact, part of the cosmic order, creating a sort of duality which was proving difficult to reconcile (Taylor, 1989: 416-7). Schopenhauer, however, attempts such a reconciliation:

> Everyone finds himself as a subject, yet only in so far as he knows, not in so far as he is object of knowledge. But his body is already object, and therefore from this point of view we call it representation. For the body is object among objects and subordinated to the laws of objects, although it is immediate object (Schopenhauer, [1818] 1969: 5).

This sets Schopenhauer apart from those intellectuals following a post-Enlightenment, Protestant, or even post-Christian line of argument. Instead of viewing liberation, for instance, as a transfiguration of ordinary life; he sees it as an escape from the self and the will altogether (Taylor, 1989: 443). Schopenhauer sees the will as emanating from nature, itself a "great reservoir of force" (Taylor, 1989: 445), regarding will as the basis of everything that we perceive - it is the Real (Abelsen, 1993: 261). It could be argued, then, that the body is the spatialisation and temporalisation of the will by the intellect, the 'higher' pole of the *homo duplex*. If this is the case, then the body is representation of the will as interpreted by the intellect, suggesting a complex interaction between the two components of the *homo duplex*. While the body and

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[9] Abelsen is careful to note that it is questionable whether Buddhist philosophy and the philosophy of Schopenhauer "breathe the same atmosphere" with regard to their respective pessimistic natures since the former does not, by and large, share the disguist for life that Schopenhauer did. Nevertheless, he does feel that they share a certain '*Weltanschauung*' which makes comparisons between them both possible and fruitful (Abelsen, 1993: 255-6).

mind represent the two poles of our being, the body can only be represented, or even constructed, through the mind's interpretation of the will.

Here comparisons can be made with Buddhist notions of the self. Perhaps these can be best understood in the context of the inherent ambiguities which they possess. In Buddhism's case, this is explained by the existence of two levels of reality, a conventional reality which is impermanent and provisional, and an ultimate level, *nirvāṇa*, which represents the true nature of reality perceived at liberation. This is achieved through a realisation that the notions of space, time and causality which underpin our everyday existence are not, ultimately, 'real'. According to Abelsen these concepts are essential in any comparison which is to be made between Buddhism and the philosophy of Schopenhauer (Abelsen, 1993: 256), and perhaps can be best shown by seeing conventional truth as the 'lower' pole of Buddhist philosophy. As a means and a sign of liberation, the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, ultimate truth, the 'higher' pole is intellectually incomprehensible for the vast majority of Buddhists. For this to be fully effective the analysis of what is not involved with ultimate truth must be set in stark contrast to it, hence the amoral mundaneity of conventional truth. Like Schopenhauer's 'will', the body, as the representation of the self in this conventional milieu, is seen as the point at which such as passion, desire and fear are located. Here the body is a sort of intrinsic representation of the conventional truth that individuals experience. This can be compared to one of the central teachings of the Buddha, that of dependent co-origination, or *paṭicca samuppāda (pratītyasamutpāda)*. The basic premise of this is that the conventional world occurs through a series of twelve causalities[10]. Each step of the process, when represented in a linear fashion, represents a further construction of first the self, and then the body. This process can only be reversed through a deconstruction of the self, initially achievable through a balanced mixture of wise and compassionate acts. It is through affinities such as these that I shall highlight the importance of Buddhism in establishing a non-rational strand of modernity which, although largely ignored by scholars until relatively recently, will have an important role in confirming my view that postmodernity contains religious elements through the presence of traditions such as Buddhism in it.

Schopenhauer's philosophy, especially with regard to nature, reflects the changes in attitude which were taking place in the nineteenth century. This was partly due to a

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[10] These twelve *nidanas* are:

1. Ignorance	5. The senses	9. Attachment
2. Action	6. Contact	10. Becoming
3. Consciousness	7. Sensation	11. Birth
4. Name and form	8. Craving	12. Old age, disease and death.

(Zimmer, 1951: 541n).

further erosion in the perception that the universe is somehow underpinned by a cosmic order. The principal reason for this seems to be the emergence of natural science (Friedman, 1994) which, according to Taylor, had shown the universe to be "much vaster and more bewildering in space, time, and evolution than the earlier orders had envisaged and rationalized" (Taylor, 1989: 416). Such developments signalled a shift in perception even for the Romantics who, while retaining their desire to be in tune with nature, had to acknowledge the scientific discoveries which were demystifying it. For Taylor, this had three principal effects on Romanticism which can be seen in its relationship with art, and became the primary source for claims of transcendence after the Enlightenment (Wolin, 1993: 170). First is Realism, in which art becomes 'de-spiritualised' (Taylor, 1989: 441), where artists appear to accept Enlightenment views of naturalism (Taylor, 1989: 432). Taylor cites Emile Zola as a typical example of this outlook:

> This is the modern countryside. One feels the passage of man who digs up the earth, cuts it up, saddens the horizon...Nothing could be more banal, were nothing greater. The painter's temperament has drawn a rare poem of life and force from ordinary reality (cited in Taylor, 1989: 433).[11]

The second effect, exemplified by Baudelaire, sees art as an epiphany of anti-nature (Taylor, 1989: 441) where there is no denial of nature as spiritual, but where the eighteenth century Romantic view that nature contains the highest spiritual reality is rejected (Taylor, 1989: 434). Baudelaire, saw nature as ugly but believed that, through their imaginations, artists were able to take fragments of it to produce something beautiful (Taylor, 1989: 436). Most famously, he saw the city as the representation of this, detecting beauty in the chaos:

> To banish, as irregular,
> All vegetation from that land;
>
> And, proud of what my art had done,
> I viewed my painting, knew the great
> Intoxicating monotone
> Of marble, water, steel and slate.[12]

This he set in a temporal context where modernity represented the transitory nature of art, the other part being that which is eternal and immutable (Baudelaire, 1964; Frisby, 1985: 50). Beauty could be found in the ephemeral, changing nature of the city, through both its structures and the human thoughts and action of which it was made (Frisby, 1985: 50).

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[11] From Zola's explanation of Camille Pissaro's painting *Jallais Hill, Pointoise* which hangs below it in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.
[12] From Charles Baudelaire - 1962, *The Flowers of Evil*, M. and J. Matthews (eds.) (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions), cited in Taylor (1989: 438).

The third negation of Romanticism in the nineteenth century can be found in the philosophy of Schopenhauer. This is a conception of art which "relates to the wild energy of an amoral nature" (Taylor, 1989: 441). For, Schopenhauer, as with Baudelaire, art provides an opportunity to represent an essentially worthless and degraded reality through which we can continue to use our expressive powers. Consequently, although seemingly anti-Romantic in terms of the way in which nature is viewed, Schopenhauer's philosophy also continues some of its ideas through his exploration of the inner depths of ourselves in relation to nature.

According to Mestrovic, Schopenhauer was *the* father of social science (Mestrovic, 1991: 52), such was his influence, and is significant in locating the roots of postmodern thought:

> The starting-point for most of the postmodern discourse as well as the positivistic readings of the origins of the social sciences is derived from Enlightenment culture: that the mind is stronger that the will. Schopenhauer's importance is that he reversed this starting point, and thereby set an entirely new course for *fin de siècle* thought relative to the Enlightenment (Mestrovic, 1993: 94).

For Mestrovic, it seems that Schopenhauer's importance for *fin de siècle* thought lies to a considerable extent in his pessimism. He concentrated on what people are rather than what they do, based on the notion of a will to life which led to compassion through a realisation of the nature of suffering and human evil (Mestrovic, 1993: 64). Such pessimism was typical of the *fin de siècle*, Baudelaire and Schopenhauer being indicative of this gloominess (Mestrovic, 1991: 106). Furthermore, the religious element inherent in this is important since it points to developments within modernity which accommodate the non-rational which are evolving quite separately, and in opposition to what has been widely regarded as its mainstream project.

Durkheim and 'Janus-faced' Modernity.

To Mestrovic this is particularly crystallised in Schopenhauer's opposition to Kant (Mestrovic, 1993), but can also be identified in Mellor and Shilling's definition of what they call the 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity. This arises from their examination of the differences between the Protestant modern body and the baroque modern body:

> [W]e argue that the corporeal consequences of both the Protestant Reformation and the baroque cultures of Counter-Reformation Catholicism provide central, if markedly divergent, sources for...'two' contrasting and potentially conflicting modernities (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 131).

The 're-formations of the body' which Mellor and Shilling consider to be at the centre of a 'Janus-faced' modernity require a fresh understanding of the ideas of Durkheim. This is well founded since much of his oeuvre looks at the nature of community in

relation to "the immanence of powerful passions and emotions of collective, sacred character" (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 1).

Durkheim's study of suicide ([1897] 1952) is particularly important since it reflects the pessimism of the previous *fin de siècle* which has been seemingly ignored by so many thinkers in the meantime. As early as 1818, Schopenhauer argued that suicide was becoming more common as a result of the desires which modernity had brought about, and became self-motivating as the attainment of material objects led to greater desire (Mestrovic, 1991: 10-1). According to Mestrovic, such ideas have been largely ignored since they do not suit optimistic Enlightenment perspectives (Mestrovic, 1991: 85), perhaps exemplified by Rousseau - whom Durkheim considered naïve (Mestrovic, 1991: 75). Arguably, then, a study of suicide as the outcome of an excess of passions ('anomie') could not have come about purely as a result of Enlightenment thought. This does not, however, deny the fact that Durkhiem's study is intrinsically modern since it has as its centre the most intimate and individual of acts (Nisbet, [1966] 1993: 92). Durkheim is aware of this when outlining his methodology at the beginning of *Suicide*, he acknowledges that societies cannot exist where there are no individuals, but that individuals are dominated by a moral reality greater than their own, that is the collective reality (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 38). This is reflected in his four-fold[13] typology of suicide; all of which consider the relationship of the individual within modern society, and which for Durkheim shows it to be in deep crisis (Simpson, 1952: 17). Even in this seemingly most individual of acts, Durkheim concentrates on the nature of collectivities in seeking the causes of suicide. Of particular relevance is his assertion that religious belief has a bearing on the frequency of suicide. He outlines a general trend which suggests that Protestants were more than three times as likely to commit suicide than Catholics.[14] He offers a number explanations for this. First, that the Protestant church allows for an atmosphere of freer enquiry than its Catholic counterpart, something which he felt led to a greater degree of reflexivity since:

> Reflection develops only if its development becomes imperative, that is, if certain ideas and instinctive sentiments which have hitherto adequately guided conduct are found to have lost their efficacy. Then reflection intervenes to fill the gap that has appeared, but which it has not created (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 158).

This suggests a lack of cohesion in the Protestant church, where individuals feel less integrated, and is something which Mellor and Shilling note in their dichotomisation of modernity. In discussing Protestant re-formations of the medieval body they highlight three changes which support Durkheim's assertions of why Protestants seem more

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[13] Egoistic, fatalistic, altruistic and anomic suicide
[14] Average suicides per million inhabitants, 190 in Protestant states and 58 in Catholic states (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 152).

likely to commit suicide than Catholics. First, and perhaps most relevant, that the Reformation has dislocated people from their environments - both natural, supernatural and social (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42). This not only detaches them synchronically, but also diachronically, with the result that individuals are cast adrift of the traditions and beliefs, as well as the locations, with which they are familiar. Combined with an increased degree of individualisation, this has led to what Durkheim sees as a lessening of integration of individuals in Protestant society. It is exacerbated by the subordination of the flesh to the mind (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42) in Protestant thought creating a 'spirit of free inquiry'. This in turn leads to Mellor and Shilling's other re-formation of the medieval body which reflects the inability of Protestant narratives to overcome, or even sublimate, the passions and emotions which occur naturally in humans, and which can result in an immense amount of anxiety on the part of the individuals concerned (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42).

Durkheim considers the role of knowledge to be an important factor in this process. He stresses that individuals do not commit suicide because of knowledge or its acquisition; rather the relationship between knowledge and suicide lies in the need to acquire knowledge which can come about through the anxiety and anomie felt by individuals as a result of the changes which the Reformation wrought:

> It is certainly not the learning...that disorganises religion; but the desire for knowledge wakens because religion becomes disorganised (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 169).

Leading on from this, Durkheim suggests that religion has generally had a prophylactic effect on suicide, not purely through moral representation - although this is a strong feature for him - but also through the individual's perceived place within society. The importance of this study as far as this thesis is concerned lies in its establishment of a relationship between religion, society, and suicide. Here, Durkheim's assertion, that more strongly integrated individuals are, broadly, less likely to commit suicide, can be linked with the degree of anomie which individuals were increasingly feeling. Given this relationship he suggests that other symbols, in addition to religious symbols, are important in reflecting the general situation in which a society finds itself. He achieves this by outlining a series of examples of suicide in literature, concentrating on anomic types, such as Goethe's Werther, who are "enamoured of infinity" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 286; Mestrovic, 1991: 89). Through this study of suicide, we can see a generalised stratification of society which existed in Europe during the latter half of the nineteenth century and can, to some extent, be classified according to religious denomination. This provides two important points with regard to Mellor and Shilling's discussions about corporeal re-formation in modernity. First, that there is a distinction which can be made between the role of the individual

respectively within Catholic and Protestant societies; and, second, that there is a greater sense of individuality within Protestant societies than in Catholic ones where pre-Enlightenment and counter-Reformation thought was more prevalent.

Durkheim argued that there are three principal forms of suicide; egoistic, altruistic, and anomic.[15] I would suggest, however, that it is possible to reduce this trichotomy to a dichotomy through a provisional examination of egoistic and anomic suicide. Durkheim himself admits that his typology is by no means fixed, suggesting that there are a number of hybrids which can be observed, egoistic and anomic suicide showing a particular affinity for each other as two different aspects of one social state (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 288). Emphasising the nature of the Protestant modern body, that is a synthesis of individualisation, disintegration from society, and anxiety, egoistic and anomic suicide can arguably be seen as being two sides of the same coin. That is, they can not really exist in isolation from each other when viewed in a post-Enlightenment and post-Reformation context. The key to these ideas, however, really lies in Durkheim's overall view of modern society in which he argues that:

> Facts thus are far from confirming the current idea that suicide is due especially to life's burdens, since on the contrary, it diminishes as these burdens increase (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 201).

This underlines the degree of pessimism which Durkheim has for modern life, something which Mestrovic claims has not been fully appreciated by many commentators, who, he says, have attempted to remove what does not fit into their modernist assumptions. This has led him to a variety of interpretations of Durkheim's work, citing in particular Barclay Johnson who believes that:

> A closer look at Suicide suggests, however, that altruism and fatalism really do not belong in Durkheim's scheme, and that egoism and anomie are identical. Thus his four causes of suicide can be reduced to one, so that all variation in suicide rates is attributed to a single cause (Johnson, 1965: 875; cited in Mestrovic, 1993: 135).

Here Johnson has made an assumption which Durkheim has not, that modern people are individuals who have, to a large extent, adopted the position suggested by Mellor and Shilling's description of the Protestant modern body. While this can be seen to lead to a increase in suicide due to a combination of egoism and anomie, it does not discount either altruism or fatalism, which Durkheim sees as being in contrast to anomie (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 276n). Indeed, it is through his ideas of fatalism that I can argue against Johnson's position. Although Durkheim suggests that fatalistic suicide would be very rare during his time, I would suggest that it may be more prevalent in contemporary society than altruistic suicide. From Durkheim's very brief account of what he considers fatalistic suicide to be (and it is restricted to a single

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[15] He only latterly mentions the fourth, fatalistic suicide.

footnote), there may well be any number of people who are suffering from "excessive physical and moral despotism" (Durkheim, [1897] 1952: 276n), within both personal and corporate milieux, the person trapped in a violent or oppressive marriage, or who is subject to the dogmatism of a religious group, for instance. This latter example in particular may be applicable to the other half of Mellor and Shilling's 'Janus-faced' modernity, through the continued authority of the Catholic Church. Consequently, fatalistic suicide could be seen as the downside of the sensual experiences which they see as being central to the baroque modern body. One could even go as far as to suggest that the presence of fatalistic suicide is essential in the establishment of a presence of this type of embodiment in modernity.

The Sacred and the Profane in 'Janus-faced' Modernity

The basis of Mellor and Shilling's discussions of the presence of the baroque modern body lie in their contention that there are forms of contemporary embodiment which do not accord with the disciplined and cognitively focused bodies which are generally associated with modernity (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 47). Much of this lies in individuals' relationship with knowledge. In *Suicide*, Durkheim allies the need to seek knowledge with the anomie and egoism which modern life seems to bring. According to Mellor and Shilling this is due to a loss of sense-contact with knowledge in which:

> What we learn through our bodies is no longer validated in the way it used to be, and this is why 'experience' is popularised as individual, unique (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 36).

Rather than accepting Johnson's view that there is a single cause for suicide in modernity, I suggested that there are two basic sets of causes which may be set in opposition. The first, and principal cause of suicide since Durkheim's time, arises from anomie and egoism, the second being altruistic and fatalistic suicides which seem to be less prevalent. This duality has a certain resonance with the 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity which Mellor and Shilling discuss. In order to contextualise these into my central themes of identity and tradition further I shall respectively examine Durkheim's theories of the *homo duplex* and collective effervescence.

These are brought together in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912] 1995), which suggests that the nature of religion can be gleaned from the most elementary forms of religious belief and action. Fundamental to his ideas is that religion is essentially a social phenomenon where:

> Religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities; rites are ways of acting that are born only in the midst of assembled groups and whose purpose is to evoke, maintain, or recreate certain mental states of those groups (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 9).

At the basis of all religious beliefs, he suggests, lies a dual categorisation of real or ideal phenomena which are generally distinguished by the terms sacred and profane. Durkheim's assertion that all that is religious is differentiated in this way; together with Mellor and Shilling's notion that the origins of 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity lie in religious schism, provides the basis in which comparisons of the two can be made. Despite assertions to the contrary - modernity has at least partly remained within a religious framework; while postmodernity exhibits features which enable me to place it within a religious context. This is something alluded to by Mellor and Shilling, that Protestantism promoted its profane nature leading to a situation where:

> A sky empty of angels becomes open to the intervention of the astronomer and eventually the astronaut (Berger, [1967] 1990: 112-3; Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 131).

This, set against what they call the 'voluptuous corporeality' of the counter-Reformation, provides a duality with which Durkheimian notions of the profane and the sacred can be compared:

> While the Protestant focus on the individual provided a basis for the extension of contractual arrangements built initially around the Word of God, the Counter-Reformers' incorporation of the Word into the flesh constantly threatened to stain, muddy and bypass these abstract channels for human interaction (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 132).

By allying this duality with that in suicide as suggested by Durkheim I can begin to establish two distinct phenomena based around a central dichotomy, both of which can be situated within the realm of religion. This can be further appreciated by considering the nature of the *homo duplex*, that humans contain within themselves two beings: an individual based within the body, which is subjective and egoistic; and a social being which represents what Durkheim calls the "highest reality in the intellectual realm that is knowable through observation", which he sees as being society itself (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 15). The realisation of the *homo duplex*, however, may not be seen as something which *entirely* differentiates the baroque modern body from the Protestant modern body since both, to varying extents, sought to regulate individuals' passionate aspects (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 135).

Mestrovic's discussions of *homo duplex* centre around his assertions that contemporary Western society and culture are not as sanitised as many theorists believe them to be. Like Mellor and Shilling, he argues against the notion that modernity has followed a single progressive path from the Enlightenment suggesting that, during the previous *fin de siècle* in particular, many thinkers were exploring the more sensual side of human nature. He feels that many intellectuals have subsequently been either unwilling or unable to accept this fact:

Hence, there arises among modernists efforts to obfuscate barbarism in modern
cultures, and among postmodernists efforts to deny the very existence of culture,
much less 'good' versus 'bad' culture (Mestrovic, 1993: 21-2).

Mestrovic sets out to rectify this, suggesting an alternative approach to modernity.
Through it he seeks to ally a number of *fin de siècle* intellectuals, most importantly,
Durkheim and Schopenhauer, arguing that the former's notions of *homo duplex* are
similar to the latter's postulation of the opposition between the will and idea "down to
the detail that 'the body' is the ultimate seat of the will" (Mestrovic, 1993: 168). Here,
according to both Mestrovic and Touraine (1995), Schopenhauer's work was seminal
for Durkheim, particularly through his attitude towards religion. Indeed, they both
regarded religious beliefs as "empirical realities that reflect back to humans their
existential situation". This, in the context of Schopenhauer's pioneering work
regarding the spectrum of religious ideas as on a continuum according to how
optimistic or pessimistic they are (Mestrovic, 1993: 172), is summarised by Durkheim:

> The old formula *homo duplex* is...verified by the facts. Far from being simple, our
> inner life is like a double centre of gravity. On the one hand is our individuality -
> and more particularly, our *body* in which it is based. On the other is everything in
> us that expresses something other than ourselves (Durkheim, [1914] 1973: 152;
> cited in Mestrovic, 1993: 172; Mestrovic's emphasis).

This explanation of Durkheim's provides a great deal of resonance with his ideas
regarding the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, something which he
himself acknowledges later in the same work (Durkheim, [1914] 1973: 159) and from
which we can draw the conclusion that collective representations of the sacred and
the profane can be found in actuality (Mestrovic, 1993: 174). In addition to this,
however, it is important to stress that the two 'poles' are here regarded by Durkheim
as being in tension with each other (Touraine, 1995: 128), with - vitally - the lower
'amoral' pole being the stronger of the two (Mestrovic, 1993: 176). It is this attitude as
much as anything which underlines the pessimism which, for Mestrovic, sets such as
Durkheim and Schopenhauer apart from their forebears, and many of their
contemporaries.

As with Durkheim's theories on suicide, the postulation of the *homo duplex* is
indebted to the Enlightenment, and in particular Descartes's notions of duality of the
soul and the body. However, whereas Descartes and his successors discussed a
disengagement from external cosmic and moral forces towards a rational individuality;
many *fin de siècle* thinkers went against this trend considering that morality could not
be based on the mind or rationality, but on the other side of the will, that of
compassion (Mestrovic, 1993: 253). This position exemplifies the notion that the
homo duplex is in tension, between the profane will and the sacred idea. In particular

it makes sense of his work on suicide which can result from a disequilibrium of its two components (Hynes, 1975: 91; Mestrovic, 1993: 220). The *homo duplex* also helps me to focus on the relationship between egoism and anomie in Durkheim's work. I have discussed previously that these are essentially two sides of the same coin as regards causes of suicide, although it is clear that, by his very categorisation, Durkheim saw that they did warrant some distinction:

> Suicide of both types suffer from what has been called the disease of the infinite. But the disease does not assume the same form in both cases. In one, reflective intelligence is affected and immoderately overnourished [egoistic]; in the other, emotion is over-excited and freed from all restraint [anomic]. In one, thought, by dint of falling back upon itself, has no object left; in the other, passion, no longer recognising bounds, has no goal left. The former is lost in the infinity of dreams, the second in the infinity of desires (Durkheim, [1897] 1951: 287).

In the context of the *homo duplex*, therefore, egoistic and anomic suicides can be seen as distinctive with, as Hynes suggests, the former pertaining to the idea and the latter the will. This does not preclude my suggestion that they are two sides of the same coin since they both occur at the disjunction of the individual with society. Consequently, Durkheim's analysis highlights the tensions which occur within individuals which can be contextualised in the opposition between sacred and the profane. Furthermore, his assertion that Protestants were much more likely than Catholics to commit suicide as a result of an imbalance in this duality underlines the difficulties which individuality brings in becoming detached from the sacred. As Mestrovic points out, anomie is essential in modern societies because it questions tradition, and without this there would be no progress (Mestrovic, 1993: 244). If this is so, and egoism and anomie are mutually productive, then there is a good case for establishing that this is a dynamic through which modernity develops. Where that dynamic is imbalanced, as it seems to be in Protestantism, tragic results ensue. By seeing the lower 'pole' as dominant, Durkheim shows a certain pessimism towards modernity seeing the steady rise in the suicide rate as being proof that the more individuals move away from the sacred, the greater the disjunctures which will occur in society. This allows for the presence of a very complex series of relationships within modernity, allowing for the presence of the sacred in such relationships, and emphasising the central dynamic of the *homo duplex* through which modernity can operate.

From this it would seem that, far from existing as an extension of Enlightenment thinking, modernity is in fact operating as a complex hybrid of ideas which may become more apparent in a more detailed discussion of society itself. For this to be compelling, however, I think that a paradox which exists in Durkheim's analysis of elementary religious societies first needs to be resolved. This lies in the fact that the

sacred and the profane interact with each other, while at the same time being very distinct. Indeed, Durkheim frequently suggests that the sacred often attempts to move into the territory of the profane. In the basic forms of religion which he discusses, and sees as seminal in the development of more complex types, he suggests that anything can have sacredness (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 35), and that it is possible to pass from one state to the other (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 37). However, he also emphasises the gulf which exists between them because of the very prohibitions which separate the one from the other (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 322), resulting in a discontinuity between the two (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 303). This leads me to focus my ideas upon the nature of the transition between the two, and indeed to how this is possible. Durkheim stresses how highly contagious the sacred is, and how this means that the profane must be kept in isolation from it (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 322). Consequently, an analysis of the passage between the two is important if I am to express the importance of this duality, and of other dualities in this context. As Durkheim comments:

> [W]hen this passage occurs, the manner in which it occurs demonstrates the fundamental duality of the two realms, for it implied true metamorphosis (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 36-7).

This process has been discussed at length, notably by Arnold van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (1969, 1974). Of particular interest is Turner's analysis of liminality as the position, in the rite of passage, which is interstitial between the states before and after the rite. In this liminal position individuals can be seen as being in touch with the sacred, and outside of the mundane society to which they usually belong. According to Turner this is a dangerous stage principally because of the large numbers of ambiguities which exist there, a position which is between categories of ordinary social life:

> Liminality is usually a sacred condition protected against secularity by taboos and in turn prevented by them from disrupting secular order, since liminality is a movement between fixed points and essentially ambiguous, unsettled, and unsettling (Turner, 1974: 273-4).

This, for Turner, can be seen in conjunction with 'communitas' which characterises the relationships between those who are jointly experiencing the rite in a spontaneous, immediate, and concrete way (Turner, 1974: 274). Together these form what he terms 'anti-structure' which is a positive, generative centre of the ritual, and which is in tension with the structure of society, although as he argues:

> Communitas does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms, though this is necessarily a transient condition if society is to continue to operate in an orderly fashion (Turner, 1974: 274).

Turner's ideas of liminality and communitas show a number of parallels with Durkheim's notion of collective effervescence, in that both are regarded as transient conditions in which there is a freedom from general norms (Pickering, 1984: 416-7). Although important, Durkheim's ideas regarding collective effervescence[16] have, in comparison with other aspects of his work, been ignored. According to Pickering the theory came about as, in suggesting that a mutual dynamic between society and religion can cause change, Durkheim saw the danger of creating a circular argument. In order to explain how change can occur he sought to introduce an additional force which is not identified with either social structure or religion (Pickering, 1984: 380-1). At the basis of his theory lay his perception that the religious comes from, and is allied with, intense collective activity which 'transports' individuals to states which they consider to be outside their own mundane milieu (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 220). Durkheim saw collective effervescence as being an intensely creative activity where new religious and social forms may be either instigated or reinvigorated. He cites the French Revolution as a good example of society making its own gods by drawing things which were wholly secular, temporarily at least, into the sacred realm where:

> A religion tended to establish itself spontaneously, with its own dogma, symbols, altars, and feast days. It was these spontaneous hopes that the Cult of Reason and the Supreme Being tried to give a kind of authoritative fulfilment (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 216)

Of particular interest here is Durkheim's use of the word 'cult'. This is important for Mestrovic as he feels that Durkheim's use of this term helps place him within anti-Enlightenment thought, carrying as it does, overtones of religion, sacredness, metaphysics, and feelings (Mestrovic, 1991: 43). This emphasises his position as a Romantic whose writings were in keeping with the *fin de siècle* milieu in which he lived (Mestrovic, 1991: 44).

Durkheim considered that a society which lacks effervescence is an anomic society, something which suggests a certain correlation between anomie and the sacred. Although I do not suggest that the sacred and anomie are inversely proportionate to each other, Durkheim does put forward a case which suggests that there is certainly an inverse linkage between collective activity and anomie. Indeed, although his study of suicide probably pre-dates his ideas about effervescence, it can be seen as a factor in his notions that individuals are more susceptible to suicide the less they are involved in shared religious activity. This strengthens the linkage which I am seeking

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[16] Pickering (1984: 385) prefers the term effervescent assembly as for Durkheim it is as a result of a deliberate coming together of people which produces the effects with which he is concerned. I shall continue to use the term collective effervescence while at the same time acknowledging Pickering's important proviso.

to achieve between the sacred and collective activity. As Mellor and Shilling suggest, the baroque modern body, itself associated with Durkheimian emphases on the non-rational in *fin de siècle* society, exhibits many of the features which can be associated with collective effervescence.

The Postmodern as Complex Hybrid.

From the above analysis it is clear that religious elements are central to the development of modernity, despite its apparently rational and secular character. This creates a duality within modernity which displays a certain ambivalence towards religion, which, in turn, masks modernity's inherently ambivalent character which is itself rooted in religion. The division which emerges from an analysis of this ambivalence reveals a series of tensions within modernity, reflected by the dichotomies found within the concept of the *homo duplex* (Schopenhauer, [1818] 1969; Durkheim, [1914] 1973; Mestrovic, 1993; Touraine, 1995) and between the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, [1912] 1995). These are mirrored in contemporary Western society in the tensions found between the social and sociality (Maffesoli, 1996), the heterotopia and the utopia (Foucault, 1986; Soja, 1995), tensions which I believe can be further seen in the context of the dichotomy between conventional and ultimate truth found in Theravāda and much of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Such tensions, I shall argue, provide a basis for an examination of the postmodern, where diachronic developments have come together to act in a groundless, synchronic manner in which fragments of tradition, including religious tradition, have merged with a plethora of other cultural phenomena to create a series of complex and ephemeral hybrids.

In chapter one I shall examine the role of religion in contemporary Western society, concentrating on the relationship between Buddhism and modernity. In examining the nature of reality and identity in both, I shall seek to establish a number of affinities between the two. Judging these in terms of the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, I argue that postmodernity contains attributes which can be seen as religious, leading me to question whether it can itself be regarded as a religious phenomenon. Examining this through an analysis of the role of tradition in modernity and postmodernity, and picking up on the dual nature of modernity's development, I shall suggest that it may be possible to see the sacred and profane strands of modernity coming together to form postmodernity.

Continuing this analysis of hybridity in chapter two, I shall concentrate on the development of Buddhist modernism in South East Asia. I suggest that the emergence of new types of colonial and post-colonial religious groups represents an analogous version of what is currently occurring in the West. Here the interaction of Buddhism with principally Protestant Western religious ideas has formed cultural

hybrids within society which, while still being ostensibly religious, exhibit facets which can best be described as modern. This occurs at the meeting point of cultural phenomenon, in an interstitial space between the two, something which will form the basis for a spatial metaphor which I shall develop in subsequent chapters. Having established the nature of this cultural hybridity, I shall examine the dichotomy that exists between this and the cultic religions of the region, which are also Buddhist in nature. I argue, that these developments are important for a number of reasons. First, that they occur within the context of religious, and particularly Buddhist, phenomena. Second, that they offer a parallel with more complex integrations in the West - where such spaces may be constructed from exposure to a much greater variety of cultural phenomena compared with colonial and immediately post-colonial South East Asia - providing a useful lead into discussions regarding the nature of the sacred and the profane in such societies, and providing a sound basis from which to re-establish a role for religion as an institution, and the presence of religious thought into contemporary Western society.

In chapter three I concentrate more on individual identity, establishing the nature of the postmodern self, and its role in society. In particular, I shall seek to establish that the presence of non-rational and religious phenomena are fundamental to the establishment of this culturally hybrid identity. By initially drawing on the developments in modernity which I outlined in chapter one, I suggest that there is an alternative way which such developments can be viewed. I shall do this by developing the 'spatial' metaphor which I established in the chapter two. Then, using the work of Baudelaire as an example, I shall examine how modern individuals have historically reacted to their surroundings, particularly in the metropolis, suggesting that they exhibit characteristics which can be associated with both aspects of modernity.

In chapter four I shall continue my discussion of hybridity, establishing the nature of postmodern space. Drawing, in particular, on Michel Foucault's discussion of heterotopias and utopias, I shall seek to establish the role that the sacred and the profane play in such a complex scenario. Furthermore, by equating liminality and communitas with Foucault's ideas, I can begin to explain how postmodern space is constructed, suggesting that the respective dichotomies of the heterotopia and the utopia, and the profane and the sacred, can be seen in terms of reality and hyperreality; and latterly in terms of Buddhist conventional and ultimate truth. I shall pay particular attention to the ephemeral nature of such spaces, seeking to equate Buddhist conventions of dependent co-origination and emptiness with Derrida's discussions of groundless language. This will provide me with a highly complex interstitial space which is able to accommodate a considerable variety of intellectual phenomena which may then be applied in the context of society and culture.

In chapter five I shall examine the corporate nature of complex hybrid religious spaces, looking especially at how certain Buddhist groups have established such spaces for themselves in the West, particularly through their involvement in environmental issues. Discussing them with reference to recent research into the nature of collectivity in postmodern society, and especially that of neo-tribalism as discussed by Maffesoli (1996), and Bauman (1993a, 1993b, 1995), I shall suggest ways in which such groups may be regarded in the context of a de-universalised order. Furthermore, by discussing them in relation to Victor Turner's (1969, 1974) notions of communitas, and Durkheim's ([1912] 1995) ideas of collective effervescence, I suggest how these collectivities may be seen in the wider context of the sacred and the profane.

In the final chapter I shall concentrate on the role of the postmodern individual. Giving the body a central role in this assessment, I shall draw on the developments of the self and individuality which I have seen as being essential to the evolution of modernity (or modernities), discussing possible further re-formations of the body which may better accommodate the highly complex hybrid nature of the postmodern. Through an analysis of the nature of the body in relation to new technologies such as cyberspace, the internet and virtual reality, I discuss the extent to which the individual or the self is fully projected into these milieux. Examining this in terms of the sacred and the profane, I shall ask whether these can be seen as liminal spaces for the postmodern self. This will allow me to discuss the very nature of the postmodern self in terms of the central themes of the thesis, as well as allowing me to argue for the religious nature of these states, offering Buddhist notions of the self as a comparison. This, I suggest, will bring together the great variety of phenomena which I have been discussing in this thesis, as well as allowing me to provide a firm foundation on which future discussions of religion and the self may be based.

CHAPTER ONE.
BUDDHIST TRADITION IN A DE-UNIVERSALISED SOCIETY.

> The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options (Giddens, 1991: 5).

In this passage Anthony Giddens encapsulates much of what I regard as being central to this thesis. His attention to the interplay between the local and the global, the expansion of lifestyle choices, and the necessity of incessant negotiation that modern life offers is, I suggest, a fruitful way into an exploration of certain features inherent in contemporary British life. It is in this context that I wish to examine the growth and role of Buddhist religious forms, providing a new insight into certain features of Western Buddhism.

As a background to this I shall initially examine the nature of early encounters between Buddhism and the West, suggesting that these are useful inasmuch as they provide examples of the nature of modern society and culture during the previous *fin de siècle*, thereby establishing an earlier role for Buddhism, and the spiritual more generally, in modernity. I suggest that these encounters provide further examples of modernity's ambivalent, 'Janus-faced' nature; additionally providing a historical provenance with which to study Buddhism in contemporary milieux.

Examining affinities between certain Buddhist notions of identity and tradition and those found in the West, I shall seek to provide a basis from which to assess potential roles for religion in the contemporary society and thought. From this I argue that it is possible to propose the development of a 'de-universalised' society which can accommodate notions of tradition and the non-rational in identities and societies which have generally been regarded as being fragmented, rational and synchronic.

The Emergence of Buddhism in the West.

European scholars had been aware of diverse forms of Eastern religious practice before the colonial expansion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, that it became a serious matter for study. Missionaries, in particular, uncovered a great deal of textual data which they sent back to Europe, where it was gradually translated and analysed. At the same time, these missionaries also sent back reports of their own activities and experiences. These were devoured by the literate classes who were impressed by what they saw as the heroic adventures of those who were bringing Christianity to the 'heathen' (Warren, 1965: 37), while at the same time being fascinated by the exoticism of these strange beliefs. Amongst these, Buddhism came to hold a special interest, though the

conditions surrounding its 'discovery' meant that its character was, to some extent, 'constructed' by intellectuals in the West:

> Originally existing 'out there' in the Oriental present, Buddhism became an object
> the primary location of which was the West, through the progressive collection,
> translation, and publication of its textual past (Almond, 1987a: 79-80).

Scholarship had advanced far enough, however, to discern the fundamentals of its philosophy. Indeed, according to Brear, by the end of the nineteenth century most students of Buddhism had agreed on at least four basic points of doctrine: cosmological speculation, dependent co-origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda/praṫītyasamutpāda*), no-self (*anatta/anātman*), and *karma* and transmigration (Brear, 1975: 145). While this understanding was often used to fuel criticism, especially in comparison with the theism of Christianity, there was positive appreciation of the nature of Buddhist ethics as well:

> Even critics who were scornful of its metaphysics or of its 'idolatry' admitted both
> the centrality and general validity of its moral system (Brear, 1975: 143).

Buddhism appealed to the literate classes of Britain who seemed to be attracted by the romanticism and exoticism of the Orient, but tended to remain subject to the values of Protestant Christianity. Consequently, it was a religion whose ethics were regarded as second only to those of Christianity (Almond, 1987a: 84) with the person of the Buddha being accorded a similarly elevated position:

> With the sole exception of Christ, there does not exist among all the founders of
> religion a purer and more touching figure than that of the Buddha (St. Hilaire,
> 1862: 12; cited in Almond, 1987b: 382).

From this it would seem that the development of attitudes towards Buddhism during the nineteenth century can be seen in terms of two interlocking strands: scholarly - and largely textual - investigations, together with Buddhism's popular appeal to a limited but important, literate, section of society. This, to some extent, was exemplified by Edwin Arnold's long poem *The Light of Asia*, published in 1879. Here Arnold highlighted the romantic ideas which many Victorians had for Buddhism and of which one commentator, George Cobbold, suggested in 1894 that:

> ...probably more than any other work of the day [it] has been a means of drawing
> the attention of English-speaking people to Buddhism...(cited in Almond, 1988: 2).

As can seen from the following extract, while romantic in its style there is also an inherent scholarly knowledge within the text:

The Dew is on the Lotus! Rise, Great Sun!
And lift my leaf and mix it with the wave.
Om mani padme hum, the Sunrise comes!
The Dewdrop slips into the shining sea!
(Cited in Almond, 1988: 1)

The nineteenth century marked an early and formative encounter with Buddhism, as a period during which Buddhist texts were first translated, systematised, and interpreted; and where Buddhist ideas were considered and approved of by a sizeable number of other people. This may be seen as the first step of a Buddhist assimilation into the West, a process which has become more marked as the affinity between Buddhist and Western ideas became further apparent.

Theosophy and Modernism.

According to a number of scholars, the affinities which were apparent between Buddhist and Western thought during the nineteenth century are not too far from those which are present today. Of particular note are the connections between Protestantism and Buddhism which occur as a complex series of interactions which make it difficult to isolate any single causal affinity (Obeyesekere, 1970; Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988; Mellor, 1991a; Schopen, 1991).

While Buddhism was treated as something of a special case amongst non-Christian religions in Victorian Britain, there were very few people who found its philosophy convincing enough to accept it for their own lives. Nevertheless, by the end of the nineteenth century the foundations for a commitment to Buddhism were laid. These were realised in 1907 through the formation of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland. The availability of newly translated texts, written by scholars who were generally sympathetic to Buddhism added to the romantic and exotic attitudes already in place. In Britain these were led by T.W. Rhys Davids whose ideas seem broadly to agree with other Victorian sympathisers:

> Buddhist or not Buddhist, I have examined every one of the religious systems of the world, and in none of them have I found anything to surpass in beauty and comprehensiveness, the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha. I am content to shape my life according to that path (Cited in Oliver, 1979: 34).

While the presence and commitment of intellectuals to Buddhism did provide a certain amount of scholarly leadership to potential Western Buddhists, they lacked real spiritual authority. This was addressed, to a certain extent, by the Theosophical Society, founded by Madame H.P. Blavatsky in the U.S.A. in 1875. Blavatsky had travelled widely in Asia where she learned a great deal about Eastern spirituality. Of particular importance were a number of Tibetan teachers - her 'Masters' - who

instructed her to establish the Society in the first place, and with whom she claimed to be in some form of psychic communication for the rest of her life.

The foundation of the Theosophical Society coincided with an increased interest in Spiritualism amongst literate American society. In philosophical terms Blavatsky may have presented nothing new in her writings, but she did capture a certain *zeitgeist* through the establishment of what became known as 'Esoteric Buddhism'. As the following quotation shows, however, while there is a great deal of Eastern philosophy contained within the central tenets of Blavatsky's thinking, they could not be described as fully Buddhist in nature:

> 1. There is an omnipresent, eternal, boundless, and immutable Reality, of which spirit and matter are complementary aspects.
> 2. There is a universal law of periodicity, or evolution through cyclical change.
> 3. That all souls are identified with the Universal Oversoul, which is itself an aspect of the unknown reality (Cited in Sellon, 1987: 245-6).

While Theosophy was not purely Buddhist, it was important for the development of Buddhism in Britain, offering accessibility to the practice Eastern spiritual techniques. Theosophists were also very much part of the initial formation of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, although they also contributed significantly to its disbanding in 1924, partly as a result of their 'non-Buddhist' views.

It seems that even at this very early stage of Buddhism's development in Britain, there was a unique relationship developing between it and Western society. This, in some ways, is paradigmatic of the way in which Westerners began to look beyond the local and draw on 'alien' cultural influences. A good example of this is how modernist art, from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, began to draw on Eastern philosophy, and particularly Theosophical ideas.[1] Interest in Eastern spirituality, together with the rise of scientific theories such as Darwinism, meant that Christianity was becoming less universal in its appeal. It appears, though, that far from reflecting the new scientific age of the machine, as had been thought previously, many modernist artists were attempting to represent the non-rational in their work, a trend which has continued throughout the twentieth century.

Concentrating on the pioneers of abstract art, it seems clear that many modernist painters did have a non-rational agenda. These were important and influential artists such as Pablo Picasso,[2] Hilma Klint, Paul Klee and Kazimir Malevich in Europe; Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove and, later, Marsden Hartley in America (Tamney,

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[1] These were highlighted in a Channel 4 series, *Hidden Hands: A Different History of Modernism* - the initial programme 'Is Anybody There', first broadcast 22/10/95, concentrating on the role of the spiritual.
[2] Typically, although Picasso was an atheist it seems that he spent much time reading tarot cards and smoking opium - that is indulging in the 'mode' of the spiritual (Saunders, 1995: 6).

1992: 23-4; Saunders, 1995: 6)[3]. In the name of brevity, however, I shall concentrate on arguably two of the best examples of this trend, the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian and the Russian Wassily Kandinsky, both of whom were deeply involved in Theosophy during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The development of Mondrian's work is a particularly good example of the affinity which could be achieved between Eastern philosophy and modernism. Mondrian saw his work as a means for transition to the spiritual realm allowing viewers, through the concentration and contemplation of its meaning, to seek the true nature of the universe - a sort of 'spiritual clarification'. This, for Mondrian, could not be achieved by traditional means, as his fellow artist Constantin Brancusi suggests:

> What is real is not the external form, but the essence of things...It is impossible for anyone to express anything essentially real by imitating its exterior surface (Cited in Saunders, 1995: 7).

This, according to Saunders, was the key to both abstraction and Theosophy, both seeking a universal essence, and a universal grammar with which to communicate it (Saunders, 1995: 7). For Mondrian this commonality could be found in geometricism. Inspired by the writings of Blavatsky, who considered geometric design to be evidence of God's presence in the world (Ringbom, 1986: 147), Mondrian began to develop a clear vision of the nature of the spiritual. Early work such as his *Woods near Oele* (1908) show a geometry which emphasises a distinct opposition between the (male) ascending lines of the trees and the horizontal (female) ground, through which a "spirit-matter polarity may be assumed" (Welsh, 1986: 83). Gradually his work became more geometrised and abstract, the triptych *Evolution* (1910-11) being a particularly important example of this development. It consisted of three female figures whose features were geometrised, and was, according to Carel Blotkamp:

> Mondrian's clearest confession of his Theosophical conviction and as such quite exceptional in his entire oeuvre because of its unnatural character and overt symbolism (Blotkamp, 1986: 100).

It seems clear that Mondrian was influenced by Cubism during this period, although his adherence to Theosophy meant that his subjects, trees and female figures, were much different to those of his Parisian counterparts (Blotkamp, 1986: 102). As his work became more abstract, he believed that the geometric representations which he painted were of great cosmological significance. Through this, suggests Blotkamp:

> Mondrian transposed the concept of evolution from natural to cultural life, a vision which would play an essential role in his Neoplasticism (Blotkamp, 1986: 102).

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[3] This was not limited to artists as Arnold Schoenberg, Boris Pasternak, Walter Gropius and T.S. Eliot, to name but a few, also showed an interest in various expressions of non-rationality.

This theory of evolution paralleled that of Theosophy, and particularly in Blavatsky's central tenets that matter and spirit are complementary - where spirit is an evolution of matter. Paintings such as *Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue* underlines this well, consisting of geometric grid designs which use only black, white and the primary colours, in order to lay bare "the immutable gridwork behind the outer shells of visible reality" (Ringbom, 1986: 146). Through this Mondrian sought to emphasise a simplification of form which highlights the abstract nature in which a 'true' or 'higher' reality can be depicted in relation to the mundane world. One could even suggest that Mondrian's grids may be regarded as simplified mandalas - for both are seen to represent the structural principles of the cosmos.

Like Mondrian, Kandinsky also saw art as a means by which to change the world. They both believed that their art could help people encounter higher realms of consciousness, providing them with a greater sense of morality and ethics. There were, however, also important differences in their respective approaches. Mondrian, for instance, did not see the relevance of individual spiritual exercise:

> There are two paths leading to the Spiritual, the path of learning, of direct exercises...and the slow path of evolution. The latter manifests itself in art...[Whereas] [t]he conscious path of learning usually leads to the corruption of art (Welsh & Joosten, 1969: 33-5; cited in Ringbom, 1986: 137).

Kandinsky, on the other hand, did, regarding "the artist's drive to express and create as a fundamentally spiritual activity" (Holtzman, 1994: 69). It is his immersion in spiritual texts by such as Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner provide the basis for his abstractionism (Tuchman, 1986: 35), a process which seems to have begun with his publishing of *On the Spiritual in Art (Über Das Geistage in der Kunst)* in 1912. This, according to Long, is what first established the equation of abstraction, Expressionism, and mysticism for both the public and critics alike (Long, 1986: 202), to the extent that Kandinsky believed himself to be standing at the turning point of two great epochs. This was expressed in the extremely influential *Der Blauer Reiter Almanac* (the journal of the Munich based group of the same name, co-founded by Kandinsky and Franz Marc) also in 1912. In it he suggests that there is an artistic revolution taking place which will result in the formation of a 'new religion' (Holtzman, 1994: 69-70), the two epochs being represented by:

> 1. Disintegration of the soulless, materialistic life of the nineteenth century...
> 2. Construction of the spiritual and intellectual life of the twentieth century that we experience and that is already manifested and embodied in strong, expressive, and distinct forms (Kandinsky, 1912: 186-7, cited in Holtzman, 1994: 70).

For Kandinsky these two processes are the two aspects of the 'modern movement', an example of his utopianism which would, as with Mondrian, see the eclipsing of

matter by spirit in a Theosophically inspired evolution. In terms of his painting, Kandinsky considered that abstractionism had less in common with the material world. Central to his philosophy was 'synesthesia', which can be described as the tendency, for instance, to hear colours and see sounds (Ringbom, 1986: 132). This is closely related to structuralist developments of language which attempt to understand a web of relationships of sounds, colours and numbers which rely on the mind's ability to perceive something in order to differentiate it from what it is not (Holtzman, 1994: 52).

For Holtzman this is similar to what the second century C.E. Buddhist philosopher, Nāgārjuna suggested as "the web of relationships that are at the center of discursive thought", although for Nāgārjuna the ultimate aim was to transcend these (Holtzman, 1994: 52). This was not the case for Kandinsky, although he did appropriate a synesthesia of colour and sound in a spiritual sense:

> Colour is a power which directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes the hammer, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul (Kandinsky, 1977: 9; cited in Holtzman, 1994: 75).

It seems likely that for Kandinsky this idea of vibration arose from a Theosophical theory of aesthetics which sees the artist's task to communicate his/her thought vibrations to the viewer through the medium of the art (Ringbom, 1986: 137).

Despite their differences in terms of method, Mondrian and Kandinsky would have largely agreed on the role of their work in making the viewer more aware of the parallel nature of matter and spirit. Their abstract work demonstrated a Theosophical utopia through which the true nature of the cosmos was variously represented geometrically and through a complex web of 'synesthesic' representations in which colour, form and vibration were used to contact the soul directly.[4]

From this evidence it seems that the tentative arrival of Buddhism *coincided* with developments in modernity rather than being contradictory to them. Far from heralding an era of rationalism, many artists who were at the forefront of modernity's development were heavily influenced by non-rational ideas. In particular, they sought to establish a connection between their work and the fundamental nature of the universe, seeing the former as representing the latter in microcosm. This was a form of speculation which possesses a certain similarity with some Eastern philosophies, most notably Buddhism. Indeed, as with Buddhism, there is a sense - in the work of both Mondrian and Kandinsky - of a dual level of truth operating, their paintings being windows from the conventional to the ultimate, providing the viewer with the insight

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[4] The advent of the First World War shattered such utopian dreams, as a number of artists, including Kandinsky's *Der Blaue Reiter* collaborator Franz Marc, were killed in the trenches.

and awareness necessary to evolve spiritually, which they saw as being the next stage of humanity's development.

In contextualising the origins of Western Buddhism in this way, it is possible to regard its presence as a reflection of an ambivalent modernity, as well as contributing towards processes which are able to place tradition, including religious tradition, within the contemporary milieu. In the remainder of this chapter I shall examine how an analysis of different levels of reality such as those discussed above can be used to express certain affinities which exist between Buddhist philosophy and social theory. Concentrating on identity and tradition, I shall suggest that there are a number of similarities between them which can form a basis for understanding the nature of religion in contemporary Western society.

Diachronic Identities and Diachronic Traditions.

In his article 'Buddhism in Recent British Philosophy and Theology', Steven Collins sets out the diachronic nature of identity in Buddhism:

> One (conventional) person can only inherit the karmic results of action performed by a single series of predecessors. Equally, if anyone achieves the rare but possible 'supernormal knowledge' which consists in remembering past lives there can, again *objectively*, be only a single series which he can remember. But such an objective diachronic series is not (ultimately) a personal fact (Collins, 1985: 480).[5]

By concentrating on a single diachronic series of lives, Collins is drawing attention to the nature of individuality in Buddhism. This can be seen in the context of Buddhist religious practice where individuals undergo a process of self-discovery in their own particular 'lifetime' in order to construct their own individuality. This is as it appears to them in their unenlightened state, and is usually referred to as *attabhāva* which literally means 'self-state' (Collins, 1982: 74), a series of these being referred to as a series of *attabhāva*. These are the two forms of individuality that can be found in Buddhism: first at the stage of *parinirvāṇa* where the 'individual' is able to peruse his or her diachronic series of rebirths, both past and future; and second where individuals are in an unenlightened state and cognition is limited to their current *attabhāva*. Collins does, however, seek to qualify ideas of individuals' perception of their previous rebirths:

> ...it is natural for the unenlightened to see the penumbra of self-interest as extending beyond this life into the future. Nevertheless, it is clear that the further one moves away from present conditions into other lives, which may be in a different sex, a different biological species...the emphatic imagination required to

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[5] Collins is taking for granted the Buddhist assertion that 'supernormal knowledge' is achievable. Indeed, it is not my intention to question any 'supernormal' or 'supernatural' claims made by Buddhists Rather, I wish to see how such claims affect their behaviour and attitudes.

regard these lives as one's own will increasingly - and soon - come to resemble the empathy needed to imagine oneself as someone else... (Collins, 1985: 481).

Collins suggests that such recollections are "best characterised not as ordinary memory, but as...'quasi-memory'." Furthermore, he asserts that even ordinary memories are in a subclass of these quasi-memories. Derek Parfitt explains the processes involved:

> (1) I seem to remember having an experience, (2) *someone* did have this experience and (3) my apparent memory is causally dependent, in the right kind of way, on my past experience. On this definition, ordinary memories are a subclass of quasi-memories. They are quasi-memories of our own past experiences (Parfit, 1984: 220).

What is being questioned here is the ability of individuals to recall their experiences with exactitude. This is difficult to judge for a number of reasons. First, their perception of the world is not a uniform one over time. As a result their memories of the past will pass through a filter of this changing perception. Second, if this is so for individuals, then it will be more so for the other as an additional filter of personal perception will also be employed. Third, a similar significant shift of perception may occur where the perception of individuals is radically altered; that is, if their lives undergo radical change, so that their previous personas are practically an-other.

Whereas Collins talks of a series of diachronic rebirths, I wish to show that life in contemporary Western society can be seen as a series of diachronic roles, brought about by a series of lifestyle choices made through a process of reflexivity, as Kellner suggests:

> Identity today thus becomes a freely chosen game, a theatrical presentation of the self, in which one is able to present oneself in a variety of roles, images, and activities, relatively unconcerned about shifts, transformations, and dramatic changes (Kellner, 1992: 158).

These can be seen on two levels. First are those choices which are made at times that Giddens refers to as 'fateful moments'. These are "points at which, no matter how reflexive an individual may be in the shaping of her self-identity, she has to sit up and take notice of the new demands as well as new possibilities" (Giddens, 1991: 142-3). Such moments are not fully in the control of individuals and have profound repercussions for their futures:

> Fateful moments are transition points which have major implications not just for the circumstances of an individual's future conduct, but for self identity (Giddens, 1991: 143).

I suggest that it possible to relate such momentous changes in attitude to the idea of rebirth where individuals move from one *attabhāva* to another. As Giddens says, a

profound change occurs in the self-perception of individuals which results in them adopting a significantly different role in society. Here the shift would be so great as to render many of their previous attitudes redundant. A form of quasi-memory can be employed, however, whereby individuals can no longer directly relate to their previous personas; but, as in Parfit's schema, are able to acknowledge its occurrence to an extent greater than any other individual could. It is in this sense that I would argue, that individuals can be seen to live out a diachronic series of lifestyles formed initially by a succession of fateful moments which alter their own self-perceptions, as well as their perceptions towards others in the world.

Such fateful moments are irregular and will often come unexpectedly, but are not solely responsible for the changes which occur in the diachronic development of self-identity. There is also a less distinct level where more subtle changes occur. These can be regarded as a continuous process of self-conscious checks and balances which can be seen as reflexive responses to the wider milieu where, as Giddens argues:

> ...the discovery of oneself becomes a project directly involved with the reflexivity
> of modernity (Giddens, 1990: 122).

This relates to Collins's suggestion that Buddhist practitioners are engaged in a process where they are discovering more and more about their 'self-state' (attabhava). As a result it is possible to place the development of individuals into a diachronic series of rebirths; where a rebirth counts as a fateful moment which radically changes their lives and perceptions, so comparing the process of reflexivity in modernity **between** fateful moments to that of a single life in such a series.

In doing this I am seeking to establish a relationship between the philosophical notions which Collins draws out of Buddhism with some of Giddens's sociological ideas concerning contemporary society. Using Parfit's conception of quasi-memory I am developing a linkage which is dependent on the actual cognition of individuals; that is the extent to which they are aware of their current and previous lives. This is not unproblematic, however, as the question of enlightenment arises, that is the extent to which a fateful moment can be related to an enlightened experience.

Again it is ultimately the actual level of cognition which I wish to consider. As each fateful moment occurs, so the perception of the individual will change. I would argue that while such dramatic changes cannot be wholly related to rebirth, the actual **perception** of the individual is similarly incomplete. In other words, the unenlightened person does not possess the 'supernatural' knowledge required to transcend the temporal barriers between rebirths. Here I would see experience as acting as a form of enlightenment whereby individuals undergo relatively dramatic changes in their situations; to the extent that, over time, they are no longer able to fully relate to their

previous 'personas'. According to Buddhist philosophy such changes are not only thought to take place between lifetimes, but constantly:

> The soul, the individual, is no more than a complex of momentary entities; and these are the only reality (Zimmer, 1951: 514).

This seems to discount any talk of diachronic series, although provisional Buddhist teaching does acknowledge a subtle form of rebirth:

> Every phenomenal being is to be regarded as...a flux of particles that are themselves ephemeral. Throughout the transformations of birth, growth, old age, death, and the endless chain of rebirths, the so-called individual is no more than the vortex of...a causal sequence - never quite what it was a moment ago or what it is just about to be, and yet not different either (Zimmer, 1951: 513).

Here Zimmer points to a situation where any perception is seen as being neither-real-nor-not-real. This is very subtle and subsequently problematic when attempting to discuss the cognition of individuals. In terms of this research, however, I would stress that it is the actual self-cognition of the 'individual' that is important. What unenlightened individuals perceive as reality is what maps out their actions. Such an analysis of Buddhist 'reality' gives a further indication of how quasi-memory can operate both at the level of a single rebirth and a diachronic series.

There are also aspects of contemporary society which seem to problematise the nature of reality. According to Featherstone, this had its beginnings in "the new experiences of *modernité* in the big cities of the mid to late-nineteenth century", as discussed by Baudelaire, Benjamin and Simmel (Featherstone, 1991: 72). Here "the new department stores and arcades were temples in which goods were worshipped as fetishes" (Featherstone, 1991: 73). This marked the beginning of a definite move from an emphasis on production to one of consumption, a major catalyst for this being the mass-media:

> This leads to a breakdown of the relationship between signifiers and the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents... (Featherstone, 1991: 99)

This seems to coincide with Buddhist notions of reality. Where the enlightened 'Buddhist' would perceive reality as a series of perpetual presents; so, through experience, can the individual in contemporary society also realise its nature. Both cases being dependent on the degree with which the individual perceives this dichotomy of reality and illusion. This is discussed by Baudrillard who considers that "we live everywhere already in an 'aesthetic' hallucination of reality" (Baudrillard, 1983: 148) which he terms 'hyperreality':

...'hyperreality', a world in which the piling up of signs, images and simulations through consumerism and television results in a destabilized, aestheticized hallucination of reality (Featherstone, 1991: 99).

As with Buddhist philosophy, the idea of hyperreality cannot be conceived by individuals who live their lives in the everyday world of 'common' perception. If this is the case it may only be possible to conceive of a world of hyperreality for an individual who is constantly and exclusively subjected to mass media imagery. Similarly someone who constantly and exclusively meditates may also realise the true 'Buddhist' nature of reality. Contextualising these in terms of the relationship between time and social interaction I shall be able to provide a common basis with which to look at diachronic ideas in both contemporary Western society and Buddhist thought, as well as underlining the importance of tradition in such a comparison.

Giddens suggests that "we may identify three interlacing forms of temporality that enter all moments of social life" (Giddens, 1987: 144) which he calls *durées*. The first is that of "day-to-day life, expressed in reversible terms" (Giddens, 1987: 144-5) which he sees as the ordering of social activities through their daily repetition. This can be seen constantly to intersect the second *durée* which represents the life span of the individual, in Buddhist terms an *attabhāva*. Giddens sees this as irreversible and "might indeed be the chief basis of our sense that time, sequence and direction are inherently connected" (Giddens, 1987: 145). These two in turn both intersect the *durée* of the institution:

All societies worthy of the name endure beyond the lives of those individuals whose activities constitute them at any given moment (Giddens, 1987: 145).

For Giddens this complex series of interactions "are no more than analytically separable from one another" (Giddens, 1987: 145). By seeing these *durées* as part of a series in which such interactions take place it is possible to discuss them in terms of tradition, since the deconstruction of time into such units allows for the study of synchronic interaction within a diachronic framework. In terms of Buddhism, Collins suggests:

The idea that self and other have the same epistemological and soteriological status can be seen in a large number of different contexts in Buddhist thought (Collins, 1982: 190).

The presence of the 'other' shows that synchronic interaction by a number of individuals, represented as diachronic series, is prevalent in Buddhism. By coming together at different times, they form a single diachronic tradition which is explained by Shils as follows:

> At any moment, an individual human being is given, not only to others but to himself as well. His character...has already been formed, his beliefs...his mental and physical capacities have been formed. His characteristics, beliefs, and capacities might be unsteady and they might undergo changes subsequently; they might furthermore be only dimly or erroneously perceived by the individual himself and by others (Shils, 1981: 11).

Shils discusses how the past has a bearing on the attitude of individuals in the present, but suggests that their actual cognition of the past may not be fully correct. A form of quasi-memory is thus employed. But if this is so by individuals, then how much more so will it be by an-other? Although the level of quasi-memory may be significant it does not lessen the importance of synchronic interaction between individuals, especially those who have a shared or similar past, something which is vital in the evolution of tradition.

One must also look at a diachronic series of generations Indeed, this is where synchronic interaction is important. While it is possible to talk of a diachronic series of rebirths, to the unenlightened there is only this *attabhāva*. Consequently, a similar view should be taken of generational evolution as enlightened individuals would of their previous rebirths. Where successive lives in a diachronic series of rebirths cannot be wholly empathic with each other due to their different milieux; so it is the same for successive generations within a tradition (Shils, 1981: 13). In terms of the transition and translation of such as Buddhism into the West, this is extremely important as the continuation of such diachronic tradition is central to the success of such a process:

> The implantation of a religious tradition involves not merely a set of theological beliefs being handed down from one generation, from one territory, to other generations in other territories but also to the implantation in a different territory of an image of the past which had been formed by those whose biological ancestors had lived in it and to whom it was endogenous (Shils, 1981: 100).

For tradition to exist there must be some form of diachronic connection, although at the same time there must be a synchronic sharing of experience between individuals. This occurs as a result of remembering and re-enacting the rituals which are perceived to form part of the tradition:

> Memory is more than the act of recollection by recollecting persons. *Memory leaves an objective deposit on tradition.* The past does not have to be remembered by all those who re-enact it; the deposit is carried forward by a continuing chain of transmissions and receptions. *But to become a tradition and remain a tradition, a pattern of assertion or action must have entered into the memory* (Shils, 1981: 167; my emphasis).

These comments bring together much of my discussion on individuality and place it in the context of tradition, and particularly the role of memory in the formation and continuation of tradition. The nature of quasi-memory is an important consideration

here. This suggests that 'transmissions and receptions' will not be accurate. However, they may well be perceived to be accurate. Individuals are relying on their own perceptions of their pasts, which may well have been unconsciously altered by the quasi nature of their memories. Furthermore, they may have also affected the nature of their own milieux; hence Shils's concerns regarding the transplantation of traditions into different societies.

Such transitions must continue to be seen in a diachronic sense. While a tradition may alter as it translates into another society, it does nevertheless possess certain aspects which signify its continuance. Such signifiers can be seen as the signs and symbols which are evident in, and an integral part of, the tradition in the society of which it was endogenous. These will be filtered as they are received into the 'host' society. However, because of the differentiated nature of Western society, such filtering will not be uniform. Furthermore, if, as I shall discuss in the next section, society is held to be as fragmented as it is claimed, this poses serious problems for the assessment of its acceptance into that society.

Religion In Contemporary Society.

Having looked at the relationship between diachronic identities and diachronic traditions, setting them in their philosophical and sociological contexts I shall now discuss them in relation to contemporary society. Considering the nature of tradition in such a society, with particular regard to its relationship with culture, I shall discuss the role of religion, concentrating initially on the notion of self-consciousness. As Kellner comments:

> [I]n modernity, self-consciousness comes into its own; one engages in reflection on available social roles and possibilities and gains a distance from tradition (Kellner, 1992: 141-2).

Although the Enlightenment proposed that the self could be seen "as something essential, substantial, unitary, fixed and fundamentally unchanging", there was a fundamental move away from such ideas. Hume, for instance, discussed the idea of a non-substantiality of the self; while Nietzsche and Heidegger saw the self as an existential project, a creation of the authentic individual (Kellner, 1992: 142). The project of modernity has gradually increased the self-awareness of the individual from Enlightenment thought, where individuality, although still viewed in relation to a relatively static and unreflexive society, was nevertheless being considered. This led to a more thorough examination of individuals in conjunction with a progressive shift towards a greater self-consciousness.

In the previous section I stressed the importance of the cognition of the individual in relation to both rebirth in Buddhism and the evolution of self-perception of the

individual in contemporary society. In both I suggested that there were two levels of change, both of which employed a degree of quasi-memory. Here self-consciousness may be seen as being integrally linked to the notion of quasi-memory, the latter being instrumental in shaping the cognition of the former. In a diachronic series, be it of rebirths or fateful moments, the level of self-consciousness of individuals is a significant factor in assessing reactions to their milieux. In examining a series of fateful moments in the life of individuals it is possible to establish a diachronic series of events which find fruition in their own current state of self-consciousness.

Tradition is central to any discussion of religion. However, Giddens's assertion that tradition is losing its hold does point to a diminished role for religion in contemporary society (Giddens, 1991: 5). I wish to argue that religion can still have a role in society, albeit an altered one. Central to this idea is this notion of lifestyle choices. In the past it has been argued that individuals "need overarching reality definitions to give meaning to life as a whole". (Berger, Berger & Kellner, 1973: 21). This stems from the aforementioned rise in self-awareness that modernity brought, allied with a perception of the centrality of religion. Thus, as Margolis argues, while in modernity there is a need for "the segregation of the claims of tradition and reason upon the allegiance of every cognitively informed endeavour and the preference of critical reason over tradition for legitimative purposes" (Margolis, 1989:18). Tradition did nevertheless have an important part to play in providing the 'overarching reality definitions'. But whereas in the past these were seen at a societal level, this in no longer the case. Awareness is no longer limited to the local. Technological advances have given people, especially in the West, a global perspective. This creates tension between the parochial and the cosmopolitan (Beckford, 1992b: 113), something which is evident in many cities where the old communities of 'locals', who generally represent the 'working class' element, often find it difficult to come to terms with - and are often resentful of - immigration and gentrification into areas which were previously their sole preserve. Such a process being amplified by the fact that there has been a societal shift in emphasis from production to consumption. This has further 'dispossessed' those whose position in society results in a lack of self-awareness of the possibilities which can arise from lifestyle choices, which they simply cannot afford. Consequently, the ensuing discussion of lifestyle choices does not apply to society as a whole. Indeed, it is the very nature of a society such as this that such decisions are not universally available.

Such a society has been described by a number of thinkers as postmodern (Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1994), something which has become a repository for a number of different ideas, not all of which are concomitant with each

other. As Philip Mellor has discussed, much of this has come about due to the confusions over its derivations:

> The meaning of 'postmodern' often remains obscure...I suggest that postmodernist discourse is characterized by assumptions rather than arguments. We can note that aside from the variety of definitions of 'postmodern' available to us, there is a widespread confusion concerning the distinction between 'postmodernism' and 'postmodernity' (Mellor, 1993: 2).

He distinguishes the former as being characterized by discussions of the 'crisis of modernity' resulting in the loss of master narratives; while the latter he sees as the cultural environment which may exist after such a crisis. The central question here is whether such a crisis has occurred? Giddens accuses postmodernists of rejecting the master narrative while still discussing a diachronic location in appointing the postmodern as a 'successor' to the modern:

> To speak of postmodernity as superseding modernity appears to invoke the very thing which is declared (now) to be impossible: giving it some coherence to history and pinpointing our place in it (Giddens, 1990: 47).

This is further highlighted by Featherstone who points out that if there were to be a postmodern account of postmodernism it would either "resist the examination of developments in knowledge and the interrelation between specialists in symbolic production and other groups to provide a parasitical account...which would use postmodern strategies to play on the unities and differences within postmodernism"; or, "follow the strategy of smuggling in a coherent meta-narrative, a tale telling the version of the fall, to announce the end of meta-narratives" (Featherstone, 1991: 32). Mestrovic also criticises this approach suggesting that by removing any basis for objective discourse, postmodernism destroys its own ground or referent as any attempt at decentred discourse is ultimately subjective (Mestrovic, 1993: 78). This upholds Luhmann's assertion of only internal legitimation being possible, where "systems of function can only legitimate themselves" (Luhmann, 1987: 108), and invalidates the idea that a discontinuity in the project of modernity has occurred. It does not, however, negate the idea that there have been some important developments in the nature of society.

For Giddens the notion of reflexivity stems from a situation where the modernist beliefs in rationality and control have not come to fruition (Giddens, 1991: 28). It is this that has caused postmodernist thinkers to discuss ideas of discontinuity which have caused the narrative of modernity to appear fragmented. For Giddens, postmodernists are merely reflecting the sense of alienation which has developed from an inability to properly explain the nature of contemporary society which,

although part of, we cannot control (Mellor, 1993: 4). The notion of reflexivity is an integral part of this high modern anomie which, as Mellor suggests, is:

> ...not just a generalised tendency towards revisionism, but a process of *chronic revisionism*, an orientation towards systematic and potentially radical reappraisals of all aspects of modern life. (Mellor, 1993: 5)

This results in a disorientation which is reflected in a loss of confidence in society by thinkers such as Baudrillard (1983, 1990) who "speaks *as* a postmodern observer who remembers the naïve modernist confidence" (Margolis, 1989: 5). Baudrillard is also reflecting this idea of disorientation in terms of hyperreality, where "the 'essentialist' forms of modernism, which still assume a historical subject and unified world-view, eventually give way to a present-oriented aesthetic of immediacy, plurality, and simultaneity". (Dunn, 1991: 113) This is characterised by a collapsing of the boundaries between 'high' and 'mass' culture into a "postmodernist eclectic mixing of subject matter, styles and attitudes formerly confined to separate realms". (Dunn, 1991: 114) For Bauman (1992, 1993b, 1995) this results in the development of lives, which, he suggests, become far more fragmented and nomadic (Bauman, 1992: 166), and questions the degree to which individuals are in control of their destinies. This interrogates the reflexive nature of contemporary Western life, which for Giddens:

> ...is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is *the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her own biography.*

This, he continues; "includes the cognitive component of personhood", concluding that:

> The capacity to use 'I' in shifting contexts, characteristic of every known culture, is the most elemental feature of reflexive conceptions of personhood (Giddens, 1991: 53).

Here is the employment of quasi-memory in the self-understanding of biography which can be seen in conjunction with the conception of the self in the current 'shifting context' of contemporary society. These points can be taken at two levels. First, at a diachronic level, where the biography is developed, or perceived to develop, over a period of time through a succession of contexts as discussed previously. And, second, where there is the possibility of a succession of contexts at any one given time - what I have referred to previously as lifestyle choices.

A number of problems arise from this. First, because of the utilization of quasi-memory, individuals may perceive a certain continuity. Yet, for Bauman, they are wandering nomadically between unconnected points (Bauman, 1992: 166), what Giddens considers to be a series of discrete moments which sever previous and

successive experiences, preventing the possibility of sustained narratives (Giddens, 1991: 53). Despite this individuals will attempt to maintain a sense of continuity through the construction of coherent diachronic biographies through their lifestyle choices. Inherent in such choices, however, is also the risk of making the 'wrong' ones. This lack of control through reflexivity or 'fate' further engenders feelings of helplessness on the part of the individual which leads to a further desire for continuity.

Looking at this from a Buddhist perspective it is necessary to reiterate my earlier assertion that what is important to my assessment of the processes involved in a diachronic series is the actual perception of the individual. In Buddhist terms this means the perceived proximity to *nibbāna*. This is related to what Bastow calls the 'intention of action' which can be seen in the context of two value systems found in Buddhism (Bastow, 1988: 158), respectively associated with *karma* and *nibbāna*. The former can be seen in terms of a very limited perception in which the memory is not, to a large extent, utilised. Here the individual is seeking a limited degree of self-change in the context of seeking a favourable rebirth. This limited path is less common, however, in Western Buddhism where there is a greater sense of nirvanic immediacy. In this latter system there is a greater desire for self change and as such individuals attempt to recreate themselves "around a completely new structure of intentions, a structure which itself is fully intended" (Bastow, 1988: 159). Something which suggests a much more significant utilization of quasi-memory.

This reflects a much more distinct form of lifestyle choice than that of the karmic system and may, in a continuous process of reflexivity, lead the individual to a situation where *nibbāna* may be seen as a more immediate goal. There is still, however, the aforementioned desire for continuity, this being the underlying motivation for seeking the Buddhist path within a tradition. The Buddhist is now seeking to extinguish such desires in order to gain a feeling of self-control through a process of self-discovery and self-realisation. This is thought to be achieved through the attainment of knowledge; in Buddhist terms - wisdom (*prājña*).

It may be suggested that greater knowledge would increase that amount of control which individuals have over their fate. Indeed, the perception might be of greater awareness. Giddens, however, argues that this is not the case, concluding that greater knowledge may equal greater control in knowledge about the physical world "but not about the universe of social events" (Giddens, 1990: 43), as this is blocked by the reflexive nature of modern social life (Giddens, 1990: 44-5). This seems problematic, particularly as the aforementioned Buddhist path towards nirvanic knowledge may be attained only through the most eremetic of practices. As a result it could be argued that individuals are still anchored in the gross world from which they are attempting to escape. Consequently, I would suggest that despite the

motivational impulses to achieve Enlightenment, Western Buddhists could be trapped by their own reflexivity.

This can be reflected in the function of tradition in Western Buddhism, acting in the role of an abstract system; which, according to Giddens, attempts to "create large areas of relative security for the continuation of day-to-day life" (Giddens, 1991: 133). Here there is a greater reliance on external advice systems which are looked upon by individuals as 'significant others' in their quest to overcome the risks that are inherent in society which gives an appearance of control. Such advice, however, may be subjective and particular; and certainly "only valid 'until further notice'" (Giddens, 1991: 32). In a Buddhist sense the security element is provided by the diachronic nature of tradition where the authority of the 'advice' can be traced back directly to the Buddha himself. The teaching, however, may be more speculative than authoritative. As I have already suggested there may be a high degree of quasi-memory operating in the transition and translation of tradition; especially when it is into a markedly different social and cultural milieu.

More broadly I suggest that any semblance of advice may also be subject to continuous change and discovery which may render any 'expert' assessment redundant. Nevertheless, the perception of individuals is of a necessary and valid process of control in which they are able to regulate the direction of their lives. They are attempting to create a coherent and controlled diachronic series of events amidst the continual construction and reconstruction of the biography that reflexivity represents. For Giddens this represents a post-traditional social universe (Giddens, 1991: 80) where the dominant post-Enlightenment and post-Reformation themes of secularisation and de-traditionalisation have removed any notion that religion may persist in contemporary Western society.

Western Buddhism, Modernity and Tradition.

Such views do not, however, represent all aspects of modernity. As Mestrovic (1991, 1993) and Mellor and Shilling (1997) suggest, there is an additional strand to its development which accommodates traditional and non-rational elements. Indeed, without this it would be difficult to establish a role for religion in modern society given the preponderance of theories which seek to marginalise it.

One problem that emerges in relation to cognition in Buddhist philosophy is that there are two levels of reality - conventional and ultimate - which respectively relate to the two notions of individuality before and after enlightenment. To compare this to elements found in modernity requires a return to the connection which I made in the introduction, between the ambiguities inherent in Buddhist philosophy, and those in the work of Schopenhauer. This provides a basis with which to look at modernity in

relation to Buddhism. The key to this is the position which Schopenhauer holds in the development of modernity. Mestrovic (1991, 1993) regards Schopenhauer as being of vital importance to the modern project. If this is the case, then comparisons made between his philosophy and that of Buddhism are significant. For Mestrovic, Schopenhauer embodied the spirit of late nineteenth century *fin de siècle* thought, which did not accord with the rationality of Enlightenment and Reformation thinking. In particular, Schopenhauer's emphasis on pessimism (Mestrovic, 1991: 88) and compassion (Mestrovic, 1991: 112; 1993: 176) suggests affinities with Buddhism in addition to the thought of the *fin de siècle*. Through his influence on such as Durkheim and Simmel, Mestrovic sees Schopenhauer forming the basis of a dichotomy within modernity by setting his ideas particularly against those of Hegel:

> Schopenhauer took seriously the ethical message preached by all the world's major religions, that the essence of morality is empathy, derived from the heart, not egoism derived by the mind and glorified by the Hegelian State (Mestrovic, 1993: 55).

This accords with the 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity which Mellor and Shilling suggest in their examination of modern embodiment (Mellor and Shilling, 1997). Like Mestrovic, they draw heavily on Durkheim to make sense of the dichotomies which they suggest. This is perhaps apt given the number of dualities which Durkheim proffered in his own work, and relevant given the emphasis he gave to religion.

In the Introduction I began to make linkages between Durkheim and Buddhism, especially through the *homo duplex*. This can, to a certain extent, be broadened to include Durkheim's other theories. Mestrovic points to Durkheim's pessimistic outlook which, if not as extreme as Schopenhauer's, is reflected in the anomic basis of his study of suicide, as well as his discussions on pain and asceticism in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Mestrovic, 1991: 85). Here Durkheim discusses some of the painful practices which ascetics undergo (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 320), and while this may not immediately suggest a resonance with Buddhism, given the Buddha's renunciation of such, physical, practices before his enlightenment, there is a linkage to be made. Although more complex than the rudimentary types of religion in Durkheim's study, Buddhism's emphasis on suffering does provide some interesting parallels. These lie at the heart of Buddhist philosophy as explained through the Four Noble Truths[6] which set out the nature of existence and the path to liberation.[7]

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[6] These are respectively:
  1. *Dukkha* - usually translated as suffering as best explained through a quotation from the Buddha's first sermon:
     ...birth is dukkha, old age is dukkha, disease is dukkha, dying is dukkha, association with what is not dear is dukkha, not getting that which is wished for is dukkha, in brief the five groups of grasping ['material shape', 'feeling', 'cognition', 'constructing activity' and 'consciousness'] are dukkha. (*Saṃyutta Nikāya*).
  2. *Samudaya*: the arising of *dukkha*.

Through the intentions considered by Bastow (1988), individuals seek an end to this comprehensive form of suffering described by the Buddha, which is founded in the ignorance of self-perception as explained in the doctrine of *paticca samuppãda*. Put crudely, the arising and cessation of *dukkha* can be respectively identified with the formation and deconstruction of the chain of causation, giving the link between lifestyle and liberation.

While it is ultimately superseded by *nibbãna*, I suggest that the Buddha's diagnosis that everything is suffering is comparable with the pessimism which Mestrovic gleans from *fin de siècle* thought given the former's concentration on the conventional reality in which both are operating. This pessimism seems to initially come from Schopenhauer's analysis of the *homo duplex*, believing that the lower pole - the will - is stronger than the high pole - the intellect. For Mestrovic this can also be seen in Durkheim's analysis:

> The painful character of the dualism of human nature is explained by this hypothesis. There is no doubt that if society were only the natural and spontaneous development of the individual, these two parts of ourselves would harmonize and adjust to each other without clashing and without friction: The first part, since it is only the extension and, in a way, the compliment of the second, would encounter no resistance from the latter (Durkheim [1914] 1973: 162; cited in Mestrovic, 1993: 176).

Durkheim goes on to note that this does not occur because the nature of society is different to that of the individual, and as a result their interests may not be the same. Consequently, Durkheim suggests that sacrifices must be constantly made in order to maintain a civilised society (Durkheim, [1914] 1973: 163). Furthermore, relating it to religion, he suggests:

> The great religions of modern man are those which insist the most on the existence of the contradictions in the midst of which we struggle. These continue to depict us as tormented and suffering, while only the crude cults of inferior societies breathe forth and inspire a joyful confidence. For what religions express is the experience through which humanity had lived (Durkheim, [1914] 1973: 156; cited in Mestrovic, 1993: 178).

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3. *Nirodha*: the cessation of *dukkha*.
4. *Magga* (path): the means of *dukkha*'s cessation - know as the Noble Eight-Fold Path:

i) Right understanding	iv) Right action	vii) Right mindfulness
ii) Right thought	v) Right livelihood	viii) Right concentration
iii) Right speech	vi) Right effort	

(Rahula, [1959] 1978; P. Harvey; 1990).

[7] This has been simplified by Buddhist commentators through a medical analogy in which the Buddha is seen as a doctor. Although an imperfect translation (Rahula, [1959] 1978: 16) *dukkha* is most often described as suffering. This is the Buddha's diagnosis of life, the cause of which is described in the Second Noble Truth, the prognosis being offered in the Third Noble Truth. Finally, the Buddha gives his prescription for a cure in the Fourth Noble Truth, known as the Noble Eight-Fold Path (Zimmer: 1951: 467-9), and is the basis for Buddhist ethics and practice - which must be carried out with a balance of wisdom and compassion.

Here Mestrovic argues that Durkheim sees religions occurring as a result of diachronic developments which reflect the continued and increasing nature of anomie in and with society. For Mestrovic this conception of anomie comes from Durkheim's view that, in the *homo duplex*, the will is stronger than the idea (Mestrovic, 1993: 179). Here a possible comparison with Buddhism is particularly strong. Both Schopenhauer and Durkheim equate anomie with egoism, meaning that such actions can never be regarded as morally sound (Mestrovic, 1993: 180). In Buddhism the appearance of the ego is equated with ignorance, the deconstruction of which can only be achieved through the presence of ethically correct action. An important consideration in understanding these actions is the role of memory, or rather quasi-memory, in tradition. Mestrovic refers to T.S. Eliot who, he suggests, was influenced by both Schopenhauer and Durkheim. Upon reading *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Eliot came to the conclusion that the primitive lives in two worlds: one mundane, the other sacred (Menand and Schwartz, 1982; Mestrovic, 1993: 209):

> Eliot's famous poem, 'The Wasteland', indicts modernity as not offering persons sufficient means to escape into this other, sacred world, the metaphysical world of the will (Mestrovic, 1993: 209).

This leads to a situation, suggests Mestrovic, where, by severing ties to the primitive past, modernity prevents individuals from contextualising memories, including those of the sacred (Mestrovic, 1993: 209-10). In other words, modernity offers no synchronic outlet for diachronic development. Here the additional filter of an other must be employed to realise a quasi-memory. Hence Durkheim made frequent reference to collective memories that involved a combination of physical and ephemeral reminders (Mestrovic, 1993: 207) which included a sacred element. Theoretically these are reference points within society which anchor the memories of the sacred:

> And these social reference points are not merely subjective viewpoints of individuals, but realities *sui generis*, such that the retrieval of any memory involves society and the human agent, will and idea (Mestrovic, 1993: 207).

For Durkheim this occurs through collective representations which extend through both space and time, encompassing the experience and knowledge of many generations which goes beyond the realm of the rational. Durkheim contextualises these in terms of the *homo duplex* (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 15), leading him to the conclusion that, "[a]s part of society, the individual naturally transcends himself, both when he thinks and when he acts" (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 16). Hynes suggests that the *homo duplex* runs like a thread through Durkheim's work (Hynes, 1975: 101), and can be seen where society meets the need of individuals as an authority for the controlling of their passions and governing their actions (Douglas, 1967: 17; Hynes,

1975: 95). Part of this authority may be seen to come from religious authority which Durkheim extends beyond any physical force to a moral imperative because, he suggests, it acts as an object of real respect (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 209). This points to a non-rational element in diachronic development which needs to be explored, suggesting that quasi-memories also contain elements of non-rationality. This, and the role of society in this process, provides further reason to re-examine the nature of modernity outside of the Enlightenment project.

According Mellor and Shilling both Protestantism and Catholicism increasingly acknowledged the *homo duplex*, both seeking to regulate humanity's passionate side. For the former this involved a rational demythologisation of the natural world, while the latter considered human intervention a necessity for the perfection of nature (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 135). It was, however, the latter, through post-Reformation Catholicism and the baroque which continued the "espousal of a fundamentally metaphysical and sensual view of the world" (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 135). For Mellor and Shilling the baroque seems to hold something of an ambivalent position with regard to the sacred. In one sense it represented "a deep sense of alienation" from the sacred as well as from society, the self and nature (Turner, 1994a: 23; Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 142), while on the other it "stimulated a melancholic fatalism about the frailties of the flesh and the location and depth of the sacred" (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 226). It achieved this through a preoccupation with the 'passions in the soul', preferring to appeal to the 'extrarational means that moved the will' (Martin, 1977: 13; Maravall, 1986: 228; Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 135) and shows a certain affinity with Schopenhauer and Durkheim in their relative emphases on the lower pole of the *homo duplex*.

The ambivalence within the baroque, like the ambiguities found in Buddhism and the *homo duplex*, allows for the presence of both the sacred and the profane. For Thompson these ambiguities can be understood by examining the boundaries between the two (Thompson, 1991: 277-8). Examining the relationship between the Thatcher and Reagan governments and the churches in their respective countries, Thompson questions where such boundaries lie. Putting them in Durkheimian terms he suggest three 'boundary disputes' over symbolic aspects of the sacred (Thompson, 1991: 285).[8] These disputes underline the fragmented nature of society, suggesting

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[8] The first questions the sacred nature of the church, for instance whether in the 1980s bishops secularised their positions of office through their involvement in politics and economics (Thompson, 1991: 286). The second dispute looks at the nature of individuality, and the extent to which individuals can be regarded as moral subjects. In particular Thompson examines Durkheim's 'cult of the individual'. He suggests that in contrasting between 'egoistic individualism' and 'moral individualism', Durkheim pessimistically points to the relative strength of the former but argued that there was still a sacred presence in society where individuals acted in a morally superior way (Durkheim [1925] 1961; Thompson, 1991: 286-7). The third

that the boundaries between sacred and profane are not as simple as they once were, but also provide evidence for the presence of the sacred in contemporary Western society, and, furthermore, show that this can still be discussed in Durkheimian terms.

The De-Universalised Society.

By advocating the continued presence of the sacred in contemporary Western society in this way, I am challenging a number of contemporary theories which do not acknowledge its role at all. For instance, while I regard many of Giddens's ideas as important, I feel that they are too absolute for my requirements - especially with regard to tradition. This is because they do not consider any provisionality which allows for the actual perception of the individuals. In order to take into account both approaches to modernity I would suggest that new parameters should be set on both sides. On the one hand I would argue that theories of de-traditionalisation are too definite. Neither, on the other hand, can religion be seen in a universal sense, since religion(s) no longer pervade society as they once did. James Beckford, in referring to the work of Richard Fenn (1972), comments that:

> ...individuals choose their own religious commitments in advanced industrial societies, but there is no justification for believing that, as a result, religion fulfils a function for the whole society (Beckford, 1992b: 114).

As a compromise between the two I suggest that we should think in terms of a 'de-universalised' society which would still fulfil ideas of fragmentation without negating the existence of tradition within such a milieu. This is a model of society which will include both components, while taking into account the provisionality of meanings which are contained therein. From this we can discern a reflexive society in which traditions are able to float around far more freely than in the past. Such motion, I would argue, is also achievable in the epistemological spaces which we can construct in such a society. This is significant given that I have underlined the importance of levels of self-realisation and self-consciousness. I have also highlighted, however, how knowledge and experience may have been tainted; the constant reflexive process creating quasi-memories rather than 'actual' ones. Moreover, in their continuous consumption of signs, individuals are giving such memories greater significance which "turns modernity itself into tradition" (Berking and Neckel, 1993: 64). I would argue, however, that this is negated somewhat by the continued existence of traditions within society and culture. In 'plugging in' to traditions in this way, individuals are to a certain extent selecting significance through external factors. Yet, through constant revision, these factors do not necessarily remain the same.

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dispute concerns the sacred nature of the nation as 'imagined community' and the role of church, and particularly the established church in England.

This results in a quasi-memory which is constantly changing, meaning that individuals are also attaining of some form of quasi-knowledge which is only 'valid until further notice' (Giddens, 1991: 32).

This may be seen in terms of Roland Robertson's ideas of religion in a global society. Acknowledging "the problem of the plurality of cultures and faiths at the global level"; he notes:

> ...consciousness of roots, tradition, heritage, and so on, increases the likelihood that societies will draw upon religiocultural resources in defining their identities and that movements within and across societies will invoke religious symbols (Robertson, 1987(a): 10; cited in Beckford, 1992b: 121).

In accepting this Robertson shows how individuals draw upon past traditions in order to construct their own diachronic selves, as well as a diachronic tradition. In this way they are able to look back at their own lives in order to see a degree of continuity within them. While, to a certain extent, nostalgia can be seen to fulfil this role, this is too superficial to allow for the inclusion of the sacred which can only be regarded diachronically with respect to tradition.

To examine this I wish to bring two ideas together which may at first sight seem paradoxical. First is the notion that we are living in a global society. I have already hinted at this in my brief comments about the interaction of the local and the global. Indeed, this is one of the main principles of the globalization theory which, according to Giddens, can

> ...be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away (Giddens, 1990: 64).

This could give individuals a further reason to doubt that they are in control of their situations and is tempered somewhat by the move from production to consumption, where the customer has a choice. This is not consumption of material goods in a gross sense, but, as Featherstone suggests:

> Consumption...must not be understood as the consumption of use-values, a material utility, but primarily as the consumption of signs (Featherstone, 1991: 85).

From this consumer culture seems to have widened the range of contexts and situations in which individuals can fulfil the dreams and desires which such a culture introduces:

> Today's consumer culture represents neither a lapse of control nor the institution of more rigid controls, but rather the underpinning by a flexible underlying generative structure which can both handle formal control and de-control and facilitate an easy change of gears between them (Featherstone: 1991: 27). .

In terms of lifestyle choices made at any give time some will be mutually exclusive, particularly where traditions - and especially where religions - are concerned. Nevertheless, and this is my point, over a period of time it is possible to encompass any number of traditions. So, as far as Featherstone's argument is concerned, I would wish to add some degree of rigidity when discussing religion and tradition. By choosing to 'plug in' to a past in this way the individual is often taking on board a new selection of norms and values which are part and parcel of such a diachronic institution.

The second idea which notionally appears to be paradoxical to the idea of a global society is the particularisation of traditions. I would argue that it is the variety of traditions that can be found in a society, each of which represent a culmination of their own diachronic processes, that makes a de-universalised society possible. Each tradition occupies its own niche within the overall order. When individuals choose a tradition, they will often point to a series of past events which have led them to it. This may well be a form of legitimation. But just as they point to their own past, so they will also have the past of the tradition to consider which may well originate outside of the local area. This may cause the tradition of the local to interact with a tradition which is alien to it. Here is where Featherstone's assertion of a 'flexible underlying generative structure' provides a useful framework, allowing a place within a de-universalised order for a multiplicity of traditions, and goes some way to negating any paradox between the global and the particular (as distinct from the local).

By describing the de-universalised society in this way I am seeking to accommodate a plurality of religions in a context which is in many ways marked by fragmentation, both of society and the self. Using Buddhism as an example, I suggest that it is possible for individuals to move from one tradition to another and, through the use of quasi-memory and quasi-knowledge, they are able construct for themselves retrospectively coherent biographies. The interaction of traditions in this way suggests that there are also a series of cultural encounters which take place. In the next chapter I shall examine the nature of these encounters by discussing the emergence of culturally hybrid phenomena which occurred as a result of the colonialisation of South East Asia by European powers. In particular I shall analyse those new forms of Buddhism which appeared in spaces within society where cultural interaction was at its most intense. Arguing that similar interactions are occurring on a more complex level in contemporary Western society, I shall suggest that these may be seen to form the basis of the de-universalised order.

CHAPTER TWO.
THE 'PROTESTANT' BUDDHISM OF THE METROPOLIS:
CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN SOUTH EAST ASIA.

> An ironic concomitant of revitalised Buddhism in recent decades has been the
> flourishing of popular and cultic religious practices alongside those forms of
> Buddhism modernism which seek to demythologise the tradition of its supernatural
> accretions, making it acceptable to the modern educated mind (Smith, 1973: 3).

This seemingly paradoxical situation is one that appears to characterize the nature of
religion in a number of Buddhist countries in the post-colonial era. The renewed
interest in these more popular types of religion together with a new 'modernized' form
- widely referred to as 'Protestant' Buddhism - appears to have polarized Buddhist
practice into two separate phenomena. This chapter will look at the development of
these religious phenomena and theoretically examine the process of cultural
interaction that has resulted in Buddhist modernization and subsequent reactions to
the process of demythologizing Buddhism. I concentrate on developments in three
countries where Theravāda Buddhism is historically the primary religion; Burma and
Sri Lanka, countries which witnessed direct colonial rule, and Thailand,[1] which was
not directly subject to the colonial process but went through an analogous process of
modernisation.

   The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how Western influence has both directly
and indirectly created a climate in which Buddhism is able to develop from its Indian
roots into a more recognisably Western form of religious practice. Paying particular
attention to my principal themes of tradition and identity, I shall discuss how the
former is revitilized, commandeered or invented in order to adjust to changing
circumstances; while the latter can be seen as being more important to a new and
increasingly reflexive section of the population.

Theories of Cultural Interaction: from the colonial to the post-colonial.
The development of 'Protestant' Buddhism, and other forms of Buddhist modernism,
involves a complex interaction of signifiers highlighting, in particular, the problems of
tradition and identity when markedly differing cultures come into contact with each
other. I shall examine the nature of such interaction in order to place 'Protestant'
Buddhism in its theoretical perspective, and in so doing explain why cultural
dichotomisation has occurred in South East Asia. Initially discussing the ideas of
Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Edward W. Said (1993) I assess the nature of colonialism

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[1] In each case I have used the current name for each country throughout, while acknowledging
that during the period that I am studying Sri Lanka and Thailand were known as Ceylon and
Siam respectively.

from both Western and Eastern perspectives providing a background for the study of Buddhist modernism in its various guises in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand.

According to Bhabha the power structure of colonialism can be seen in terms of a global link between colony and metropolis (Bhabha: 1994: 212). This can be viewed in a 'radial' context where the colonial capital, i.e. London or Paris, can be seen as the hub, with the colony itself on the rim. The process of colonialization, which involves the establishment of such radial links, is central to the ideology of imperialism (Bhabha, 1994: 212). This can be seen as a physical link between the metropolis (the centre) and the colony (the periphery), where modernity is 'injected' into what the Westerner considered to be a pre-modern society, achieved through the introduction of Western ecology, education, and built environment. "The culmination of this process", according to Said, "is imperialism which dominates, classifies, all space under the aegis of the metropolitan centre" (Said, 1993: 272). The aim was the creation of a space in which the colonial power is able to replicate itself to the extent "so as no longer to appear foreign to the imperial eye" (Said, 1993: 273). This was central to the process of empire building which underlined and upheld the power of the centre over the periphery.

These colonial spaces continued to grow both in size and number up to the beginning of the Great War in 1914. At this time it was estimated that Europe controlled about eighty five per cent of the earth as colonies, protectorates, dependencies, dominions, and commonwealths (Said, 1993: 6). This provides a degree of global standardization hitherto unseen, underlining Peter Beyer's suggestion that

> ...globalization *begins* in all parts of the globe except the West as an exogenous process, meaning that it would not have happened had it not first occurred in the West. In this sense globalization *is* Western imperialism (Beyer, 1994: 8-9).

As Beyer illustrates, it is important to realise that the actual process of colonisation takes place at the periphery. I have already spoken of colonial spaces and not a single colonial space. This is because globalization, certainly at this early stage, will not result in "the creation of one historically existing culture at the expense of all others" (Beyer, 1994: 9). Instead Beyer suggests a particularisation and revitalisation of cultures. Consequently, within the framework of Western hegemony there is a significant amount of local diversification and rediscovery of tradition. As a result, the European policy of the 'Westernisation' of their 'possessions', was by no means total. This means that any analysis of culture at the periphery cannot be viewed as being part of the mainstream of diachronic urban development, but as a series of abstractions from it.

To discuss this I shall look at cultural interaction engendered by colonialism in two ways. First geographically, taking into account the lack of uniformity at the periphery, resulting in a variety of cultural forms as a consequence of the encounter between colonial and indigenous cultures. Then considering the nature of societies at the periphery, examining their stratification, in particular how their spatial and demographic development causes them in turn to become centres. Both these begin during the colonial phase where members of the indigenous community start to become part of the colonial structure, situated generally in the colonial capital. Taking up mainly administrative jobs and - together with the new prosperous merchants and business people who have benefited from the increase in trade, goods, and services which the imperial powers brought - they form the new urban middle-class elite. From this comes a concentration of indigenous power and wealth in one place, allowing the colonial periphery to become the centre of the new nation-state after independence.

"Culture", says Said, "is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage one another" (Said, 1993: xiv). Nowhere is it more so than where cultures interact, when the political and ideological causes of separate societies meet. In the colonisation of territory there is the additional concept of legitimized superiority:

> Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination... (Said, 1993: 8).

The attempt by the colonial power to mimic itself in the colonial space, together with the perceived need, often genuinely motivated by altruism, to impose its own culture on the 'heathen' (Warren, 1965: 37), does not result in the wholesale transplantation of metropolitan culture onto the periphery. This shows that interaction does take place, albeit of an asymmetrical nature:

> Colonial authority requires modes of discrimination (cultural, racial, administrative...) that disallow a stable unitary assumption of collectivity. The 'part' (which must be the colonialist foreign body) must be representative of the 'whole' (conquered country), but the right of representation is based on its radical difference (Bhabha, 1994: 111).

This seemingly paradoxical statement is legitimated by Bhabha through his introduction of the concept of 'hybridization'. This he feels is necessary to retain a sense of authority by discrediting the tradition of the colony by creating a process of symbolic interaction in the interstitial spaces between identities (Bhabha, 1994: 4). This prevents the polarization of colonialist and colonial identities, and, given the asymmetrical nature of the relationship between the two, allows for the dominant part to take over the whole. Once achieved, the process of hybridity is then set to work. It

is, says Bhabha, "the sign of the productivity of colonial power...it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (Bhabha, 1994: 112). In short the colonial force focuses on its own power through the abject discrimination of the other, what Bhabha calls a 'negative transparency', namely:

> ...the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory (Bhabha, 1994: 112).

I take this to mean that hybridity acts as a sort of culturally ambivalent entity that occupies the space at the point of cultural interface and by which authority is achieved through difference, the dominant role being achieved by the minority party. Yet because it is ambivalent, elements of either culture contribute to its hybridity. Perhaps most importantly it represents the "displacement of value from symbol to sign that causes the dominant discourse to split along the axis of its power to be representative, authoritative" (Bhabha, 1994: 113). This does not mean that there is a resolution of the tensions between the cultures; rather it results in an infiltration into the host culture by the colonial power to such an extent that from the inside the latter seems to no longer exist, meaning that cultural difference is no longer evident. It is from inside this entity that I wish to take my position.

In the shift from symbol to sign, value may be given to the authority of the hybrid rather than the colonial. As a result the essence of power begins to shift from the centre towards the periphery. The colonial space no longer wholly mimics that of the metropolis but is different. It is different too from the pre-colonial society which it infiltrated. Instead it forms a new centre which draws on both cultures which it contacts, hence the importance of the interstitial space between the two. In discussing the hybrid from the inside I suggest the gradual infiltration of the colonial network by the indigenous population. Indeed, from an early point in colonial history the local population became involved in aspects of administration of the colonies' affairs. This was necessary for economic and practical reasons, and marked the beginning of the local middle-class and urban elite who, despite remaining outside of colonial society itself, were very much involved in the interfacial hybrid. As Robertson (1992b: 12) suggests, without collaboration from the indigenous population, Europeans could not have conquered and ruled their non-European empires. Consequently, there was mutual interest in the creation of an indigenous urban elite, who act as a sort of paradigm for this hybrid given their own liminal position, being apart from both colonial culture and their own society. Instead they began to accumulate power for themselves by acting within the system. It was perpetrated through the educational system which allowed successive generations of middle-class indigenous people to separate themselves from the majority of the population. This

resulted in a deep distinction between this 'hybridised' class and the rural masses, who tended to be more conservative. Indeed, while the rural masses were organised into more vociferous traditionalist movements it seems that, when independence was gained, it was the urban elite who broadly maintained their positions. For Bhabha such problems of cultural difference are inherent in this type of cultural interaction:

> The concept of cultural difference focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority: the attempt to dominate in the *name* of a cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation. And it is the very authority of culture as a knowledge of referential truth which is at issue in the concept and moment of *enunciation* (Bhabha, 1994: 34-5).

This, argues Bhabha, leads to a split between traditional demands and new cultural demands. During the colonial period this split gets wider as the gap between the transposed Western way of life and the traditional way of life grows. For each section of society, however, a form of quasi-memory will be in operation which will have a marked effect at the point of independence, the final and most significant moment of enunciation - that moment which acts as a catalyst for change: a sort of collective 'fateful moment'. I suggest that throughout the colonial period there are a series of such moments through which the colonial space develops; of which the hybrid is a vital element. At the moment of independence there is a point, which can be viewed in cross-section, from which the nation-state develops in its own space. This can be viewed synchronically in terms of the cultural interaction which formed the hybrid space; and diachronically through the series of fateful moments on which quasi-memory is employed. So while the diachronic development shapes the moment of independence in terms of the traditional demands of the indigenous population, the synchronic takes these and enunciates them into new cultural demands. For Bhabha, however:

> The enunciation of cultural difference problematizes the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address. It is the problem of how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic (Bhabha, 1994: 35).

This highlights the problem of attempting to recreate tradition in a post-colonial society where only quasi-memory is employed, and leads to a form of nationalism which is on the one hand forged out of a romantic ideal of the past; and on the other through a pragmatic realisation of the needs of the present. While the former would mark a radical shift, the latter broadly maintains the colonial status quo; with neither recreating the society of pre-colonial times. As Said suggests, the process of de-colonialisation, cultural territory is reclaimed long before geographical territory (Said,

1993: 252). Thus the urban elite, whether consciously or not, is regaining the cultural ground within the hybrid, albeit pragmatically, but also giving ground itself in certain areas. The result is a sub-culture which holds many of the attributes of pre-colonial times, yet is tainted with Western ideas. While independence may not have occurred without the nationalist movements and their policies of resistance, it was with the compromise of continuity that 'liberation' lay:

> Culture is never just a matter of ownership, of borrowing and lending with absolute debtors and creditors, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures (Said, 1993: 261-2).

As a result, despite achieving independence many ex-colonial nation-states (themselves a Western creation) are still subject to some degree of Western hegemony be it in the political processes that are left behind, the retention of the cultural hybrid, or the submission to the forces engendered by economic globalization emanating from the West.

Colonialism and the Seeds of 'Protestant' Buddhism.

In discussing the role of colonialism in Sri Lanka Richard Gombrich observes that its history can be conveniently divided into two principal periods, the ancient and the modern, which respectively occur before and after the Portuguese arrival as the first colonial power in 1505 (Gombrich, 1971: 20) This suggests the importance of colonialism as, if Gombrich is right, it marks probably the most important historical event since the arrival of Buddhism into the island about 1750 years earlier. It is not, however, with the Portuguese rule of Sri Lanka with which I wish to begin, nor with the Dutch who took over in 1658. Since it is only under British rule (1796-1947) that Sri Lanka came under one administrative system, in 1815.

While opposition between the Christian colonial powers and Buddhist monks had always been present on an *ad hoc* basis it was not until this time that it was put on any formal footing. As well as placing Sri Lanka under a single rule the British also sought to significantly lessen Buddhism's influence in the area. Such was the confidence of the British that it was taken for granted that once the 'heathen' discovered the 'wonders' of Christianity and Western lifestyles, they would naturally succumb to the authority of the colonial powers. As Sheila McDonough comments

> ...all assumed as a starting point that western man had reached a stage of rationality and civilisation far superior to anything that had ever existed (McDonough, 1966: 769).

It was seen as the duty of every Briton to proclaim the Christian message whenever he/she could (Warren, 1965: 51), in particular through the imposition of a British system of education. While the nature of this education trained the Sinhalese to think

in a more Western way, encouraging them to take on board Western ideas and values. It did not convince them to embrace Christianity as an alternative to Buddhism, although it did empower them to seek alternatives which they took from the Protestant Christian tradition, and adapt them into a Buddhist framework as a way of pragmatically retaining a significant proportion of their own tradition. In other words they used elements of Protestant Christianity to safeguard what they regarded as vital elements of their own tradition and repel a complete invasion of Western culture into their own.

Like most changes in tradition this occurred very gradually, although I would suggest that 1815 was one of those enunciating or fateful moments which provided a catalyst for change. As Gombrich suggests Sri Lanka has the tradition "that it is the Theravādin country *par excellence*" emphasising Theravāda Buddhism centrality to Sinhalese identity (Gombrich, 1988: 137). This can be seen through the history of the Sinhalese people and 'nation', and particularly its symbiotic relationship with Buddhism which is recorded in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, written in four instalments by Theravāda monks respectively in the sixth, thirteenth, fourteenth and eighteenth centuries (Gombrich, 1971: 25). Collectively it can be seen as the chronicle of Sinhalese Buddhism, and is the source of much Sri Lankan nationalist pride - particularly after 1815 when the British declared that Buddhism would cease to be the state religion.[2] This led to opposition between Buddhist and Christian elements which emerged principally in the form of a series of disputations held between Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries, acting as a catalyst for a Buddhist revival (Bond, 1988: 47).[3] Occurring between 1864 and 1873 they culminated in a two day disputation that resulted in a victory for the Buddhist monk Mohottivatte Gunananda, successfully defending Buddhism in front of a crowd of around ten thousand people. This had two important consequences: first, it provided Buddhists, both *sangha* and laity, with a new-found confidence against the apparently superior Western culture with which Christianity was inherently tied. While, second, it gave Buddhism a higher profile outside of its Eastern milieu. This, however, was a Buddhism divorced of its developing nationalistic accretions and the realities of everyday life in South East Asia. The scholarly emphasis on the normative aspects of the religion meant that Buddhism's high standards of morality appealed to a Victorian society that attempted

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[2] Although it was granted basic rights of religious freedom and continued ownership of its properties.

[3] Initially, Buddhist monks had sought to counter Christian tracts by setting up a printing press of their own in 1855. This underlined the monastic reform that had been taking place in Sri Lanka, beginning with the re-establishment of higher ordination in 1753 (Bond, 1988: 46). The arrival of the colonial powers had energised the monastic community into action, while the lay elite - created by colonial administrative and trade requirements - was still really finding its feet, although there was evidence for the beginnings of its involvement. Indeed, Bond (1988: 47) highlights the case of two businessmen who planned to establish a Buddhist college in 1873.

to uphold its own Puritanical ethic. As a result Buddhism acquired something of a romantic quality that found its ultimate expression in Edwin Arnold's long poem *The Light of Asia*, published in 1879, which idealised both Buddhism, and the Buddha.

Such attitudes represented a preoccupation with Buddhism in the West that fell short of the actual adoption of the religion itself. What this did show, however, was that people who were living according to strict 'Protestant' attitudes of morality were able to encompass and appreciate ideas that were central to Buddhist philosophy, albeit without their cultural context. A number of Westerners, however, wished to go beyond this superficial, and at times condescending, attitude towards Buddhist ideas and become practising Buddhists.

One such person was Colonel Henry Olcott, one of the principal members of the Theosophical Society.[4] As a Westerner so obviously committed to Buddhism he appealed especially to the emerging urban elite in Sri Lanka, and was instrumental in the introduction of Western ideas into Sinhalese Buddhism, founding the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Olcott set about revitalising Buddhism in Sri Lanka, designing a Buddhist flag and catechism as well as introducing festivals, and songs modelled on Christmas carols. Although these achievements were significant, they were chiefly of symbolic value, as Gombrich and Obeyesekere suggest, "Olcott should be seen rather as the patron than as the true founding father of 'Protestant' Buddhism" (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 205). Even though it was largely his influence that led to the founding of Buddhist schools similar to their Christian mission counterparts, and organisations such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Buddhist Associations, these were very much attempts to counter Christian influences in Sri Lanka rather than deeply altering the Buddhist's ways of thinking. Nevertheless, they do play an important role in the longer-term 'Westernisation' of certain aspects of Buddhist life on the Island.

The vast majority of the innovations that Olcott made involved lay participation. In terms of the development of 'Protestant' Buddhism this lessens the potential role of the monk by empowering the individuals to make their own religious decisions, especially with regard to soteriological questions. In a similar way the rise of Protestantism in Europe lessened the power of its clergy when compared with that of the Roman Catholic church. As Obeyesekere asserts:

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[4] It was as a direct result of the Buddhist/Christian debates in Sri Lanka that led Olcott and Blavatsky to sail from the newly founded Theosophy Society headquarters in Madras to Sri Lanka in 1880 "to lend the strength of the West to the Buddhists in their struggle" (Bond, 1988: 48).

The term "'Protestant' Buddhism" in my usage has two meanings. (a) As we have pointed out many of its norms and organizational forms are historical derivatives from 'Protestant' Christianity. (b) More importantly, from the contemporary point of view, it is a protest *against* Christianity and its associated Western political dominance prior to independence (Obeyesekere, 1970: 46-7).

Olcott's accomplishments were significant if not wholly instrumental in the development of 'Protestant' Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He did, however, indirectly influence it through his protégé, Don David Hewavitarne - known latterly as Anagārika Dharmapāla - a native of Sri Lanka who recognised the importance of Olcott's ideas, adapting them according to Sinhalese tradition. Dharmapāla's chosen name was very significant, especially the title Anagārika (meaning 'the homeless') which, according to Obeyesekere, "resolves the moral ambivalence associated with the temple monk", he continues:

He [Dharmapala] has given up the lay life nevertheless and the mundane satisfaction associated with it - his this-worldly asceticism reminiscent of Calvinism. However the social context in which the *anagarika* role is performed is different from the Calvinist, so that the asceticism of the *anagarika* is directed towards social and political goals (Obeyesekere, 1970: 53).

While Dharmapala's principal motivation was the reformation of Buddhism, he firmly placed this within the nationalist agenda which he saw as the "manifest destiny of the Sinhala race according to the *Mahāvaṃsa*...to be guardians of the *Dhamma*" (Bond, 1988: 55). In drawing on the illustrious Buddhist past of the Sinhalese people, Dharmapāla was attempting to achieve a focal point for disquiet while at the same time modernizing Buddhism to challenge Christianity on its own terms, especially through ethics:

Recovering their true identity represented what Dharmapala considered the best response that the Sinhalese could make to the problems of the modern context. Re-establishing Buddhist values would enable them to re-establish the 'glorious civilization' of Buddhist antiquity... (Bond, 1988: 56).

Here is an interesting mixture of the retention and invention of tradition while at the same time attempting to establish the 'moral high ground' over the colonial power. At the root of this, however, was Dharmapāla's search for his own identity, which can be seen to be reflected in his campaign for the role of Sinhalese Buddhism as a whole. His search for a Buddhist identity was one in the same as his search for a Sinhalese identity (Obeyesekere, 1976: 221). In working out his own identity in the face of colonialism and the vicissitudes of modern life Dharmapāla saw, through the influence of the Theosophical Society, that Buddhism needed to adapt if it was to prosper in such an environment. Obeyesekere suggests how his life is reflected in his ideas and attitudes:

> His lack of roots in the traditional social structure - the absence of village life, caste or regional identities - impelled him to seek his identity in Buddhism. Moreover, insofar as he lacked local identities like caste, he could appeal to all sectors of the educated Sinhalese (Obeyesekere, 1976: 236-7).

Dharmapāla can be seen to be outside of society, belonging to no particular section of it. In the same way I suggest that those who were becoming involved in colonial society did not really belong. It was up to them to bring their own cultural forms into such a milieu. This Dharmapāla understood as being within his modernising schema, recognising the importance of such as pilgrimage sites and relics. This mixture of approaching colonial society from the outside with a definite Sinhala Buddhist agenda had definite appeal to those Sinhalese within such a framework and this allowed Dharmapāla to build up a following within that section of society.

Anagārika Dharmapāla laid the foundations for 'Protestant' Buddhism, in a way that Olcott could not. By introducing specifically Sinhalese elements into a more modern perspective he was able to present something to the emerging middle-class of Sri Lanka which they felt they could support. In doing so he was able to influence Sinhalese society in a very deep way given the gradual infiltration of Sinhalese people into colonial society. Providing a way for members of the urban elite to encounter both Sinhalese and colonial cultures without apparently being a part of either, resulting in the formation of a space between the two cultures at the point of interaction.

Theravāda Buddhism and Hybridity.

Like Sri Lanka, Burma was also forcibly introduced to modernity through successive stages of British conquest in 1825, 1865, and 1885 - the latter date marking the final disposition of the monarchy; an event which had a marked effect on Burmese life:

> With the collapse of the throne of Burma its conception of the world collapsed also. The kingly palace in Mandalay, which had as its archetype the World Mountain of Meru, and was thought of as the World Axis, the Golden Palace, which the Burmese revered as central support of the cosmic and ethic world orders - this was transformed into an English club...The state had lost its cosmic archetypal character (Sarkisyanz, 1955: 348, cited in King, 1976: 89).

From this it is evident that Burma's relationship with Buddhism was stronger at this time than in Sri Lanka. While the latter based its tradition on the past - the Mahāvaṃsa and the tooth relic - Burmese religiosity seems to be far more ingrained into its current ideas of kingship. This was eroded by the British, who sought to further undermine the traditional role of Buddhism, again through domination of the education system. But the nature of the clash between Western and indigenous cultures was different than that in Sri Lanka, as Winston King suggests, in Burma this took place in the socio-economic realm where

> ...the basic challenge was between two life styles. On the one hand was a view of time-space existence as an impermanent, impersonal flux within a birth-death cycle (*samsara*)...The Western cultural package, however, involved *improving samsara* by means of better technology, medical science, welfare plans...and the democratic equality of all men... (King, 1976: 90).

The basic challenge between two lifestyles mirrors what I have already outlined in this chapter with an urban elite entering a hybrid culture formed through the interaction between the colonial and the indigenous. As a result there emerged a dichotomy between those who were part of the hybrid culture and those, the majority, who were not. This underlines Bhabha's assertion that the authority of the 'part' over the 'whole' is based on radical difference, where the 'part' possesses colonial authority (Bhabha, 1994:111).

The nature of Buddhism in this milieu is contextualised by Melford Spiro (1971) who differentiates three different types of Buddhism in Burmese society - 'nibbanic', 'kammatic', and 'apotropaic'. The first two are respectively normative and non-normative soteriological systems, while the latter is both non-normative and non-soteriological. Fundamentally nibbanic and kammatic Buddhism represent the traditional distinction between the *sangha* and the laity. The former being a 'Religion of Radical Salvation', while the latter is a 'Religion of Proximate Salvation', where the laity is looking forward to future worldly lives, reflecting the lifestyle choices mentioned above, and corresponding to a large extent with Bastow's intentions of action (Bastow, 1988). Spiro is, however, careful not to associate kammatic Buddhism with Western influence to any great extent:

> Given the psychological press for the new orientation, kammatic Buddhism merely transplanted seeds already sown by the contradictions inherent in the very fabric of nibbanic Buddhism (Spiro, 1971: 68).

He does not rule out the idea that influences, such as colonialization, have had an effect on lay Buddhism, suggesting that they have rather resulted in the rearranging of existing Buddhist ideas within a changing framework. As a result, the advent of colonialism in Burma merely helped to act as a catalyst for the sociological shift which moved Buddhism away from the sole preserve of the *sangha*. As in Sri Lanka, the new urban elite required greater religious power in an attempt to reconcile nibbanic contradictions. This resulted in a movement towards ideas of proximate Buddhist soteriology, although in the absence of figures such as Olcott and Dharmapala, Burmese Buddhism developed in a different way.

Spiro locates the contradictions which are to be found in normative Buddhism to the usage of two levels of truth:

Buddhism postulates the existence of two planes which, like parallel lines, never meet. On the one hand there is *saṃsāra*, the worldly *(loyiya)* plane; on the other hand there is nirvana, the otherworldly *(lokuttara)* or transcendental plane (Spiro, 1971: 68).

The acknowledgement and application of such a dichotomy is important as it enables me to look at individuality from the point of view of the Buddhist without having to engage in the semiotics associated with questions of reality in Buddhism. This does not mean ignoring questions of ultimate truth, but as few Buddhists are able to recognise it for what it is *they* must rely on conventional truth in order to further their spiritual and social progress.

This can be related to my central themes of identity and tradition. In discussing hybridity I am especially concerned with the unenlightened Buddhist. In Burma, as well as Sri Lanka and Thailand, the self identities of individuals within the hybrid space will be markedly different to their perceived identities from either side of it, resulting in the relativisation of identities according to quasi-memory. Indeed, the consequences of this can be seen in the different attitudes to nationalism which occurred in the dichotomy which occurs in South East Asian Buddhism.

Both these are, however, on the worldly plane and respectively represent the kammatic and apotropaic forms of Buddhism which Spiro has outlined. In terms of the evolution of modern Buddhism, I would argue that kammatic Buddhism has also developed in what may be regarded as a hybrid space. This can be seen in two ways. First as a hybrid between nibbanic and apotropaic Buddhism, where individuals perceive themselves to be in closer proximity to *nirvāṇa*, where they are regarded as being on at least a point on the same plane as *saṃsāra* where "both require the same prerequisites and qualifications for admission" (Spiro, 1971: 84). Second, between the colonial and indigenous, rural, aspects of society where, for instance, the *sangha* were afforded a position seemingly equivalent and parallel to that of the civil service and were only preferred at times of crisis. This can be seen as a kind of 'dual hybridity'. Looking at this in terms of a spatial metaphor where the vertical axis represents a continuum whose two poles respectively represent ultimate and conventional truth.[5] I would argue that in thinking about hybridity in this way may help reconcile some aspects of kammatic and 'Protestant' Buddhism. First, on the philosophical level, where both seem to perceive of *nirvāṇa* as considerably more proximate than those laity who are not part of these hybrid spaces. Second, on the sociological level, where both are located between, the *sangha* on the one hand and a rural laity on the other, the latter of whom adhere to a series of indigenous, cultic,

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[5] According to Spiro while kammatic Buddhism tends to regard *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* as being part of the same 'journey', he does point out that this many or may not be continuous, the important shift from nibbanic Buddhism being that in the former there is a sense of connection between the two (Spiro, 1971: 82-4).

beliefs. So while I do not wish to fully identify the 'Protestant' Buddhism of Sri Lanka, and Spiro's discussions of kammatic Buddhism in Burma - since the former had obvious influence from the West in Sri Lanka, the latter can be seen as more of an indigenous development - I do feel that there are a number of similarities in terms of their philosophical and sociological positions in relation to Buddhism and its potential Western influences to warrant further study.

By comparing the relative natures of hybrid spaces in this way it may be possible to understand the process of legitimation which takes place from within these spaces. If this is not taken into account those individuals, viewed from outside of the space, may be seen to have reneged on any number of the tenets said to be central to Buddhist thought. From the perception of individuals, however, any externally objective change is seen as an interpretation or modification which remains within the realm of normativity. This, in conjunction with the authority which is concentrated within this space, results in the rapid growth of such ideas through a series of fateful moments which seem to become the norm in a post-colonial society. While from the outside a significant shift appears to have taken place, from the inside the actors perceive themselves very much as Buddhists. Applying this to the process of dual hybridity I suggest that the relationship between a new centre and its periphery can be seen in two senses. First, seeing the hybrid in terms of the religious centre I would argue that, from the point of view of authority, the centre lay with the urban elite who, through a process of politicization and socialization, rendered nibbanic and apotropaic Buddhism to much more peripheral roles outside of their immediate realm of religious practice. In Burma, for instance, many monks take on more socially active roles, concentrating more on abstract moral concepts than the central tenets of Buddhist philosophy.

Second, with regard to the political centre, the hybrid is able to set the agenda providing a geographical location for the new nation state, forming a new centre where the urban elite is concentrated. Here both kammatic and 'Protestant' Buddhist elements are able to act in forming new centres at the old colonial periphery. By adopting the idea of dual hybridity both of 'vertical' religious and 'horizontal' geographical development I am not only able to reconcile these elements of the hybrid state but provide a meeting point for synchronic and diachronic development.

This can be shown with regard to Burmese Buddhists' conceptions of time, the perception of which is of great importance to the Burmese in their attitude to salvation, and their consequent adoption of lifestyle choices. On the level of ultimate truth, time in Buddhism is on a vast, almost incomprehensible scale (Spiro, 1971: 452). Applying conventional truth to this Burmese Buddhists do not display any anxiety towards achieving salvation, hence their acceptance of proximate soteriological practice. This

is the attitude within the hybrid space where Buddhists are striving for a better rebirth during their own series of rebirths, ultimately seeking *nirvāna* - which is eminently, though distantly, achievable. Synchronically we see secular activity within the hybrid space which is a result of individuals becoming much more self-conscious of their activities, due in the most part to the lifestyle choices which are now available to them. As King suggests

> ...some of the most profound challenges to the traditional scriptural, Sangha-dominated, bound-for-Nirvana (or at least happy rebirth) Buddhism did not come in the form of anything ostensibly religious at all, but rather in the socioeconomic field (King, 1976: 90).

This brings me full circle in my analysis of Burmese Buddhism. Here I have furthered my discussion of hybridity, using it as a tool with which to reconcile some elements of varying differentiation. I have also schematised these in terms of diachronic and synchronic developments. By placing the hybrid space at the centre of such a process I was able discuss how, upon independence, previous peripheries become new centres, intellectually as well as physically. I shall now go on to look at Thailand as an example of a Buddhist country that escaped direct Western influence through colonialism, but, nevertheless, displays many of the characteristics that I have discussed with regard to Burma and Sri Lanka.

Buddhist Developments Outside the Colonial Milieu.

Although Thailand was never colonised by Western powers, their influence elsewhere in South East Asia was bound to have an effect. Like Burma, nineteenth century Thailand maintained strong relationship between Buddhism and the monarchy.[6] Along with many other Theravāda countries, there was an ideologically central alliance between the *sangha* and political authority, which contains a complex mixture of symbiosis and dialectical tensions (Tambiah, 1976: 160). This went back to Aśokan times where it was seen as the monarch's duty to both protect the religion, and maintain its purity. For Robert Bellah (1965) this is the ideal situation for an Asian country to encounter modernity which, as Donald Swearer explains, provides for a relationship of 'creative tension' between religion and society (Swearer, 1973: 79):

> On the one hand, religion provides for stability, continuity and coherence; yet, on the other, religious symbol systems can evolve and become more rationalized (Swearer, 1973: 78).

The proper control of Buddhism in Thailand was vital, therefore, if modernization were to take place. A movement towards Buddhist reform had led to an increase in

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[6] Historically, Sri Lanka also had a tradition of kingship contained in the *Mahāvamsa* which, as I have said, was central to the revival movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

monastic scholarship and a desire to return to a more canonical form of Buddhism. The central character in this reform movement was Prince Mongkut, a member of the *sangha* himself, who intended to create a 'sacred space' within which religious activities could take place (Tambiah, 1976: 210). Moves towards religious revival were essential as a response to the Christian missionaries who began to operate in Thailand in 1828, its continuing independence being dependent on religious authority remaining in Thai hands. Paradoxically Mongkut was also open to Western ideas. He introduced new forms of daily worship which included definite 'Protestant' elements, including an emphasis on teaching and scripture above ritual. It was obvious, however, that wider reforms of Buddhism were necessary to prevent religious authority being passed into the hands of the powerful Thai nobility or Western powers.

It was clear that attempts by Western powers to establish a global culture was having an effect in Thailand, with the nation's economy developing many features which are generally associated with a country under colonial rule (Tambiah, 1976: 190). To the monarchy this did not sit well with the increased power of the nobility. Consequently, in an attempt to free the monarchy from such limitations, Mongkut's successor, Chulalongkorn, began a process of modernisation which was to transform the country, in conditions which reflect those held to be ideal by Bellah (1965). That this occurred without the *direct* influence of a colonial power, however, was extraordinary. As Tambiah comments:

> It is indeed a remarkable phenomenon that the colonial threat was not only withstood in Siam by such a royalist minority but rarer indeed that the same minority creatively initiated its country into the compelling tasks of the twentieth century, when not to have modernized in certain respects would have meant colonial conquest and bondage (Tambiah, 1976: 193).

These changes took the form of a centralisation of power which, in time, produced a new middle class of the kind that existed in Burma and Sri Lanka. Unlike the other two, however, it was less conceivable that, without the goal of independence to work towards, there would come a time where the nation would undergo a defining fateful moment. Instead the reforms of Chulalongkorn found their ultimate fulfilment in the Revolution of 1932 when the new middle class gained a much greater share of the power from the nobility and monarchy, although the latter did survive.

Religious reform also occurred during this time through a series of Sangha Acts, the first of which was passed in 1902. The principal aim of this Act was to provide a more effective ecclesiastical network to spread the *sangha*'s involvement in primary education, an area frequently exploited by Christian missionaries. In addition, the ecclesiastical hierarchy mirrored that of the secular bureaucracy. As the Act itself states:

> Whereas the amendment of the law and the reformation of the administrative system of the state have brought about manifold developments and outstanding progress to the country, it is obvious that the religious affairs of the Buddhist Church are also of no less importance to the development of both Buddhism and of the country in that, systematically administered, they will serve to attract more people to the study and practice of Buddhism under the guidance of Bhikkhus, thereby leading them to the right mode of living in accordance with the Buddha's instructions (cited in Tambiah, 1976: 238).

This shows how significant the shift was away from ideas of kingship in Buddhism towards a more Western structure, although it was also an attempt to retain religious authority within the realm of the monarchy. By arranging the secular and ecclesiastical hierarchies together there is an implication that the two are of equal value, raising the importance of work in the minds of the new middle classes. Indeed, it is perhaps this new sense of importance that added to the revolution in 1932 which was instrumental in shaping the Sangha Act of 1941. The hand of a powerful bureaucracy was obvious here in the attempt to decentralise the *sangha*, giving power to abbots appointed by administrators. As a result there became a very firm linkage between politico-bureaucratic authority and religious authority. Such a system, however, lasted for just over twenty years when, in 1963, a further Sangha Act was passed which placed the power firmly in the hand of the then Prime Minister, Sarit, who was virtually a military dictator. As Tambiah suggests:

> The master symbols of Buddhism and kingship with the totalizing and multivalent meanings they subsume could just as well act as canopies for the new political ideals and provide the framework for creatively interpreted political action as they were reference points for other political acts in the sixties. If a polarization takes place between the coterie of military rulers backed by force but unable to administer morally and rationally or to ensure economic expansion and political development, and a growing civilian intelligentsia fortified by education and knowledge and the ideal of bourgeois democracy but faced with deteriorating living conditions and restrictive occupational and political horizons, then it is not unlikely that the *bhikkhus* of Thailand may become more directly embroiled in politics than their counterparts have done in Burma and Sri Lanka (Tambiah, 1976: 514).

These events point to a society which was, to all intents and purposes, a post-colonial one. A well-developed administration together with the instability that came from different sections of society vying for power and religious control as if suddenly released from the yoke on colonial rule, in this case the powerful role that kingship played.

Tambiah suggests that the transformations which took place during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries represent a shift from a galactic polity (like satellites revolving around a centre) to a radial polity (which has similar attributes to colonial relationships between centre and periphery) (Tambiah, 1976: 197-8). As with colonial radial polity, the periphery proved to be too unwieldy for the centre to fully cope with. While this

centre had never been at the periphery of any colonial empire a similar structure of authority emerged from the series of fateful moments - the Sangha Acts and the 1932 Revolution - which acted as catalysts for changes in cultural difference.

This does, however, create a problem which is not evident in studying countries such as Sri Lanka and Burma. Here the question arises as to whether I can validly discuss these ideas in the context of hybridity, given that the dividing lines between Western and indigenous influence are less distinct. As I have said Thailand's development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are remarkably similar to those of Theravāda Buddhist countries which were under colonial rule. In order to assess whether or not I can discuss hybridity in this context I shall consider the nature of authority in the Thai situation. Before the 1932 Revolution, power lay naturally with the notion of kingship. This was gradually wrested from the monarchy by a growing middle class which was itself created by regal assent.

Examining this from the point of view of the urban elite it is possible to discuss the changes that have occurred at the individual level in order to ascertain how they have effected individual identity. As Matthews and Tambiah respectively comment

> ...the introduction of Western ideologies in the nineteenth century was the beginning of a widespread 'identity crisis' for the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, still largely sheltered by a world view that had not changed in hundreds of years (Matthews, 1982: 379).

> Most Sinhalese, the vast majority of Burmese and Thai, can only conceptualize their nationhood in terms of their adherence to Buddhism (Tambiah, 1976: 445).

This was the case for Anagārika Dharmapāla whose own struggle for identity mirrored that of the wider society. In Thailand too it is possible to appraise changes in the attitude of individuals by looking at the relationship between the *sangha* and the people. In Thailand, as elsewhere, the monastic community became much more involved in social projects, such world-affirming activities on an organised level being a reflection of Western influences. There was also a greater emphasis on the Canon that Mongkut instigated, which marked a further move away from esoteric practice. The fruition of this process can be seen in 1967 when 'The Project for Encouraging the Participation of Monks in Community Development' set out its objectives that the *sangha* engage in social activities as well as educating the laity with the express aim of nation building (Piker, 1973: 51). The nature of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, moreover, meant that monkhood became one of the principal avenues of social mobility (Tambiah, 1976: 288), where individuals moving gradually from the village wat to the major Buddhist monasteries and universities in Bangkok, in other words from the periphery to the centre. This occurred as a series of dyadic relationships with their teachers on a "'homeless' path from village to the metropolis" (Tambiah, 1976: 357).

Throughout this 'journey' monks developed a series of symbiotic relationships with the laity from the humble villager to the government minister, all seeking to gain merit and reflecting the belief in proximate salvation through an exchange between ritual legitimation and patronage. These relationships involved a degree of creative tension:

> The relation between political authority and the internally segmented *sangha* could thus be profitably regarded as a centre-periphery dialectic exhibiting a variety of pulsations and oscillations (Tambiah, 1984: 3).

While the *sangha* played an important role in the life of the country, religious authority lay very much at the centre. The question is whether the location, and nature of religious power in Thailand, when compared with both Sri Lanka and Burma, is of sufficient similitude to allow their conflation. I would suggest that there are a number of factors which may warrant this. The first lies in the notion of the centre-periphery dialectic. Although Thailand was never at the periphery of empire such as Sri Lanka and Burma were, as Tambiah illustrates, there is a sense that a similar process has occurred where power is wrested away from the *sangha* towards a political elite who regarded it as factor, though not an exclusive one, in the maintenance of its own position. The greatest difference between Thailand and the others lies in the way that the *sangha* is organised into an ecclesiastical hierarchy concomitant with the secular bureaucracy. I do not believe, however, that this is sufficient to discount comparisons, since membership of the *sangha* led individuals to become part of the urban elite, being one of the principal means of social mobility. What I think this shows is that religious authority seeks to reconcile the tension between the centre and the periphery, between the political authority which adopted a broadly Western structure and the more indigenous forms of rural life. This may be seen in terms of hybridity where religious authority carries the traditional kudos to legitimate notions of nationhood, yet is organised in such a way as to reflect the new realities of the country's political situation. This, I believe, is not to far removed from the situations respectively in Sri Lanka and Burma where cultural hybridities also become the acknowledged location of a political power which is underpinned by a religious authority which are represented by 'Protestant' and kammatic Buddhism, and in Thailand through the organisation of Buddhism. So while in each case the nature of the Buddhist hybrid is different, it can be seen as something of reconciling factor in the construction of nationhood.

This brings me to my second point, that in all three cases this occurred as the result of a series of catalysts, or what Bhabha sees as enunciation of cultural difference (Bhabha, 1994: 34-5). These may be seen as 'fateful moments' in the process of nation-building which are by no means identical in each country, but do contain

similarities, especially in terms of cultural hybridity. By this I mean that in each case there is a definite interaction between indigenous and Western culture. However, in each case where there is a hybrid formed, Buddhism remains as the principal form of religious authority. While Sri Lanka conceivably offers the best example of the way in which this occurs, I feel that both Burma and Thailand make valid contributions to the understanding of this process since they respectively offer a 'Religion of Proximate Salvation' which is far more indigenous in terms of its practices, yet within a milieu which has become hybridised through colonial encounter; and a form of hybridity which can be determined in a much more institutional sense.

These differences are important since they underline the potentially complex nature of hybridity. So while I am not suggesting that Buddhist hybrids across South East Asia are uniform, I do believe that there are a number of similarities inherent within them which allow comparisons to be made. These, to a certain extent, can be seen in terms of the nature of globalisation. According to Robertson globalisation may be seen as a two-fold process which involves *"the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism"* (Robertson, 1992b: 100). By conflating the Buddhist hybridities found in Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand I am seeking to underline this process, which I began by suggesting that there was not one colonial space but a series of such spaces. By acknowledging such diversity I wish to show that the formation of a series of de-universalised Buddhist spaces in the West can be seen to have some provenance in recent Buddhist history. Under Western influence a number of Buddhist hybrids emerged, yet within this diversity there are a number of common elements which suggest this.

Buddhism, then, is very much part of the hybridity in Thailand, although the *sangha* itself does not occupy the hybrid space, being merely an instrument of the authority contained within it. As elsewhere, lay Buddhists occupied the hybrid space with their desire for a Western lifestyle coupled with the traditional activities of merit making; allowing the urban elite a religion of proximate salvation. This hybridity is limited to the centre and not the periphery where a different set of relationships are attributable.

Forest Monks and Spirit Cults.

I have chosen to place these two phenomena together since they represent a return to more traditional practices in South East Asia, fulfilling Beyer's remarks about globalization being a catalyst for reform and revival. In the previous sections I have discussed reform within Buddhism. I shall now concentrate on elements of South East Asian religious practice which have been revived, discussing the extent to which they can be regarded as Buddhist. These are very much aspects which are at the new periphery of the modern nation.

Putting the nineteenth century revival of the forest *sangha* movement into context of a long history of revision Michael Carrithers suggests that the nature of the social history of the *sangha* in South East Asia is dependent on a number of constant factors:

> First, the Sangha is organised in small face-to-face kin-like groups. Second, monks are closely interdependent. Third, the Sangha is dispersed throughout the agrarian countryside, and this, along with the first two principles, leads to the gradual abandonment of some practices and the adoption of lay values... (Carrithers, 1979: 294).

Carrithers refers to as this as 'domestication', which occurs as a result of the monks being preoccupied with ritual rather than ascetic practices. This has happened despite numerous attempts to purify the *sangha* and return it to its more eremetic role where the attainment of *nirvāṇa* is the exclusive priority. However, the symbiotic relationship between the *sangha* and the laity keeps much of the monastic community within the realm of proximate salvation. Consequently there is a continual process of domestication and reform as forest monks get sucked back into the pastoral role of a village or town dweller. While the distinction between the forest dweller and the town or village dweller is not a new one, the notion of lay meditation, such as amongst the urban elite, is. This must be taken into account when discussing the forest monk in the contemporary situation. It has led to forest monks becoming both revered and in great demand, so creating a greater potentiality for their domestication. More importantly it has given the forest monk, who by nature takes as peripheral position in society as is possible, a direct connection with the centre.

According to Tambiah[7] these relations appear in two forms, the 'triadic' and the 'pentadic', both centred around the dichotomy inherent within the *sangha*. He regards the 'triadic' schema as a "relationship between the king or ruler and the 'establishment' *sangha* of primarily village- and town-dwelling monks on the one side and forest-dwelling 'ascetic' or 'contemplative' monks on the other" (Tambiah, 1984: 72). He locates the 'establishment' *sangha* with the ruler at the centre; with the other monastic pole at the periphery. In this schema the strength of the bonds between these three is constantly variable. At times of purification the relations between the ruler and the forest *sangha* will be stronger; while at other times the *sangha* at the centre will gain favour. It is clear, however, that whatever the state of the relationships between the three, the religious authority remains at the centre with the ruler.

While this framework is useful for making clear the relationships which exist between the ruler and the *sangha* in its various guises; by Tambiah's own admission it

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[7] (1984) *The Buddhist Saints and the Forest Cult of the Amulets*, pp.72-7

does leave out an important section of society, the ordinary laity which he says "cannot be subsumed in the expression 'ruler and polity'" (Tambiah, 1984: 76). The 'pentadic' schema allows for the same relationship between the laity and *sangha* as that of the ruler in the 'triadic' framework. But in this case Tambiah replaces the notion of the ruler with that of a central political authority. Each have their separate relations with the *sangha*, but do not have a direct link with each other. This occurs because:

> The rulers themselves and their political machinery have always buttressed their legitimacy, and indeed fulfilled their role, by supporting the sangha and being supported in turn (Tambiah, 1984: 76).

Tambiah goes on to say that there are two moments when the ruler or central political authority has turned to the forest *sangha*. First, at the time when kingdoms were expanding and become established; and, second, at a time of "deep turmoil and near disintegration" (Tambiah, 1984: 76-7). This I take to be at what I have been calling fateful moments or catalysts for change, where a split between traditional and new cultural demands occurs. This is an attempt to gain religious legitimation for the new cultural outlook - which itself has come from the dual hybrid which is located at the centre - by moving towards a more other-worldly form of Buddhism. Looking at this in terms of my synchronic and diachronic time scales I suggest that the regular ebb and flow of political favour can be viewed synchronically in terms of cultural interaction and the development of the hybrid. Here a space is developed within an attitude of proximate salvation where the urban elite no longer felt part of the wider society; hence the absence of connection between the political authority of the centre and the laity of the periphery in Tambiah's pentadic schema. The idea of this-worldly asceticism was very much part of this hybrid allowing for more esoteric practice in conjunction with social and political development as well as attempts to gain merit.

As a result of these 'catalytic' moments, however, attempts were made by those in political authority to associate themselves with Buddhism because of its aspiration to other-worldly realms. This is the diachronic component of the process where a series of other-worldly legitimations are being sought in order to retain control. Consequently, it is the diachronic element which shapes the moment of independence in terms of the traditional demands of the indigenous population, while the synchronic takes them and enunciates them into new cultural demands. In terms of the utilisation of quasi-memory the diachronic series provides for a seemingly normative development of the Buddhist tradition through a legitimate process. While the synchronic represents the cultural 'fine-tuning' which allows a hybrid space such as that of 'Protestant' Buddhism to develop. It is vital, however, that religious authority remains with those occupying the hybrid space if these aims are to be achieved.

The relationship between the hybrid (the central political authority) and the *sangha* is, however, only one side of Tambiah's pentadic framework. On the other lies the mass of laity who do not possess political and religious authority contained within the hybrid. This section of society does respond to the diachronic moments of normative Buddhist legitimation, while at other times may be involved in more animistic or cultic practices which form the other half of the dichotomy which I highlighted at the beginning of the chapter.

In Sri Lanka cultic practice is directed principally towards Hindu deities whose powers were utilised to perform exorcisms and esoteric magic. However, as Gombrich and Obeyesekere discuss, one particular deity, Kataragama, has found great favour with many Sinhalese (Gombrich and Obeyesekere: 1988: 101). Kataragama is another name for Skanda or Subramania, the second son of Śiva. This deity is the most popular in the Tamil pantheon reflecting the Tamil influence in Sri Lanka. In a number of shrines or temples Buddhist and Hindu iconography appears side by side. Gombrich and Obeyesekere note a movement towards the Buddhicization of Kataragama despite the fact that he is "ineluctably associated with both violence and unchastity and must, by the same token, still be a long way from the ultimate sanctity of attaining Buddhahood" (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 100). Despite this, his terrible aspects have been played down by his followers, becoming a sort of bodhisattva figure.

Gombrich and Obeyesekere consider that a rise in such magical observances is a result of modernization, and particularly the consumerism that it has brought:

> People quite correctly perceive that in modern Sri Lanka rational action to better oneself or one's family is not always crowned with results, especially if one is not a member of the elite (Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 100).

This, they claim, along with the collapse to the traditional hierarchy during the colonial era, has led the individual to, amongst other things, look for supernatural help. This is a way of dealing with the anomie which modern life so often brings to a section of the community which is not empowered to make significant lifestyle choices. As with earlier analyses of lifestyle choices, modernity brings with it a great degree of self-consciousness and from this a sense of disorientation which comes from the none arrival of the expected rational ordering of society. This powerlessness and anomie combines to strengthen a sense of distance from the proximity of *nirvāna* which leads those outside of the urban elite to look to other things outside of normative Buddhism. This is found in what Spiro calls apotropaic Buddhism, which he describes as a 'Religion of Magical Protection' which is both non-normative and non-soteriological. This is a form of religion which is concerned with the important matters of present

existence and assumes that the goals involved in this existence can be attained by specific magical acts (Spiro, 1971: 140).

Outside of the hybrid space, then, is a society whose perceived proximity to *nirvāṇa* is limited to merit making activities associated with a better rebirth. When people make supplication to Kataragama, any failure on his part to deliver is generally blamed on either unfavourable karmic forces, or taboo violation, rather than on the deity himself (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 113). This is why Protestantism has generally had no effect on such cults, given its own perception of soteriological proximity.

Following spirit cults comes as a result of a dual sense of disenfranchisement, from the lifestyle choices of modern society and from a foreseeable attainment of *nirvāṇa*. This may go some way to explaining why 'dreadful' deities such as Kali and Huniyan have become popular, given the fact that they are wholly involved with the world. Both are deities that had their origins as demons and have developed aspects which engender magic, personal conflicts and personal attainments. Where they do differ is in Kali's role as mother, combining the pragmatic and the emotional, and reflecting the changing role of the female in urban society, to that of provider as well as mother. Kali is seen as a dominant mother who will punish wrongdoers severely. This shows how far from 'Protestant' Buddhism these aspects of apotropaic Buddhism are. Yet, as Spiro comments:

> The evil spirits and the demons, the witches and the ogres, against whom so much magical Buddhist ritual provides protection, are no less important features of the behavioural world of Buddhists than are the Buddhist sacra (Spiro, 1971: 160).

What such phenomena represent is one half of the dichotomy which Buddhism has developed as a direct result of the introduction of modernism in Buddhist countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here I have shown how such a dichotomy can come about through the biurification of society into an urban elite and the mass of ordinary people; yet with all aspects still recognisably, Buddhist:

> That this magical technology has remained an integrated part of Buddhism, rather than fissioning off into a separate cultural system, is attributable (at least in part) to its assimilation within the moral and ontological framework of nibannic and kammatic Buddhism (Spiro, 1971: 160-1).

Spiro goes on to say that this is so inasmuch as Buddhist magic is only efficacious for those who live according to the moral precepts of Buddhism, its efficacy is interpreted in terms of normative karmic doctrine.

These can be seen in contrast to the 'Protestant' forms of Buddhism found in the new middle classes of Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. These 'modern' sub-cultures gradually attained a great deal of authority seeking their legitimation through a series

of enunciating moments culminating in one significant moment of enunciation which provided the authority with which they could establish themselves, a process which I likened to a series of reflexive moments followed by a great fateful moment. Their value, I believe, lies particularly in their hybrid nature, representing a more basic series of interactions than those found in contemporary Western society. In the next chapter, continuing my analysis of the nature of cultural hybridity in the metropolis, I shall examine the development of modern identity, which I suggest can both reflect and contribute to the notion that modernity, while becoming more ephemeral and fragmented, also contains a series of more complex hybrid spaces which can form a basis for assessing the role of religion in contemporary society.

CHAPTER THREE.
FROM PROTESTANT PILGRIMS TO POSTMODERN NOMADS:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE MODERN METROPOLIS.

> Postmodern nomads, unlike Protestant 'pilgrims through life', wander between *unconnected* places. It is on this that they differ - not in the concern with *establishing* and *preserving* their identities, a concern which they share with their pilgrim ancestors. (Bauman, 1992: 166)

Bauman's remarks suggest that postmodern individuals, despite their fragmented lifestyles, experience a degree of diachronic identity construction which may not be dissimilar to that of their modern predecessors. In this chapter I shall examine the similarities between modern and postmodern identities, questioning whether one can be seen as a development of the other. Placing them in the context Mellor and Shilling's (1997) 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity, I shall consider the diachronic development of modernity itself, discussing the extent to which these parallel processes can be reflected in the nature of postmodern identity.

In terms of my discussion of diachronics and quasi-memory the idea of postmodern nomads wandering between unconnected places is particularly apposite. Bauman suggests that the lifestyles of both pilgrims and nomads adhere to Giddens's notions of contemporary identity (Giddens, 1991: 75ff). Here diachronic individuals experience a series of fateful moments which lead to major disjunctions in their lives, undergoing a constant process of reflexivity (Giddens, 1990: 122) or 'chronic revisionism' (Mellor, 1993: 5) resulting in continual change and readjustment. This coupled with, and caused by, a view of reality which is highly stylised and aestheticized leads to a situation in which individuals feel out of control. For Bauman this difference can be seen in their respective relationships with time:

> Where the nomads and the pilgrims differ, and differ rather sharply, is the *disconnexity* of the time/space in which the identity of the nomads is plotted, as against the *connexity* of the time/space canvas on which pilgrims' identities are woven (Bauman, 1992: 166).

Modern pilgrims seem to construct a coherent diachronic series of moments through which they are able to view themselves within tradition, including religious tradition. This is not the case with postmodern nomads who experience only series of unconnected moments. This reflects the ideas of a number of commentators that tradition has no place in contemporary Western, postmodern, society (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983; Giddens 1990, 1991). Bauman, initially, suggests two archetypes for this sort of 'nomadic' postmodern identity, the tourist and the vagabond (Bauman, 1993b: 240). Both seem to fit well with his main arguments of postmodern identity, although from my perspective there are a number of problems which arise through the adoption of

the vagabond into this sort of role. The lifestyles of vagabonds seem to fit with many ideas of postmodernity. They wander between unconnected places without any notion of their final destinations, synchronically structuring the site which they currently occupy with little obvious attention to the past or the future. But, as Bauman himself acknowledges, they remain within the local (Bauman, 1993b: 240). The vagabond also fails to fit the cultural profile which would normally be associated with postmodernity. Indeed, although one of the points of the postmodern is the dissolution of cultural differentiation, this is not a universal phenomenon, being limited to a particular section of society which is actually able to make lifestyle decisions. Hence vagrants, being limited by a number of cultural, and particularly economic, factors do not fit so easily into such a category. Tourists though are able to make such decisions:

> Like the vagabond, the tourist is extraterritorial; but unlike the vagabond, he lives his extraterritoriality as a privilege, as independence, as the right to be free, free to choose; as a licence to restructure the world (Bauman, 1993b: 241).

Tourists are a popular example of postmodern identity (Urry, 1990) and, I shall argue, may be seen as the natural successors to a modern equivalent, the *flâneur*. In this chapter I shall examine the development of the *flâneur* and suggest the extent with which he[1] can be seen to typify the modern project, both reflecting its dual nature and possessing a number of qualities which can be regarded as postmodern.

The Flâneur: *the emblem of modernity.*

In his book *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, Marshall Berman highlights three phases in the history of modernity. The first starts at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when "people are beginning to experience modern life"; but "hardly know what has hit them" (Berman, 1983: 16-7). The second commences around the revolutionary period from 1789 when "a great modern public abruptly and dramatically comes to life". While the third and final period begins at the start of the twentieth century where the process of modernisation becomes virtually a global culture in which "modernism achieves spectacular triumphs in art and thought", but where, as a modern public expands in response to it, "it shatters into a multitude of fragments" (Berman, 1983: 17).

For Berman the first phase of modernity can be exemplified by Rousseau, who, in the eighteenth century prior to the French Revolution, foresaw the coming tide of modernity and the upheavals which would occur as a result. Here was a society

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[1] The *flâneur* is generally regarded as being male, certainly being exclusively so in nineteenth century Paris. The female equivalent, the *flâneuse*, may be regarded as possessing some of the same attributes of her male counterpart, although, as I shall explain later, not enough to consider them as being the same.

which saw the onset of the Agrarian Revolution, and the very beginnings of the Industrial Revolution; but which was finally dominated by human revolution. It was one in which there was some mobility, although this usually took the form of a single movement from the rural to new urban milieux where people 'hardly knew what had hit them'. This was the first real change in society for generations and led many to try to hold onto ways of the past while attempting to come to terms with the changes of the present. As a result people still very much stayed within their own local communities. It was, as Taylor suggests, the origin point for a great deal of contemporary culture (Taylor, 1989: 362).

This relatively rudimentary process of change began to develop in the second phase, the period when, as Berman states, "a great modern public abruptly and dramatically comes to life". To illustrate this Berman uses the example of Baudelaire's Paris of the nineteenth century. Baudelaire regarded modernity as lying in the 'newness of the present' (Frisby, 1985: 50), the representation of which he saw as being half the role of the painter, the other half being that which is eternal and immutable (Baudelaire, 1964; Frisby, 1985: 50). Berman initially focuses on Baudelaire's examination of the social implications of George Eugène Haussman's post-revolutionary re-development of Paris. Haussman was the Prefect of Paris who, in the late 1850s and 1860s, was charged by Napoleon III to create a network of boulevards which were, by nineteenth century standards, vast roadways which carved their way through the city enabling rapid troop deployment. They opened up large parts of the city to vast numbers of people who had hitherto been restricted to their own localities, acting as public spaces which accommodated street cafés and other visual extravaganzas:

> Pedestrian islands were installed to make crossing easier, to separate local from through traffic and to open up alternate routes for promenades. Great sweeping vistas were designed, with monuments at the boulevards' ends, so that each walk led to a dramatic climax. All these qualities helped make the new Paris a uniquely enticing spectacle, a visual and sensual feast (Berman, 1983: 151).

To enjoy this people came out, sat in parks and cafés; and strolled along the boulevards. In his poem 'The Eyes of the Poor', Baudelaire talks of the boulevards creating "a new primal scene: a space where...[people] could be private in public" (Berman, 1983: 152). For Richard Sennett this was being 'public' in a new sense, away from family and immediate friends into a public domain of complex social groups the focus of which was the city, and in particular the capital city (Sennett, 1978: 17). Those who could not afford to sit at the cafés would come to stare at them and their inhabitants; while the café dwellers in turn came face to face with the poor for the first time.

These cafés became the social centres of the new cities, centres where an increasingly diverse cross-section of society came into contact with each other. This led to a form of metropolitanism where individuals became freed from many of the associations which were previously forced upon them allowing them to be largely anonymous. As Sennett notes, the construction of immense public spaces meant that the "mass of population and the humanly contrived illusion of limitless space were joined together" (Sennett, 1978: 53). In other words, individuals could now lose themselves in this great public mass, no longer restricted to their own locality. For Sennett, the city represents a human settlement in which the interaction of strangers is likely, but, as he suggests:

> For this definition to hold true, the settlement has to have a large, heterogeneous population; the population has to be packed together rather densely; market exchanges among the population must make this dense, diverse mass interact (Sennett, 1978: 39).

What was of particular importance, given this need for market exchanges was the emergence of "mass-produced goods, handled by a large bureaucracy, with a mass of buyers..." (Sennett, 1978: 143). Nowhere is this better seen than through the opening of department stores and arcades. These act as a symbol of the amalgamation of new technologies, represented by the introduction of mass-produced goods, and the developing social and cultural milieux which had been made possible by this new metropolitan mobility. As Laermans comments:

> The early department stores played a prominent role in the breakthrough of the modern consumption society. They not only made people acquainted with recent commercial innovations but also took the lead in the shaping of the contemporary consumer culture (Laermans, 1993: 80).

This began a shift towards consumption which was centred around the bourgeoisie. Here were people who were from outside of the traditional moneyed classes, but who found themselves in the position of having disposable income and a significant amount of leisure time:

> The vast appetite for status symbols of the new middle class of professionals and employees was actually fostered by their particular conditions of living. A major portion of the petit bourgeois lived in the steadily growing cities of the nineteenth century (Laermans, 1993: 98).

As M.B. Miller suggests, the activity of consumption became a substitute for being bourgeois (Miller, 1981: 185; cited in Laermans, 1993: 81). As a result the emerging, and rapidly growing, middle class of the nineteenth century was finding in the new urban atmosphere, a niche which provided many of the characteristics of bourgeois society, but at a level which could be afforded. These are the forebears of what we

would today call the middle-class, the section of people who are the most significant for the majority of my study, whether in nineteenth century Paris, twentieth century Sri Lanka, or contemporary *fin de siècle* Britain.

The role of the bourgeois individual in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can perhaps be typified as that of the stroller or *flâneur*. First described by Baudelaire (1964), the *flâneur* was an observer who was perhaps the first to fully experience the modern city:[2]

> The crowd is his domain, just as the air is the bird's, and the water that of the fish.
> His passion and his profession is to merge with the crowd (Baudelaire, 1972: 399).

For Baudelaire the *flâneur's* natural environment was that of the crowd. He found no interest in a private home life, but revelled in the bustle of the city. He sought fleeting beauty, viewing it with the eyes of a child seeing everything in a state of newness, as if always drunk (Baudelaire, 1964: 7; Frisby, 1985: 50). Through this he became one with the crowd, finding no meaning in the private, seeking it only through his contact with the city (Tester, 1994: 2), he was "only at home existentially when...not at home physically" (Tester, 1994: 2). It is the very absence of a stable home life which the *flâneur* desires, highlighting Baudelaire's conception of him as a poet and idealist who, because of his social position, was able to scrutinise society from a dispassionate viewpoint. He was at the heart of the crowd, yet 'invisible' to other members of it. As Tester suggests:

> Such a knowledge of being in the crowd, such a princely incognito...gives the
> Baudelarian poet an ability to make for himself the meaning and the significance
> of the metropolitan spaces and the spectacle of the public (Tester, 1994: 4).

The *flâneur* makes space for himself within the teeming milieu - which was so confusing to Rousseau's Alcibiades - in an attempt to come to terms with his environment. This represents the individual development which, when interlaced with the institutional *durée* as suggested by Giddens (Giddens, 1987: 144-5), gives some indication of the way in which society as a whole has developed. Whereas previously this could have been seen in terms of two *durées* - the day-to-day and the institutional - which lessened the impact of the individual on wider society. The development of the city allowed the interaction of individuals in the manner his three-way interlacing formula:

> The encounters of day-to-day life might seem remote from the long stretches of
> institutional time. But institutions have the form they do only in so far as they are
> produced and reproduced in the settings of day-to-day life. On the other hand,

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[2] Although Baudelaire originally coined the term *flâneur* with the Parisian specifically in mind, Tester suggests that the character of the *flâneur* has become a generic one for this type of modern person (Tester, 1994: 1).

day-to-day conduct only has continuity through its involvement with institutionalized modes of activity (Giddens, 1987: 145).

This underlines the fundamental link between day-to-day life and institutionalised activity, which becomes increasingly augmented by the ability of the individual to act in a more independent way, while still remaining, however marginally, within society. This can be seen with respect to the *flâneur*'s position in society, representing something of a departure in terms of his respective relationships with the public and the private. These are less definite but symbiotic:

> ...'without the arcades, the *flâneur* would be unhappy', the balance in fact tips in the other direction. For 'without the *flâneur* the arcades would not exist' (Huart, 1841; Ferguson, 1994: 23).

The presence of the *flâneur* adds a certain degree of meaning to those areas of the city which have been created especially to allow the individual a hitherto unimagined freedom of expression. He became tied to fashion, the pace of change of which increased dramatically with the development of the arcades and department stores. Like the very presence of the *flâneur* himself, fashion represents the coming together of technology and individuality which is typical of this phase of modernity. Here the role of the *flâneur* in society is not a fixed one; and likewise the role of society for the *flâneur* is one where, in public life at least, he frees himself of many of the cultural moorings which had bound his predecessors. The *flâneur* becomes much more of a 'free spirit' within the particular, yet multi-faceted, milieu of the arcades, cafés and public spaces of nineteenth century Paris. Tester suggests the following dialectic may be applied to the Baudelarian poet as:

> ...one of the sovereignty of individual self-hood in synthesis with a situation in which the practice of self-hood is dependent on the contingencies of spectacles such as crowds (Tester, 1994: 5).

The *flâneur* experiences transient forms of self-hood where he is constantly attempting to overcome his feelings of anomie. This is initially shown in his dissatisfaction with his private life The arcades offer the *flâneur* a space which allows him to be both public and private. While this seems to place him in an ideal position to assess his role within society, the increasingly transient nature of his environment only makes him feel more anomic since he is never able to fully understand what is going on around him. As Rob Shields suggests:

> ...while the *flâneur* is presented as a native of his locality, he is actually an individual caught in the act of attempting to regain and keep his native's mastery of his environment (Shields, 1994: 72).

For Shields this means that the process of alienation which the *flâneur* experiences can be contrasted with that of the stranger:

> The Stranger is...a foreigner who becomes like a native, whereas the *flâneur* is the inverse, a native who becomes like a foreigner (Shields, 1994: 68).

In other words the *flâneur* becomes displaced by the city, he realises that he is unable to find meaning there because, as Shields suggests:

> These spaces constantly refer elsewhere, to the colonized sites of production of the commodities on display, just as the colonial hinterland is pervaded and transformed by codes which refer to values and domination of the metropolis (Shields, 1994: 68).

The *flâneur* comes to live on the margins of even bourgeois life since the dual process of his own distancing, and society's displacement of him, places him in a position where he no longer feels part of any section of society.[3]

The role of the *flâneur* can be seen as a consequence of the technological advances which led to mass production and repetition, what Baudrillard calls the second order of simulacra[4]. The building of arcades and great public spaces bombarded individuals with a multiplicity of signs and symbols which result in feelings of anomie. For the *flâneur* this provided a potential source of meaning rather than a focus for consumption, something which sets him apart from the rest of society:

> The *flâneur* is someone abandoned in the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity. He is not aware of this special situation...[which] permeates him blissfully like a narcotic that can compensate him for many humiliations. The intoxication to which the *flâneur* surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity around which surges the stream of customers (Benjamin, 1973: 55; cited in Frisby, 1994: 86).

It is the very position which the *flâneur* occupies which prevents him from realising his own goal of meaning since he is bombarded with these signs and symbols which act as what Frisby sees as a 'veil' before him (Frisby, 1994: 86). In sharing the situation of the commodity, as Benjamin suggests, the *flâneur* is constantly looking outside himself for meaning in the same way that the commodity requires external references

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[3] This is where the male *flâneur* differs from the female *flâneuse*, as the latter does not remove herself from society to the same extent. As Ferguson suggests in discussing writings of the time: "Women, it is claimed, compromise the detachment that distinguishes the true *flâneur.*" It seems that this is because women shop, in other words are not detached from the myriad of commodities which are on display in the arcades and department stores. "Indeed, for these texts of *flânerie,* shopping seems to be the strongest social marker of female activity. No woman, it would seem, can disconnect herself from the city and its enchantments" (Ferguson, 1994: 27).

[4] That of *production.* The first and third respectively being *counterfeit* and *simulation* (Baudrillard, 1983), the latter of which begins to develop at the time of the *flâneur.* A fuller explanation of this appears in chapter four.

in order to have meaning applied to it. Like the commodity, the *flâneur* is "subject to the vagaries of the market" (Mazlish, 1994: 47), he is himself a commodity. Such explanations, when compared with other fictional descriptions of modern individuality, throw the nature of the *flâneur* into sharp relief. Mazlish makes this comparison with other 'spectators' in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries literature, respectively through the writings of Adam Smith[5], Charles Darwin[6] and T.H. Huxley[7]. All three are very introspective in character, Smith's 'impartial spectator' analyses his own moral shortfalls as an allegory for those of human society as a whole (Mazlish, 1994: 43-4). For Darwin the 'impartial spectator' acts as a counterbalance for "man's 'own strong selfish desires'" (Mazlish, 1994: 45). And, as Mazlish comments, Huxley argued that

> ...evolution had produced in man an animal whose benevolent feelings evolved
> and became stronger over time (Mazlish, 1994: 45).

Huxley saw conscience as an 'artificial personality', constructed alongside the natural personality. Although all products of their time, concentrating on the moral element of human nature, none were able to get to the nub of the changes which were occurring society because of their introspection. By looking outwards the *flâneur* is perhaps a much more valid reflection of his time:

> It is that capitalist society, and not the imagined moral society of Smith's 'impartial
> spectator', that then produces the *flâneur* and serves as the spectacle for his
> heroic glance...Unquestionably, the *flâneur* enters history along with capitalism
> (Mazlish, 1994: 46).

The *flâneur* was an integral part of "the big cities of the nineteenth century capitalist societies, which became the sites for the intoxicating dream-worlds, the constantly changing flow of commodities, images and bodies" (Featherstone, 1991: 70). This is why much social and literary analysis has concentrated on the *flâneur* as an "emblematic representative of modernity and personification of contemporary urbanity" (Ferguson, 1994: 22) For Frisby the *flâneur*'s activity cannot be reduced to that of the spectator, but:

> Rather, the activity of watchful observation in the modern metropolis is a
> multifaceted method for apprehending and reading the complex and myriad
> signifiers in the labyrinth of modernity (Frisby, 1994: 93).

This underlines the nature of the city, as a modern phenomenon - a labyrinth of signs and symbols through which the *flâneur* must find his way in his search for meaning. As Willem van Reijen (1992) argues, this has a certain resonance with the nature of

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[5] *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *The Wealth of Nations.*
[6] *The Origin of the Species* and *The Descent of Man.*
[7] *Evolution and Ethics.*

Baroque culture, which, he suggests "thematizes the tension between path and goal" (van Reijen, 1992: 8); a tension which can also be seen in the *flâneur* who seeks meaning within society (the goal) but tries to achieve it outside society (the path). Here nature of labyrinth mirrors what the *flâneur* is feeling:

> The labyrinth is confusing, symbolizing disorientation, but also the necessity to strive for orientation. As a spatial construct, the labyrinth naturally manifests the outer world as time and space for the path of life... (van Reijen, 1992: 8).

Van Reijen links this with another idea which was prevalent in the Baroque; the ruin. As Bryan Turner suggests:

> A fascination with ruins was an important feature of the baroque sense of the artificiality and the constructive nature of social reality, but is also expressed in a deep sense of melancholy, spleen and anxiety of the period (Turner, 1994a: 23).

This is brought into the time of the *flâneur* by Benjamin whose "modernity carries the seeds of its own destruction" (van Reijen, 1992: 7). This would suggest that the *flâneur's* labyrinthine quest for meaning is heading inexorably towards ruin, which can be seen by his ever increasing anomie and rejection of society in an attempt to become secure. Van Reijen goes on to suggest that for Georg Simmel this represents a paradox where the more this process goes on the more stable it is:

> The ruin is stable to the highest degree - any further decay would only make it more thoroughly what it already is - while it gives expression to decay as something of a process (Van Reijen, 1992: 6-7).

This, according to van Reijen, is reflected in Benjamin's Marxian perspective on the development of capitalism through which he connects the baroque and modernism. This can be seen in the Paris of the *flâneur* which on the surface seemed to provide for its inhabitants a new utopia of consumerism and choice, but actually represents a devaluation of society where "the only appropriate way to abandon oneself to the city is to wander - aimlessly - through it" (van Reijen, 1992: 11). In other words the only thing which this utopia creates is illusion, although to the *flâneur* it is reality. It is through this labyrinth of illusion which the *flâneur* must travel in his quest for meaning. Here Frisby describes how Simmel sees the city in terms of sociological rather than territorial boundaries:

> Though the city is a distinctive social space that 'fundamentally acts upon social interactions within it', it is 'not a spatial entity with sociological consequences, but a sociological entity that is formed spatially' ((Simmel, 1903: 35); Frisby, 1985: 56).

The city developed into a complex series of interactions and exchanges, both physical and social. Seen generally it would be easy to look at it as a single entity in which

these many different transactions sit easily. Yet this is to deny the labyrinthine qualities of modernity which are reflected in the city:

> Both the representation of social relations in the metropolis and its conception as the convergence and intersection of diverse social strands, produce an image of the metropolis as a harmonious whole that may well exist in the experience of specific strata in this configuration but hardly reflects in full the nature of the metropolis at the turn of the century. The undifferentiated manner in which social relations intermesh and converge in the metropolis suggests an image that also applies to Simmel's notion of society itself, namely the labyrinth (Frisby, 1985: 58).

In order to find meaning in society the *flâneur* must find his way through this labyrinth, he must lift the veil which he feels obscures his ability to see things as they really are. This is why he renounces the social world, in an effort to remove himself from the crowd and concentrate on interpreting the signs and symbols of modern life rather than consuming them. His ultimate quest is an epistemological one, in which he is concerned with discerning the true nature of reality. As Mazlish states:

> In the end, the *flâneur's* vision of life, based on his peripatetic observations, creates reality...By reflecting this merger of inner and outer reality in his prose and poetry, Baudelaire as *flâneur* also was convinced that he was depicting the real nature of modern, capitalist society (Mazlish, 1994: 53).

If Baudelaire was right, however, the further development of the city would have increased the *flâneur's* capacity to absorb a greater deal of knowledge through his contact with a wider range of signs and symbols. In fact the reverse was the case as Hausmann's building of the great boulevards was one of the principal reasons which led to the *flâneur's* decline.[8] This reflects the nature of this particular period of the city's development, and also the nature of modernity at the time. While the *flâneur* experienced a freedom hitherto unrealised - a freedom which seemingly allowed him to go anywhere that he pleased - he was still really limited to the realm of the local. While he sought meaning from a multiplicity of signs and symbols, these were very much within a limited context. As such the *flâneur* can be seen as the forebear of those who today are involved in the making of lifestyle choices in a de-universalised society.

The 'Janus-faced' Flâneur.

There seems to be a broad range of affinities between the *flâneur* and modernity which are reflected in his symbiotic relationship with society. These can also be seen in the paradoxes which seem to lie in the *flâneur's* character. On the one hand, he seems to be the locus for the proliferation of capitalistic trends of consumerism and

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[8] Giddens (1990: 43ff) suggests that a greater control of knowledge of the physical world, because of the reflexive nature of modern social life, does not correspond to greater control of 'the universe of social events'.

milieu, but which also offers the glimpses of hope which his search for meaning seeks to reveal. Baudelaire saw the role of art as vital in judging this being, according to Taylor, the originator of an epiphanic art which was also anti-nature:

> Baudelaire brings into the Romantic-expressive stream the opposite spirituality from its point of origin...rooted in Jansenism and the acute sense of human fallenness (Taylor, 1989: 439).

Taylor argues, however, that Baudelaire was not sufficiently immersed in Christianity to be able to read any real theological explanation into his work. Instead he suggests that Baudelaire provides a means of understanding an option within the religion of art itself. This allows us to see that there was, as later with Mondrian and Kandinsky, a spiritual element to Baudelaire's work which was not allied to any particular set of religious ideals. This is achieved by thinking of art as something higher, in which individuals can recover beauty from the mêlée of nature, breaking with it and creating its own realm (Taylor, 1989: 439). Putting it in the context of the *flâneur*, this schism between the material and the spiritual is formative in terms of his role as the archetypal modern individual. Within the *flâneur* is a paradox, a tension between the material and the spiritual. He is very much a person of his time, a pioneer in his choice of lifestyle and his emergence into modern city life. Yet within this milieu he is also seeking something deeper, a meaning for his existence. Unlike his Romantic predecessors he has turned away from nature as a source of this meaning towards the:

> Intoxicating monotone
> Of marble, water, steel and slate.[9]

Seeing the *flâneur* as a representation of Baudelaire himself, allows us to see the sort of search for meaning that he is talking about. By using art to attempt to reconcile the paradox between the spiritual and the material, although ultimately in vain, does help to understand the nature of modernity at this time. This was a modernity which was not just about technological progress and de-sacralisation, but which also had its spiritual side. While the *flâneur's* milieu is that of an individual within the second order of simulacra, he does not seek a Cartesian disengagement from external cosmic and moral forces. This suggests a certain duality which may be concomitant with those suggested by a number of the *fin de siècle* thinkers writing a little later than Baudelaire. Frisby sees this in the work of Simmel who saw that in society everything interacts with everything else where "the dissolution of the societal soul into the sum of interactions of its participants lies in the direction of modern intellectual life itself"

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[9] From Charles Baudelaire - 1962, *The Flowers of Evil*, (eds.) M. and J. Matthews (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions), cited in Taylor (1989: 438).

(Simmel, 1890: 13; Frisby, 1985: 53). Society is in a state of continuous flux where fleeting moments of interaction can be seen as fragments of social reality, which are the key to its totality. Yet in the teeming metropolis the construction of a totality becomes evermore difficult. For Simmel this can be seen most obviously in urban life where "the lack of something definite at the centre of the soul impels us to search for momentary satisfaction in ever-new stimulations, sensations and external activities" (Simmel, 1978: 484; Frisby, 1985: 55). Couched in terms of fashion, Simmel discerns a certain duality which can be seen as a dialectic, and ultimately a compromise, between the adherence to a social group on the one hand, and in seeking to remain individual and distinct from other members of that group on the other. This, he suggests, is a duality that is "revealed finally in biological forms as the opposition between inheritance and selectivity" (Simmel, 1923: 31: Frisby, 1985: 62). In terms of tradition and identity I would argue that this opposition can be seen respectively as one between the diachronic and the synchronic, showing a tension between the desire for individuality and the need for socialisation. Here is where quasi-memory and quasi-perception can be employed in an attempt to create a coherent reality which, for instance, the flâneur constructs from the fragments of the social reality he encounters.

This is where the imagery of the labyrinth is particularly useful in explaining the path of the flâneur through these fragments of social reality, never getting a holistic view of the metropolis and never fully aware of the choices available to him. He has to negotiate his way through what he perceives to be society, using his memory as he perceives it to construct his own version of reality.

Creating an analogy I would like to suggest that, like the early city, knowledge was broadly compartmentalised into distinct areas. Baudelaire attempted to retain this by keeping the material and the moral apart from the spiritual and the artistic, although this distinction soon proved to be inoperable. This is because a perceived convergence of all knowledge has resulted in it becoming increasingly more amorphous. We have seen that the flâneur's movements and conceptions are restricted to the local, and his being given the opportunity to broaden his scope resulted in his demise. As an "emblematic representative of modernity" (Ferguson, 1994: 22) he attempted to find meaning in the labyrinth of signs and symbols which bombarded him. Yet he also enjoyed an element of security as at the base of this confusion lay the familiar in the many public spaces which were constructed and allowed the flâneur to take stock of his situation.

Looking at this in terms of the above analogy I would suggest that the inclusion of such areas act as 'breathing spaces' in which the public and the private come together in a way which enable the construction of hierarchies of knowledge which

can provide the framework for the analysis of modernity. In other words, while the construction of the boulevard allowed for the integration of disparate influences, on both a human and material level; the spaces created between allowed the *flâneur* to take stock of the multiplicity of images with which he was constantly presented - where the private and the public came together (Berman, 1983: 152). At this point we are still considering the city in the singular, by this I mean that we are still very much in the modern, with the conception that religion, although limited to the private, still fulfils some form of universal role. In terms of the plurality of religions, there is still held to be a single centre, suggesting that modernity has maintained a sense of order which is reflected in the security that the *flâneur* feels from remaining in his locality.

Like the *homo duplex*, the duality of the *flâneur* is in tension, a tension between the rationality of his milieu, and the non-rationality of his thoughts. This is evident in the *flâneur's* essential search for meaning which goes beyond mundane enquiries into his surroundings. He is intoxicated with the city and the constant flux of commodity signs therein. Yet this is not the enforced intoxication of Coleridge or the Romanticism of Rousseau, rather it is one which stems from bewilderment. He was not concerned with consumption *per se*, but its epistemological significance. Ironically it is the very signs and symbols that he is using which prevent him from any realisation of meaning (Benjamin, 1973: 55; Frisby, 1994: 86). As with the baroque, the *flâneur's* search for meaning within society (the goal) is in tension with his trying to achieve this outside society (the path) (van Reijen, 1992: 8). For Mazlish, this leads him to construct an alternative reality which can be sensed in Baudelaire's writings.

But this situation did not persist. The advent of Haussman's great boulevards and the introduction of the department stores brought in people and commodities from outside of the local. Yet while the *flâneur* possessed many of the qualities which would have stood him in good stead in his continual search for meaning, limited his gaze. By remaining essentially parochial - he seems to have missed the opportunity to move with the times. This would suggest that the *flâneur's* affinity with modernity stretches beyond being an archetypal person to being a representation of modernity itself. But does he represent modernity as it has been traditionally regarded, or in its 'Janus-faced' nature? I would argue that despite his seeming reliance on, and cleavage to the rational elements of modernity, there is a side to the *flâneur* which suggests certain affinities with Mellor and Shilling's (1997) notion of the baroque modern body. These extend beyond his labyrinthine and ruinous searches for meaning, and is evident in the *flâneur's* dandyism. While he did not alter his physicality, his appearance - more that any of his predecessors - did allow him to construct a series of signs - fashion statements - which, because of his position marginalised from society, could be contrasted with other signs. This is comparable

with Baudrillard's discussions on the use of stucco during the Counter-Reformation, which represented the world according to human design - where the natural was made artificial (Baudrillard, 1983: 83ff; Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 27-8). This represents Baudrillard's first order of simulacra, the counterfeit, which can be seen in Baudelaire's view of the relationship between technology and nature. It highlights the paradoxical nature of the *flâneur* given that he appears at the time of Baudrillard's second order of simulacra, that of production. Arguably this comes about because the *flâneur* utilises signs which belong to the order of production, but puts them together in a way which Baudrillard suggests belong to the counterfeit, "the time of the double and the mirror, of theatre and games of mask and appearance" (Baudrillard, 1983: 98). This paradox suggests that the *flâneur* was in someway caught between two forms of modernity. The *flâneur* was a thoroughly modern person on the one hand, but possessed a certain sensuality which did not sit easily with the modernity of the Enlightenment and the Reformation.

> Beauty is made up of an eternal, invariable element, whose quantity is expressively difficult to determine, and of a relative, circumstantial element, which will be...the age, its fashions, its morals, its emotions (Baudelaire, 1964: 3; cited in Mazlish, 1994: 52-3).

For Taylor, Baudelaire's art was closely linked to religion, perhaps even taking the place of religion, where the spiritual world stands behind the fallen world. In this situation only art can bring the world to epiphany (Taylor, 1989: 436). To achieve this, Baudelaire's artist strolls through the world seeing the spiritual in fragments of nature acting as an sort of alchemist:

> For I have from each thing extracted its quintessence,
> You have given me mud and I have made of it gold
> (Cited in Taylor, 1989: 439).

Taylor suggest that Baudelaire's art can be seen as an anti-nature, conjoined with a sense of human evil. This may take the artist into the realm of the sacred, as with Durkheim's analysis of the aesthetic element of representative rites. Durkheim argues that such rites fit well into the scheme of totemic religion, generally taking place away from consecrated ground, but without those people (usually women and children) who are regarded as profane. This, according to Durkheim, suggests that such rites straddle both the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 384). The use of art in such rites, furthermore, is essential because the cult is in some way aesthetic. While, for Durkheim this aesthetic does not represent the essence of religion, it is important for the feeling it induces in those who practice the ritual, encouraging a state of effervescence (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 386). Comparing this to Baudelaire's

work, the alternative reality which the *flâneur* constructs does not represent a religious essence as such, as it is too ephemeral for that. Nevertheless it does contain elements which are ostensibly non-rational. These 'fragments' of beauty Baudelaire considers to represent the spiritual world (Taylor, 1989: 436):

> Nature is a temple whose living colonnades
> Breathe forth a mystic speech in fitful sighs;
> Man wanders among symbols in those glades
> Where all things watch him with familiar eyes
> (Baudelaire, 1962: 12; cited in Taylor, 1989: 436).

Such journeys are important in Baudelaire's search for meaning; in a milieu which is not too different from that of Durkheim. As Fields suggests, Durkheim "breathed the air of turn-of-the-century Paris, a place that fizzed with experiments in artistic representation". She suggests that finding a vocabulary for such experiments[10] may represent a similar search for language at its boundaries (K.E. Fields, 1995: xxii). Like that of the *flâneur*, Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life is a study* of social life. And while I do not suggest that Durkheim can be fully compared to the *flâneur*, it could be argued that his milieu of writing is not too different to that of Baudelaire. Baudelaire sought meaning through the spatialisation of the boulevard as *intérieur* (Benjamin, 1973: 37; Burgin, 1993: 36), Durkheim saw the origin of the basic categories in which we think, including time and space, as being in religion (K.E. Fields, 1995: xxv). Within this spatialisation is the *homo duplex*, underlining the respective relationship between the sacred and the profane, and the social being and the body (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 15).

While a comparison between the primitive societies of Durkheim's study and that of Baudelaire's Paris may not at first sight seem to be a fruitful one it does show markedly the fragmentation of the spiritual in modernity. The *flâneur*, in his position as a pioneer of modern lifestyles, was perhaps the first to really experience this de-universalisation of the spiritual. I would argue that this can be seen as a result of the 'Janus-faced' nature of modernity which Mellor and Shilling (1997) suggest. Here the *flâneur* can be seen to possess elements of both the Protestant modern body and the baroque modern body. The former can be seen in the way that, through the use of profane associations, individualised bodies developed as a result of their participation in urban exchange relations. These bodies were gradually closed off from others, the self becoming more open as a space to be filled. For some Protestants this would be with 'personal inspiration' (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 46) but for the *flâneur*, this was an individualised search for meaning which was more complex than represented by

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[10] Fields uses the example of Picasso's 1907 painting *Demoiselles d'Avignon*'s profound influence of cubism as an example of such experiments.

the Protestant modern body. The *flâneur* also contained elements of the baroque, this labyrinthine and ruinous search which increasingly alienated him from society. This was a search that involved fragments of the spiritual, resulting in a labyrinth which transgressed the boundary between the sacred and the profane.

While the *flâneur* did dislocate himself from his environment, he did not make linguistic symbols and narratives the main source of his self identity, as was the case with Protestantism (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42). Instead he drew on the many signs and symbols to which he was exposed. As with the baroque modern body, he was able to weaken the stability of his fixed habitus (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 55), becoming a stranger in his own city. While he did not change his body physically, he did act as a pioneer in terms of his use of fashion and consumer goods, possessing the *potential* to make lifestyle choices. His gradual movement from being a native of the city to his becoming a foreigner, or stranger, however, meant that he was never fully able to reflexively participate in modern society to the degree that Giddens (1990, 1991) suggests.

The end of the Flâneur.

Berman's third phase in the history of modernity began in Baudelaire's time with the 'macadamizing' of the boulevards, something which transformed the urban environment into a 'moving chaos'. Although as Berman states:

> The chaos lies not in the moves themselves...but in their interaction, the totality of
> their movements in a common space (Berman, 1983: 159).

This is a much more complex world than that of Baudelaire's Paris. It is one where even the buildings lack permanence, where the urban boulevard has given way to the inter-state highway; further removing the individual from the local (Berman, 1983: 295). Public spaces continued to be built, but they failed to have the same climatic impact as before:

> As with many creations born out of the spirit of this age, the meaning and the
> beauty of the parkway cannot be grasped from a single point of observation, as
> was possible from a window of the château at Versailles. It can be revealed only
> by movement, by going along in a steady flow, as the rules of traffic prescribe.
> The space-time feeling of our period can seldom be felt so keenly when driving
> (Giedion, 1967: 823-32).

Spaces, epistemological spaces included, are not necessarily stationary. Because of the reflexivity of contemporary knowledge there is a constant flux of ideas which shape and re-shape the space. This leads to the process of chronic revisionism (Mellor, 1993: 5), although this can be placed in the context of "the present-oriented aesthetic of immediacy, plurality, and simultaneity" (Dunn, 1991: 113). Bauman

discusses the nature of such knowledge in his analysis of the stranger. He suggests that familiarity refers only to the possession of a satisfactory volume of knowledge (Bauman, 1993b: 151). With strangers we lack this knowledge, yet on the other hand they are too well known to us to become aliens. In a situation of 'mobile togetherness', such as the department store, most others fail to even attract a rudimentary amount of our attention. Some, however, move into the periphery of our attention through certain encounters, condensing into strangers (Bauman, 1995: 44) - those who are socially distant but physically close (Bauman, 1993b: 153). For the *flâneur* to exist as a stranger in such a way, he must master the art of 'mismeeting',[11] which relegates the other into the background. Like the symbiotic relationship which the *flâneur* has with society, mismeeting is a two-way process. For Bauman the overall effect of this is to 'desocialise' a potential social space (Bauman, 1993b: 155). More than this, however, mismeetings are also moments which have no temporal precedent, neither do they have any tangible future effect on the 'participant's' lives. But, as Bauman acknowledges, boundaries cannot be hermetically sealed and there may well be a consequence for mismeetings (Bauman, 1993b: 156-7).

These consequences lessen the ambivalent nature of modern interaction in that they threaten to turn strangers into something more - neighbours, acquaintances or friends for instance. Such ambivalence can be found in the gap between what modern individuals need to know in order to navigate their way through the epistemological labyrinth, and what they know (or perceive to know) about the actual or possible moves of others. This gap, which Bauman suggests is what constitutes others as strangers (Bauman, 1995: 126), points to the bewildering cornucopia of modern experience which leads to feelings of helplessness and anomie. It represents the sensory overload which modern individuals can encounter, and can result in the "superficiality, emotional and temporal flatness, splicing of the time flow into unconnected fragments [which] used to be the pleasures of the *flâneur*" (Bauman, 1995: 133). According to Bauman this can be seen in contemporary cultural signifiers such as glossy magazines where "reality is as thin as the paper it is written on" (Bauman, 1995: 133). This is reflected in daily life, where the 'presentation of the self' is essentially one of surfaces (Bauman, 1995: 134). These are surfaces, furthermore, which have nothing which can be regarded as 'natural' behind them (Bauman, 1995: 136), where individuals can even become strangers to themselves. Through the constant fluctuation of their identity in search of an ideal 'presentation' they become people who they themselves would not recognise.

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[11] Bauman borrows this term from Martin Buber's 'Vergegnung' which can be seen in opposition to meeting - 'Begegnung'. This suggests that interaction with strangers is a meeting which is pretending not to be a meeting (Bauman, 1993b: 153-4).

Radical processes of self presentation and self transformation help to explain the demise of the *flâneur*, who limited himself to the local, in the singular - albeit plural - city. In other words he was not prepared to go beyond the boundaries that he had set himself. Like modernity itself, he had come to accept the transitory, but only within his own locality. This was fine while the centre of change was in the city. With the development of the boulevards, however, there began a revolution in communications which meant that the focus of change became de-centred. This eventually left the *flâneur* isolated and out of touch. His was a reality which he believed to be the true nature of capitalist society, which he saw as "a shifting, historical phenomenon, laced through with an unchanging element" (Mazlish, 1994: 53).

What Mazlish emphasises is the notion of representation which he feels is inherent in the *flâneur* in terms of his 'knowing' of 'reality' (Mazlish, 1994: 56). But, as he rightly suggests, if this notion of representation is to be upheld then we need to establish a postmodern successor for the *flâneur*. They must no longer be limited to the local:

> [I]t can be postulated that global life, not the metropolitan, is now where the action is (thus possibly transcending modernism, which is based on the city). The city as adventure may be a thing of the past...Bright young people may thrill not to Baudelaire's 'shock' of the metropolis, but to the 'sonic boom' of the global world (Mazlish, 1993: 124).

While, as Bauman suggests, the aim of both modern and postmodern people is the 'construction and maintenance of identity', where they differ is that modern people plot their future course; whereas the postmodern individuals only construct it with hindsight, moving between unconnected places (Bauman, 1992: 166). The key to this seems to lie in attitudes to time and space:

> Nomads do not bind the time/space, they move through it; and so they move *through* identities (Bauman, 1992: 167).

This was not the case for the pilgrim whose search was bound to time and space. According to Bauman, the pilgrim gained a new prominence in modernity (Bauman, 1995: 82). As in the past the modern pilgrim is seeking a place which is always elsewhere (Bauman, 1995: 83). In Protestant modernity, however, the nature of pilgrimage took on a "seminally novel twist" (Bauman, 1995: 82) becoming an 'inner-worldly' journey:

> In the new post-Reformation city of modernity, the desert began on the other side of the door (Bauman, 1995: 85).

Hence instead of travelling to the desert, the desert came to them. For Sennett this is shown through terms such as impersonality, coldness and emptiness which are prevalent in explanations of Protestant environment (Sennett, 1993: 44, 46). This

stems from the nature of Protestant individuality which, shorn of ritual and institutional mediation, meant that the Word of God became the primary locus of religious belief (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 42). Identity, then, became associated with an inner search which is symbiotic with the 'desert' within which individuals travel - a process which can continue because of the maintenance of a distance between the goal and the present moment. This points to the maintenance of a project for both meaning and identity (Bauman, 1995: 86) which is achieved through the 'connexity' of time and space (Bauman, 1992: 166):

> The world of pilgrims - of identity builders - must be orderly, determined, predictable, insured; but above all, it must be the kind of world in which footprints are engraved for good, so that the trace and the records of past travels are kept and preserved (Bauman, 1995: 87).

Such a world was not maintained as modernity became evermore ephemeral. Protestant pilgrims were responsible for their own demise, turning the world into a desert, only to find that they could not leave their permanent mark there (Bauman, 1995: 88). Individuals gradually became cleaved from space and time to live life in a series of moments so preferred by the nomad. This begins with the *flâneur* in that he gradually becomes a stranger in his own city. But what the pilgrim did in all seriousness, the *flâneur* did by engaging in the playfulness of modern consumerism (Bauman, 1995: 92), he became separated from society in general and instead began to construct his own realities.

As I have said, the *flâneur* possessed many of the characteristics of postmodernity but, like modernity itself, fell short of moving from the local. Nevertheless, the *flâneur* does offer this vital link between modernity and postmodernity. As a localised nomad he was a stranger in his own area, moving between places which he perceived to be unconnected. Whereas the true postmodern nomad has a global perspective.[12]

The Post-Flâneur.

Given that the *flâneur* represents an identity which is an 'emblem' of modernity (Ferguson, 1994), what sort of person can take a similar role in the context of postmodernity? This is difficult given the supposed ephemeral nature of postmodern society. One way to approach this may be to discuss how 'postmodern nomads'

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[12] This is another reason why tourists rather than vagabonds are more useful examples of postmodern nomads. Although vagabonds are seen by Bauman (1993b, 1994) as postmodern strangers, possessing many of the qualities of the *flâneur*, they become marginalised by the increasingly ephemeral nature of the postmodern world. So while they are not as restricted to their locality as much as the *flâneur* their movement in society has become more limited to the extent that the only people vagabonds will meet are other vagabonds (Bauman, 1994: 95).

locate themselves with their milieux. This is often attempted through nostalgia both on an individual level and a level which Fred Davis calls a 'collective nostalgia':

> Collective nostalgia...refers to that condition in which...symbolic objects are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character, those symbolic resources from the past that...can trigger wave upon wave of nostalgic feeling in millions of persons at the same time (Davis, 1974: 122-3).

This shows a need for identity construction which has moved away from the local, suggesting that nostalgia is no longer limited to a particular place or time. Robertson is very clear about this, suggesting that it is now the global environment which many consider as home. As a result:

> Nostalgia is not what it used to be - it is more than what it used to be. It has been doubly globalized. It has become collective on a global scale and directed at globality itself (Robertson, 1992b: 161).

For Robertson this shows how individuals draw upon past traditions in order to construct their own diachronic selves, as well as a diachronic tradition. In this way they are able to look back at their own lives in order to see a degree of continuity within them. Moreover, they are able to trace continuities in terms of tradition. This may, as I have already suggested, be in terms of nostalgia. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I wish to view it in terms of the role of religion in a global society. Acknowledging the problem of the plurality of cultures and faiths at the global level Robertson argues that:

> ...consciousness of roots, tradition, heritage, and so on, increases the likelihood that societies will draw upon religiocultural resources in defining their identities and that movements within and across societies will invoke religious symbols (Robertson, 1987(a): 10; cited in Beckford, 1992b: 121).

According to Baudrillard, this collective need for identity construction occurs as a result of us being less in touch with what we perceive to be reality:

> When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity (Baudrillard, 1983: 12).

This is 'hyperreality' which, while only being possible through an exclusive exposure to mass-media imagery, does nevertheless point to a trend in contemporary society away from the real. If we look again at the respective natures of modernism and postmodernism we can see how this has occurred. Modernism, according to John Urry, is essentially a process of differentiation between various cultural spheres. This can be seen in both a horizontal sense, through such as public and private spheres of life; and vertically in the differentiation between high and mass culture (Urry, 1990: 83-

4). By dissolving such differentiations, postmodernism creates the sensation where both the individual and society generally feels out of control.[13]

Such analysis leads many to believe that the postmodern successor to the *flâneur* is the tourist (Urry, 1990; Robertson, 1992b; Tester et al, 1994; Bauman 1993b, 1995). For Friedman the tourist trade has turned towards nostalgia - catering for a search for roots, albeit in simulacra - and has contributed significantly towards the Western search for the experience of otherness (Friedman, 1990: 311). As with the *flâneur*, tourists have exhibited many of the features of postmodernism before it was actually recognised, occupying something of a liminal area which is somewhat detached from that which they are observing. In the past this involved spectacle on the local level:

> Almost everywhere has become a centre of 'spectacle and display', and as a result resorts now have relatively little to distinguish themselves from elsewhere (Urry, 1990: 93).

Tourists can take one of two options, they can either 'go with the flow' and holiday at these resorts; or become what Feifer terms a 'post-tourist' - someone who is "freed from the constraints of 'high culture' on one hand, and the untrammelled pursuit of the 'pleasure principle' on the other" (Urry, 1990: 100).

There is some overlap between the tourist and the *flâneur*, their common goals of 'knowing' 'reality', from a position of detachment - feeling at home when a stranger. The tourist is the *flâneur* of the theme park and holiday package, travelling from one place to the next in order to view an eclectic mix of culture, without actually participating in it. In other words someone who is present within a society without essentially affecting it. This is typical of Bauman's definition of a postmodern person:

> In terms of his biography, the contemporary individual passes a long string of widely divergent...social worlds. At any single moment of his life, the individual inhabits simultaneously several such divergent worlds. The result is that he is 'uprooted' from each and not 'at home' in any. One may say that he is the *universal stranger*. One is tempted to say that he is only fully at home with himself (Bauman, 1993a: 95).

Tourists can be seen as being the successors to the *flâneur* and as such reflect the move from modernism to postmodernism in that each acts respectively as an emblem for their time. As someone who typifies the ideal of the postmodern nomad, we can take the attributes of tourists and expand them onto the contemporary individual, seeing them as 'universal strangers'; people for whom "the 'real reality' has already been squeezed out" (Bauman, 1994: 150).

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[13] On a societal level this can be seen in terms of the 'green' movement which exhibits a concern for global annihilation because of the perception that global systems are out of control, be they eco-systems, or political and economic systems.

Although they share a common goal of the construction and maintenance of identity, Protestant pilgrims and postmodern nomads differ markedly on their means of achieving it. While the former engage in a process of tangible connections, the latter follow an ephemeral course which can only be diachronically constructed in hindsight. Examining the two together it seems there is no palpable connection between them. The *flâneur's* position between them, however, helps place them in the same diachronic process. While he possesses many of the attributes of the Protestant modern body, he also demonstrates the non-rational and sacred qualities which can be found in the baroque modern body. As such he represents the 'Janus-faced' modernity which is seminal in the understanding postmodernity. The *flâneur* shares a number of qualities with the postmodern individual although he remained in a typically modern milieu. From this we get an overview of the development of identity in modernity and how this acted as a precursor to postmodern identity. In the next chapter I shall examine the milieux which make this identity possible, arguing that - like the Janus-faced *flâneur* - it represents a *mélange* of phenomena which allows for the formation of complex culturally hybrid spaces as found in the de-universalised society. By questioning the distinction between the sacred and profane in such a society I shall seek to establish a role for the sacred and non-rational in postmodernity. In examining the affinities which I have established between Buddhism and modernity, and using the more simple hybrid structures of contemporary South East Asia, I shall also show that both religion and tradition are not only possible but essential to such a society.

CHAPTER FOUR
POSTMODERN SPACE AND BUDDHIST DISNEYWORLDS

> But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence...*illusion* only is *sacred, truth profane.* Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness (Feuerbach[1]).

Feuerbach's comments underline a marked shift which has occurred in the perception of reality in contemporary Western society. Highlighting characteristics which are frequently referred to as postmodern (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983; P. Harvey, 1990; Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1994), he points to a situation where illusion prevails over what is 'real'. Discussing a series of shifts, which may in the past have been seen in the context of the movement from modernity to postmodernity, Feuerbach considers the relative presence of the sacred and the profane in such a milieu. By suggesting that "the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness" he questions the nature of the sacred. This goes against the ideas of many thinkers (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983: Giddens, 1990, 1991) who believe that contemporary Western society has undergone a process of de-traditionalisation and secularisation. Nevertheless, by introducing the idea of the sacred into this context Feuerbach poses a number of questions regarding the nature of belief, and in particular religious belief, in the postmodern. A number of recent studies (Ferguson, 1992; Mestrovic, 1991, 1993; Maffesoli, 1996; Mellor and Shilling, 1997) have sought to correct the prevailing belief of a secular modernity, pointing towards both a continued presence of non-rational and sacred elements throughout modernity's development (Mestrovic, 1991, 1993; Mellor and Shilling, 1997), and a process of re-sacralisation in contemporary society.

The Development of Postmodern Space.

> If the task of postmodernism is first and foremost to locate the lines of configuration, a 'historical' analysis of the ways different social and ideological machineries work is the issue at hand (Chen: 1987: 72).

This is discussed by Baudrillard (Chen, 1987: 73) who examines the development of postmodern society in terms of what he calls three 'Orders of Simulacra'[2]. These broadly reflect Berman's (1983) three-fold analysis of the development of modernity, which are sub-divided by Chen as 'early modernity', 'modernity', and 'postmodernity'; and are respectively signified by Baudrillard as 'counterfeit', 'production', and 'simulation' (Chen, 1987: 72-7). The 'counterfeit' begins with the Renaissance and the

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[1] Cited as an introduction in Debord (1983).
[2] This is a development which can principally be found in Baudrillard's book *Simulations* (1983).

beginnings of a 'de-solidifying' society. Here social spaces are no longer the permanent and absolute constructions that they once were. Instead a certain amount of social mobility becomes possible, particularly through the rise of the bourgeoisie. This is significant, first because they are the class with whom I am most concerned in this thesis; and second because they begin to create for themselves a social space in which to operate - in a manner not dissimilar to those who create interstitial hybrid spaces in South East Asia. This is significant for Baudrillard, because it signals the end, within the bourgeois social space at least, of fixed 'obliged' signs (Baudrillard, 1983: 85). Instead we see the emergence of signs in a milieu in which:

> Representation is born, and surpasses the real into the 'counterfeit': not denying the 'original' but extending producing the equivalence of the original, the copy (Chen, 1987: 74).

Baudrillard sees parallels between this and the imagery of the baroque:

> It is in the Renaissance that the false is born along with the natural. From the fake shirt in front to the use of the fork as artificial prosthesis, to the stucco interiors, and the great baroque theatrical machinery (Baudrillard, 1983: 87).

For Baudrillard the baroque represents an early example of the development of non-specific space in which structure and order are no longer strictly adhered to. This is seen by Chambers, who considers the Baroque to be:

> Lost in space...decentred, [where] the uniformity of logic and nature is punctuated by the accidental: the ornamental, the decorative and the monumental (Chambers, 1995: 92).

The baroque marked a move away from the solid boundaries of space which existed before the Renaissance, allowing for a new sense of transience which had not previously been present. It is a space, albeit a socially limited and localised one, which displays many of the qualities of modern, and even postmodern, society, where the very fabric of reality, as well as of time itself began to be questioned. Here transience was prevalent and originality was no longer a pre-requisite. Because this space was the focal point for the interactions of the bourgeoisie, it was the role of the commodity which best symbolised its nature:

> For the bourgeoisie to calculate and accumulate their wealth so as to consolidate the stability of their power, they create the marketplace to sell the commodities which can be used in daily life (Chen, 1987: 74).

It is this process of commodification which drives Baudrillard's second order of simulacra; where "the 'origin' of counterfeit becomes the 'technique' of production", and "the myth of equivalence (of the original, of identical objects) achieves its glory by effacing the original" (Chen, 1987: 74). As a result "nostalgia for a 'natural' order (first

order value) is abandoned" (Chen, 1987: 75). This is the era of mass production, which saw the rise of the department store in big cities. Whereas the first order contained elements of illusion and transience, in the second order the space began to exhibit qualities which further removed individuals from the natural world to the world of reproduction where:

> The production of 'identical series' and of equivalence has thus been displaced by the nonidentical, infinite reproduction of objects; [where] the signifier defeats the signified (Chen, 1987: 75).

Individuals became immersed in signs which were less solid, gradually removing the foundations of identity which have previously anchored them to a specific social location. The perception of the individual, in this case the *flâneur*, is that he is constructing for himself a conception of reality which is based on the signs and symbols which are reproduced for his consumption. In the social space which he occupies, the *flâneur* perceives reality from signifiers which are not necessarily rooted in 'natural' reality, but which, nevertheless, give him a sense of reality.

The *flâneur* exhibits a number of characteristics of Baudrillard's third order of simulacra, that of simulation, which has as its key the idea of consumption. Through his discussions of hyperreality, Baudrillard stresses the importance of the move from production to consumption, a situation where the process of signification becomes more and more abstract to nature, and eventually to the productive source which first led to that abstraction (Chen, 1987: 78). This results in an 'aestheticised hallucination of reality' in which space and time are no longer governed by natural laws and where:

> There is no longer any distinction of interiority and exteriority; the mental the psychological, and the metaphorical are all hyperrealized and simulated on the surface (Chen, 1987: 78).

This seems to suggest that hyperrealised postmodern space has developed into something of a two-dimensional affair, a view of reality which lacks depth. In other words, we only perceive reality from the veneer of signs to which we are exposed. For Chen this leads us to ask:

> Does it matter whether the film is real or unreal? On the screen, Reagan's imperialist attack on Libya can be as real as *The A Team*'s explosive fight (Chen, 1987: 79).

For Baudrillard it is not reality itself which is important, but the way in which we perceive reality through the signs and symbols which we receive through our interaction with postmodern imagery. MTV (Music Television) is often used as a typical example of this imagery:

Although MTV is not the 'mirror' of postmodernity, it is a condensed version of our world, an extreme pole of our cultural manifestation... (Chen, 1987: 79).

The 'originality' of MTV lies in its technique of montage, collage, segmentation with the quotation of irrelevant cultural representation. It abandons the ideology of reality principle: the original, the copy, the same, and the like are displaced by simulacrum without the nostalgia of creativity. The practice of MTV has nothing to do with truth or reality; the infinite (re)production of fascinating image satellites the hyperreality of simulacrum (Chen, 1987: 80).

From this description I suggest that MTV meets most of the criteria that I have seen as being present in a postmodern society. The techniques which MTV employs takes the viewer through a plethora of sounds and images which seldom show any linkage between them. This is the perspective which the postmodern tourist has, a barrage of signs which neither reflect the natural world, nor the world of everyday perception. As Chen says, it is a condensed version of postmodernity.[3]

MTV is only one of many examples of postmodern culture which have emerged in society in recent years. Collectively they have resulted in an invasion of society which has in many ways transformed it. This has resulted in the eclectic mixing of high and mass culture and the free flowing of signs in what I have called a sea of culture - an important factor in the construction of the de-universalised society. While this in itself is significant, what I think is of more importance to my discussions of social space in postmodernity is the fact that MTV is most commonly 'consumed' in such as pubs, clubs, hotels and fitness centres. Here the imagery is not generally the focal point of the individual's attention, but something which is secondary to the principal actions of the 'consumer'. In other words, while it is not excluded from society as such, it does act as something of a marginal item, adding to the general ambience without being central to it.

MTV provides an extreme example of how the nature of space has developed in postmodernity. While television was, and still is on many levels, something which is watched exclusively, MTV does not place this expectation on the viewer. It merely occupies a space which is not particular in its definition, yet which is very localised occupying a definite niche within society - providing a concentrated reflection of it.

The Nature of Postmodern Space.

In general...the 'reassertion' of space into postmodern theory has led to widespread critical attention being given to emergent spatial transformations in our everyday lives as the loci of our coming into experience and collective social action (Genocchio, 1995: 35).

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[3] MTV is also self-conscious, its Saturday evening programme *Postmodern* being a good example of the reflexive behaviour of the channel. It knows exactly what it is, and what it is providing, an intense experience of postmodern imagery where the advertisements cannot be discerned from the programme output of the station.

Even from the limited discussion above, it is clear that the role of space and spatial awareness is important to any discussions about contemporary society and culture. In a way this was inevitable given the reflexive nature of such a milieu. It is a reflexivity which is inherent within many individuals, and the roles which they enact within society, as well as the society itself. For Lefebvre:

> When we evoke 'space', we must immediately indicate what occupies that space, and how it does so... (Lefebvre, 1991: 12).

I would suggest that from what I have already said about postmodern space this is problematic. The de-universalised society does not presuppose any sort of uniform ordering of space. Instead it is occupied by free-floating cultural phenomena which act both independently and often within the same area of social space. In thinking of space, therefore, I am not suggesting some sort of mundane space in which only one phenomenon can exist at any one time. Instead I shall discuss a complex multivalent space, or even series of spaces, which allows for a series of social and cultural phenomena to exist. Continuing from the previous quotation, Lefebvre suggests:

> When we evoke 'time' we must immediately say what it is that moves or changes therein (Lefebvre, 1991: 12).

It is clear that the relationship between space and time has altered in the move from the modern to the postmodern:

> We have often been told...that we inhabit the synchronic rather than the diachronic, and I think that it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism (Jameson, 1991: 16).

Examining this in the context of reflexive lifestyle choices and fateful moments it would seem that each significant change would mean individuals occupying a fresh series of spaces. This underlines the precarious nature of self identity which must make its way through the labyrinth of signs and symbols which make up daily life, reminiscent of the *flâneur*'s negotiation of the city. Now, however, the labyrinth is less solid, a hyperreal state where "only transience is durable":

> What has disappeared, has every chance of reappearing. For what dies is annihilated in linear time, but what disappears passes into the state of constellation. It becomes an event in a cycle which may bring it back many times (Baudrillard, 1990: 92; cited in Bauman, 1992: 174).

This brings together much of what I have been discussing previously. First, within the context of a postmodern society I suggest that such spaces, in their purest sense, are

random collections of signs and symbols which offer no real continuity between one moment and the next. Rather they float in a labyrinthine sea of culture, through which the individual must navigate. This leads to the second consideration, that this gives rise to a situation where individuals in these spaces are undergoing experiences which are constantly changing from moment to moment - but in a way which, Bauman suggests, are in no way connected (Bauman, 1992: 166). If this is the case then it is conceivable that time no longer has to be seen in a linear sense, but becomes fragmented into a "series of perpetual presents" (Featherstone, 1991: 99) which are only constructed diachronically in retrospect - where tourists construct their holidays out of the series disparate events in which they have participated.

In many ways this is a very seductive argument, not least because it seems to contain many elements of the baroque which appear to have persisted throughout the project of modernity, and right into postmodernity. The labyrinth has become less and less solid as perceptions become more and more 'hyperreal'. Also the ruin, which can be taken as the baroque equivalent of postmodern ideas of transience, can be seen in terms of the constant and reflexive search for stability and security:

> The ruin is stable to the highest degree - any further decay would only make it more thoroughly what it already is... (van Reijen, 1992: 6).

Transience can also be seen in this sense, so the more transient something is - the more it is transient. As Bryan Turner suggests, these seem to have the same effect on individuals who experience them:

> A fascination with ruins was a important feature of the baroque sense of the artificiality and constructive nature of social reality.

This he feels led to

> ...the profound sense of social change and decadence which surrounded the political culture of the baroque found its expression in a set of images and themes which expressed a deep sense of alienation from society, self and nature (Turner, 1994a: 23).

These parallels can also be seen in terms of space. Buci-Glucksmann (1994: 53-61) discusses baroque space with regard to Klee's picture - *Angelus Novus*. She suggests that, it provides a representation of an angel which focuses attention on the space which such a creature occupies. The angel has human features but what makes up those features are not necessarily human attributes in themselves. Here the angel can be seen as occupying something of an indeterminate and ambivalent space in a sort of 'intermediate world' (Buci-Glucksmann, 1994: 58) - as in baroque theatre where the figure of the angel is usually associated with illusion:

[T]he Angel's labour still resumes the great angelic utopia of the baroque, which consisted in making something visible, in being a pure apparition that made appearance appear, from a position just on its edges (Buci-Glucksmann, 1994: 60).

Returning to the example of MTV, which, as Jameson suggests, represents the "spatialization of music" (Jameson, 1991: 299) there is a similar idea in that the illusion is somehow peripheral to the space, while at the same time adding to the nature of that space. Both represent a certain spatialisation which is in some way ephemeral, but also self conscious and representative of its time and milieu.

Such a comparison underlines a number of similarities which may exist between the baroque and postmodernity, which I shall explore in relation to the roles of identity and tradition in these ephemeral spaces. In order to achieve this I wish to also suggest how Buddhism may be regarded in this context. To do this, however, requires a common ground for discussion. This, I suggest, may also be found in the dichotomy between reality and illusion. In contemporary Western society 'reality' may be discerned through the operation of quasi-memory where a diachronic sequence is constructed which is, as Giddens states, "the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his or her own biography" (Giddens, 1991: 53). If this is the case then individuals may perceive these ephemeral or hyperreal signs and symbols in such a way as to construct for themselves diachronic biographies and traditions through this, primarily synchronic, process of reflexivity. In this way the creation of space is intrinsically linked to the construction of both synchronic identity and diachronic identities and traditions. From this position I would argue that it is possible to suggest that traditions may occupy a series of spaces which do not necessarily follow a diachronic lineage, although they may be perceived as doing so by those who construct them. This also allows any number of traditions to inhabit the same cultural and societal space without paradox or contradiction. Each tradition, including religious traditions, is constructed from a series of synchronic roles which have become particularised into the de-universalised society. What are regarded as traditions are cross-sections of perceived diachronic constructions - the synchronic - which may actually bear little relation to what they were previously. This is because of a quasi-memory and how it is effected by such as fateful moments, lifestyle choices, and the constant process of reflexivity.

This underlines the connection between construction of spaces of identity and tradition, and the nature of postmodern society and culture. When perception of reality is also added in to the 'formula' I would argue that Buddhism too can be seen in such terms. As such there is a certain provisionality about these states of reality. In Buddhism this is highlighted by the many layers of reality which depend on the level of awareness of individuals. Such provisionality is evident in postmodernity from its lack

of solidity: where everything is valid 'until further notice'. Hence 'reality' is not as it appears, the search for meaning being undertaken through a labyrinth of ephemeral signs and symbols which do not lend themselves to any permanency. Taking these ideas on a purely theoretical level, it is very difficult to see how such abject provisionality can actually lead to any fruitful search for meaning. Like the ruin, transience only leads to transience. For Jameson this can be see in Kevin Lynch's *Image of the City*:

> ...the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves (Lynch, 1960).

To which Jameson responds:

> Disalienation in the traditional city, then, involves the practical reconquest of a sense of place and the construction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in the memory... (Jameson, 1991: 51).

Although this solution seems to discount any ideas of quasi-memory, in one sense he does seem to be advocating something of a solidification of reality through a search for meaning. He cites Louis Althusser[4] who sees ideology as "the representation of the subject's *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence" (Jameson, 1991: 51). Placing this in terms of the individual's role within the city Jameson suggests:

> Surely this is exactly what the cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city: to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structure as a whole (Jameson, 1991: 51).

I think that here Jameson is in fact underlining the provisionality of such a quest, where any perception is on a series of particularised bases, and not at a global level. This is the essence of the de-universalised society, and in particular the way in which it arbitrates between the paradox of the particular (as opposed to the local) and the global. The 'narrower framework of daily life' represents the particularised spaces which the individual can be seen to inhabit at any one moment; where the 'unrepresentable totality' represents the globalised society which does arguably exist, but cannot be discerned at the particular level. The mediation between the two could be seen in terms of what Featherstone calls a "flexible underlying generative structure" (Featherstone, 1991: 27) which allows for a multiplicity of traditions within a global, but de-universalised order. Traditions need not necessarily originate within a

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[4] L. Althusser - 1972, 'Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy* (New York).

particular diachronic space. But, because of the way in which culture exists at its most macrocosmic global level, the injection of tradition in the form of cultural signs and symbols outside of the particular cannot be ruled out - the transition and translation of Buddhism into Britain being a good example of this. This further highlights the labyrinthine and transient nature of any search for meaning within such an order, and also helps to explain why such a search can no longer take place in a universal sense.

Knowledge and Space

For Jameson, space has become extremely important in postmodern thinking

> ...postmodern theory...infers a certain supplement of spatiality in the contemporary period and suggests that there is a way in which, even though other modes of production (or other moments of our own) are distinctively spatial, ours has been spatialized in a unique sense, such that space is for us an existential and cultural dominant...in striking contrast to its relatively subordinate and secondary...role in earlier modes of production (Jameson, 1991: 365).

In the context of knowledge which I have, so far tenuously, connected to the idea of de-universalised and Buddhist spaces. I suggest that the occupancy and creation of these spaces is primarily to satisfy the search for meaning - the desire for knowledge in order to further construct space, where transience leads only to transience. This points to a significant relationship between knowledge and space, as Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991: 3-4) suggests:

> The scientific attitude, understood as the application of 'epistemological' thinking to acquired knowledge, is assumed to be 'structurally' linked to the spatial sphere (Lefebvre, 1991: 4).

This seems to be something of a starting point for Lefebvre. By placing this within the scientific context he is also placing it within the modern milieu. He then proceeds to chart the development of this relationship through a series of 'neo' philosophies describing what Jameson calls "a random cannibalization, the play of random stylistic allusion" (Jameson, 1991: 18). In other words, where postmodern eclecticism meets the study of Western thought - what one could call the creation of a postmodern philosophical space. Lefebvre, offers a critique of this approach, suggesting that those who engage in it "interrupt the continuity of their argument in the name of a discontinuity which their own methodology ought logically to prohibit" (Lefebvre, 1991: 5).

He suggests that the likes of Derrida, Kristeva and Barthes have created a mental space which is *apparently* 'extra-ideological'. But, he suggests:

In an inevitably circular manner, this mental space then becomes the locus of a 'theoretic practice' which sets itself up as the axis, pivot or central reference point of Knowledge (Lefebvre, 1991: 6).

He then makes a distinction which is extremely important for this study when he suggests that:

The quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space...and real space creates an abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other (Lefebvre, 1991: 6).

Consequently there may be a form of quasi-knowledge which actually links the two together. That is there is a parallel methodological concern between the quasi-knowledge which is used in the construction of diachronic spaces within Buddhism and the de-universalised society; and with the knowledge gained in postmodern academic spaces. If this is the case it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that only if one occupies this 'mental sphere' on an exclusive and permanent basis can one actually fully utilise the knowledge that is postulated there. If this is not the case, then surely a certain filter of perception comes into play as a result of the quasi nature of that knowledge with respect to what Lefebvre calls the physical and social spheres.

If this is the case I would suggest that this mental space has more to do with culture than society. So with the quasi-knowledge which is constructed and then transferred into society, which can be seen being analogous with hyperreal imagery. Imagery which is also of a quasi nature, as Marshall McLuhan famously said, "the medium is the message". If this is the case then it is the knowledge itself which regulates society and constructs the spaces in each case, allowing for a comparison between the quasi-knowledge which constructs the space synchronically and the quasi-memory which constructs the space diachronically:

The production of space, having attained the conceptual and linguistic level, acts retroactively upon the past, disclosing aspects and moments of the hitherto uncomprehended. The past appears in a different light, and hence the process whereby the past becomes the present also takes on another aspect (Lefebvre, 1991: 65).

In terms of the construction of the de-univeralised society I would argue that quasi-knowledge and quasi-memories come from many different and fragmented sources. In other words, the many and varied synchronic and diachronic spaces are a reflection of the plethora of epistemological sources from which they are made:

...space may be said to embrace a multitude of intersections, each with its assigned location (Lefebvre, 1991: 33).

Examining this in terms of British Buddhism within a de-universalised society I can argue that it is constructed from many and varied synchronic and diachronic spaces

which are both global and particular in nature. This results in a series of Buddhist de-universalised spaces which occupy certain positions, what I have termed niches within society, which are able to operate both within, and as interfaces to, other spaces. As Lefebvre comments:

> Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not things, which can have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours or as a result of inertia (Lefebvre, 1991: 87).

Such cultural hybridity allows for the appearance of certain cultural phenomena in the interstitial spaces between the hybrids which, on one level, form at the interface between spaces, but on another are a result of the interpenetration and superimposition of spaces on each other.

?topias.

> Once diversified, places opposed, sometimes complemented and sometimes resembled one another. They can thus be categorized or subjected to a grid on the basis of 'topias' (isotopias, heterotopias, utopias, or in other words analogous places, contrasting places, and the place of what has no place, or no longer has a place - the absolute, the divine, or the possible) (Lefebvre, 1991: 162-3).

In this section I shall discuss the actual purpose of spatial construction. So far I have only done this in terms of the means of that construction, the actual search for meaning itself. But what is the ultimate aim of such spatial construction regardless of the extent to which this is achieved in a reflexive or self-conscious way? I shall begin by referring back to Jameson's notion of mental space. Given that this is somewhat abstract from social and physical space there is no direct comparison which I can make, although I have sought to establish that the relationship between these spaces is theoretically similar.

Jameson sees those postmodern thinkers who occupy this mental space as being committed to fragmentation - the collapse of the master narrative - which he sees in the following terms:

> The hostility to the concept of 'totalization' would thus seem to be most plausibly decoded as a systematic repudiation of notions and ideals of praxis as such, or of the collective project (Jameson, 1991: 333).

This idea of 'totalization' he suggests is frequently seen in terms of the 'mode of production'; "a notion that it would seem equally strategic for the postmodern to evade or exclude" (Jameson, 1991: 333). Fragmentary consumerism is seen as a more attractive alternative. Most importantly from the point of view of this thesis, he puts this in terms of utopianism. Jameson suggests that within the discussion about

totalisation lies the basis of a utopian language which is "now generally recognized as a code word for the systematic transformation of contemporary society" (Jameson, 1991: 334). Here Jameson sees the project of modernity as a utopian one which, in many ways, has been overhauled by postmodern ideas which are essentially 'anti-utopian'. This, he suggests, is because:

> [T]he social or collective illusion of Utopia, or of a radically different society, is flawed first and foremost because it is invested with a personal or existential illusion that it is itself flawed from the outset (Jameson, 1991: 335).

This, Jameson says, is on the one hand thought to stem from a basic fear of a utopian society which will result in something of a collapse of Western civilization as we know it:

> [T]he Utopian 'reconciliation of subject and object,' will somehow be a place of renunciation, of the simplification of life, of the obliteration of exciting urban difference and the muting of sensory stimulus (Jameson, 1991: 335).

While on the other it may lead to the so-called utopian desires of such as Stalin and Pol Pot. Whatever the reason, it is clear that from these examples there is an anxiety about utopia. I feel that to go into all the issues regarding this 'anti-utopianism' would be an unnecessary diversion. Instead I shall concentrate on the perceptions of such thinkers in putting forward these views. A good example of this is this idea that modernity will bring together a reconciliation of subject and object. I have suggested previously that a search for meaning in both modernity and postmodernity has included a increasing degree of renunciation from society; first with the *flâneur*, and then the tourist. Yet this renunciation was more in celebration of the complexity of life, of exciting urban difference, and of sensory stimulus. It could be argued that such projects do seek such a reconciliation of subject and object themselves. For Jameson this is illusory in two senses. First is the illusion of the individual searching for meaning, for some sort of reconciliation through the renunciatory labyrinth. While second is the Marxist occupier of mental space whose 'vision of history' is some form of uniform utopian golden age where all the evils of capitalism, including the dissociation of subject and object, will be dissolved (Jameson, 1991: 336-7).

The point which I wish to make is that both of these views, although opposing, are both utopian - only being 'anti-utopian' in relation to each other. Similarly both, to varying extents, are subject to an illusory interface. In the case of those occupying the mental space, this rests on the relationship between the physical and the social. Whereas the individual *flâneur*/tourist is subject to the illusion respectively of commodification and hyperreality. They are, then, very much two sides of the same coin to give one metaphor. Yet (to totally mix the metaphor) a coin with interesting reflective qualities. What I wish to argue here is that both utopian ideals are

constructed in order to reflect certain qualities; qualities which are themselves illusory. From the point of view of individual in their respective spaces, what are perceived as utopian ideas are actually far from the case. While this leads to important questions regarding the reality of such ideals, this should not in itself negate the importance of such perceptions. I shall, however, put such perceptions to one side in order to discuss what, if not actually utopias, are being constructed here.

I think that a good alternative explanation lies in Edward Soja's article 'Heterotopologies: A Remembrance of Other Spaces in the Citadel-LA' (Soja: 1995: 13-34). Here Soja concentrates on an article written by Foucault in the late 1960s entitled 'Of Other Spaces' which discusses "how to see the 'other spaces' hidden in the more obvious and diverting multiplicity of real-world sights and situations" (Soja, 1995: 14). Here Foucault examines 'heterotopias' which he sees as:

> ...something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the
> real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are
> simultaneously represented, contested and inverted (Foucault, 1986: 24).

What is most interesting from my point of view is that Foucault saw these as being reflections in utopias where:

> The mirror represents both 'in a sort of mixed, joint experience,' at once a
> placeless, virtual, unreal place in which I see myself where I am not, over there
> where I am absent (utopia); and a real, counteracting space in which I discover my
> absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there, a realization that
> makes me come back toward myself, to reconstitute myself there where I am
> (heterotopia) (Soja, 1995: 14).

Soja goes on to explain that these sites are constructed at the same time in order to "recreate and reveal the meaning of social being", whereas:

> To get to these 'other' spaces requires a different way of seeing, a different
> interpretive analytics (sic) (Soja, 1995: 15).

Given the obscure correlation between these, I have suggested that knowledge (or awareness) is paramount if any relationship between them is to be formulated. Given the importance of this comparison I shall look at the nature of these heterotopias in some detail before discussing them in relation to the real and illusory spaces that I have already discussed. I shall then look at all of these with respect to Buddhist philosophy.

Soja outlines six particular attributes of heterotopias[5] which allows us to see very clearly the nature of space that I have been discussing (Soja, 1995: 15-6). While

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[5] 1. No single heterotopia is ever universal. In this sense Foucault discusses two particular types of de-universalised spaces. First are "privileged, sacred, or forbidden spaces reserved for individuals who are in some way in a state of stressful personal transition"; the

each has its own construction, however ephemeral this may be, none of them can effectively exist in isolation from the others. I would suggest that the qualities which are inherent in these spaces are consistent with those which are present in the de-universalised spaces of contemporary Western society. This, first and foremost lies in the fact that Foucault does not regard them as universal. It is, however, where he locates them which renders them irresistible to my argument. Here we have spaces which change over time yet are also linked to particular 'slices of time', allowing for both diachronic progression and synchronic interaction. These are able to overlap and even juxtapose each other, making them both 'isolated and penetrable'. Finally, in seeing them as operating in respect to both illusion and delusion, we see elements of both quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory involved in both their construction and their maintenance, underlining the relationship which can be established between heterotopias and utopias.

In addition to the utilisation of quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory I wish to draw out two further aspects of the relationship between the utopia and the heterotopia. The first lies in Foucault's notion of utopia as "a placeless, virtual, unreal place in which I see myself where I am not" (Soja, 1995: 14). Here the utopia is seen as being outside the reality of an individual's situation. Yet this is only from an objective analysis, from the subjective perception of the individual it is very much something which is real, through the utilisation of quasi-memory and quasi-knowledge. So while the heterotopia represents a sort of anchor in 'reality', the utopia acts as a sort of fantasyland in which reflexive actions can be simulated. In terms of lifestyle choices, it is in the heterotopia that the decision is made, and the results of that decision experienced. This leads me to my second point, that the heterotopia would not exist

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nineteenth century boarding school, or the military service facility for example (Soja, 1995: 15). The second being 'other spaces' such as retirement homes, mental institutions and prisons.

2. These heterotopias can change in both function and meaning over time, "according to the particular 'synchrony of culture' in which they occur.

3. The heterotopia "is capable of juxtaposing in one real place several different spaces" which are either incompatible or foreign to each other (Soja, 1995: 15).

4. Heterotopias are particularly linked to slices of time; which Foucault termed 'heterochronies'. As Soja points out:

> This intersection and phasing of space and time, this periodization of spatialities, allows the heterotopia 'to function at full capacity' within a trackable historical geography. In the modern world, many specialized sites exist to record these crossroads of time and space (Soja, 1995: 15-6).

Examples of these include museums, libraries, and leisure and festival sites.

5. "Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that simultaneously makes them both isolated and penetrable" (Soja, 1995: 16). This occurs in cases and situations which exhibit qualities of human territoriality.

6. Heterotopias are spaces where "the occupant is tugged by the simultaneous pleasures of accentuated illusion and delusion" (Soja, 1995: 16).

in the same sense without the utopia, to reiterate Soja's comment about the relationship between them:

> [The heterotopia is] a real, counteracting space in which I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there, a realization that makes me come back toward myself, to reconstitute myself there where I am (Soja, 1995: 14).

Heterotopias can be seen as reflexive spaces which obey most of the rules which I have attributed to de-universalised spaces. They allow for the construction and maintenance of tradition and identity both synchronically and diachronically, but in a way which allows for interaction with other heterotopias/spaces regardless of their geographical, cultural or societal positions.

The Empty Net as Utopia.

Having considered the nature of postmodern space, and its relationship with both the de-universalised space in which I wish to place Western Buddhism, I shall now examine one of the most often cited constructions of postmodern space - the theme parks constructed by the Disney organisation. It is clear that a number of scholars regard these 'Disneyworlds' as examples of the archetypal postmodern city. This is certainly the case for Baudrillard who sees Disneyland as "a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation". He goes on to suggest that its attraction "is undoubtedly...the social microcosm, the miniaturised and *religious* revelling in real America, in its delights and drawbacks" (Baudrillard, 1983: 23). Disneyworlds are seen as utopias which encapsulate the 'American dream'; which act as a "digest of the American way of life, panegyric to American values, idealised transposition of a contradictory reality" (Baudrillard, 1983: 24-5). To this extent Baudrillard may be correct. However, I think that he goes too far to suggest that:

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America, which *is* Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imagery in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation (Baudrillard, 1983: 25).

Hyperreality can only be conceived, as Baudrillard sees it here, if one is exclusively subject to hyperreal media imagery. If we lived in a Disneyworld then we could well experience full aestheticisation of our everyday lives. I would argue that we do not, and as such Disneyworlds are more utopias in the Foucaultian sense of the world. They are idealised reflections of the multiple heterotopias which we inhabit each and every day, in other words that which makes the de-universalised society what it is. So while Baudrillard is right to suggest that "the real is no longer what it used to be"; he is

wrong to see it as being exclusively hyperreal, what Umberto Eco calls the 'Absolute Fake' (Eco, 1987: 43).

The Disneyworld is something of a hyperreal utopia which in some ways reflects the 'real' world; but is constructed using quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory. As Bauman suggests:

> Blatantly and unashamedly, it presents the dream as reality, the world - this world here and now, in this enclosure - as play and nothing but the play (Bauman, 1994: 151).

Disneyworlds represent the postmodern utopia in relation to the de-universalised heterotopia. They act as an idealised reflection of American heterotopias, but are not themselves heterotopias because they act as a sort of a fantasyland in which reflexive actions can be simulated in a playful and - as far as the internal operation of the parks is concerned - inconsequential way. Unlike the heterotopias which they reflect, they have no real anchor in reality, especially in the perception of those who visit, who believe them to be hyperreal simulacra. Yet without the utopia (the Disneyworld) the heterotopia would be different because of the actions it inspires. This is placed in the context of the baroque by Turner:

> The fantastic world of the baroque theatre beautifully expressed...[its] precarious fragility, just as Disneyland expresses the inner reality of modern consumerism (Turner, 1994a: 8).

Using the Disneyworld as an example, I shall now look at the role of Buddhist philosophy in creating heterotopic and utopian spaces, which I shall compare with postmodern utopias, before discussing how Buddhism may similarly operate within the de-universalised society. I shall suggest that Buddhists attempt to construct a similar relationship between the utopia and the heterotopia, in effect creating Disneyworlds of their own through the use of quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory. These will be utopias which will reflect the heterotopias which they occupy, those of the de-universalised society - only some of which will be Buddhist, but all of which will have been synchronically and diachronically constructed with regard to both identity and tradition. In doing this I shall seek to underline affinities which I believe exist between Buddhist philosophy and contemporary Western thought.

As David Loy points out Western philosophy was, until recently, a project which contained a variety of approaches aimed at discovering the a fundamental grounding which provides the basis for all sentient thought. During this century, however, this project has ended; not in success but through abandonment (Loy, 1993: 481). Freud's analysis of ego-consciousness, Saussure's severance of the connection between the signifier and the signified, and Barthes's notions of textual fragmentation have resulted in a multi-dimensional intellectual space which displays less overall

coherence than ever before. This has be continued and exemplified by Derrida who, according to Loy, argues that

> ...the meaning of such a multidimensional space can never be completely fulfilled, for the continual circulation of signifiers denies meaning any fixed foundation or conclusion. Hence texts never attain self-presence, and that includes the text that constitutes *me* (Loy, 1993: 481).

He goes on to consider how these claims about textuality could be applied universally, and suggests that the third century C.E. Chinese Buddhist metaphor of Indra's Net could be used as an example of how Buddhist ideas could be seen as similar to those of Derrida's (Loy, 1993: 481). This is especially apt since Indra's Net is often used by Buddhist teachers as a way of explaining the nature of *prafītyasamutpāda* to Westerners. It is thought that the metaphor first appeared in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (Jones, 1989: 136), and is said to be typical of the Hua-yen tradition of Chinese Buddhism in the way that it uses similes to describe difficult concepts (Loy, 1993: 482). The 'net', is a representation of the one which hung above the palace of the Vedic god Indra:

> Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net that has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions (Cook, 1977: 2, cited in Loy, 1993: 481).

At each eye of the net is a jewel, each of which is reflected in every other jewel. For Buddhists the 'net' can be viewed on a number of levels. Ultimately it reflects the doctrine of *prafītyasamutpāda* which stands at the root of much Buddhist teaching, underlining the relationship between the human condition, as it is perceived, and *nirvāṇa*. In particular it suggests that there is no first cause, but a series of interconnected causations which have resulted in the illusory creation of the conventional world, and the sentience of human beings. The twelve links (*nidānas*) can be seen in a similar way to the jewels in Indra's Net in that they all reflect each other in the construction of the lifeworlds which humans inhabit.

For Loy an association with post-structuralist philosophy is particularly apt since the textuality of Indra's Net is essentially beyond language. This lies in the interconnectedness which is the *raison d'être* of its speculation. In Indra's Net everything is grounded in everything else, yet at the same time everything is ultimately groundless:

> [They] include similar critiques of self-existence/self-presence; a shared suspicion about the ontotheological quest for Being, and a corresponding emphasis on groundlessness; the deconstruction of such 'transcendental signifieds' into ungraspable traces of traces; a rejection of Truth...as the intellectual attempt to fixate ourselves; and the questioning of both objectivitst and subjectivist values (Loy, 1993: 483-4).

This is the nature of the mental space which Derrida seeks to create. An intellectual utopia/dystopia in which, like Indra's Net, everything is a reflection of everything else, to the extent that there is nothing fundamental underpinning it. This is best described by Derrida, as cited by Loy. First in a critique of Plato's cave:

> Imagine that mirrors would not be *in* the world, simply, included in the totality of all *onta* and their images, but that things 'present' on the contrary, would be in *them*. Imagine that mirrors...would no longer be *comprehended* within the structure of the ontology and myth of the cave...but would rather envelop it in its entirety, producing here or there a particular, extremely determinate effect (Derrida, 1981: 324, cited in Loy, 1993: 484).

> In this play of representation, the point of origin becomes ungraspable. There are things like reflecting pools, and images, an infinite reference from one to the other, but no longer a source, a spring. There is no longer simple origin (Derrida, 1976: 36, cited in Loy, 1993: 484).

These comments provide basis with which to compare Derridian thought with Indra's Net. In Derrida's case between the physical and social spheres and the mental sphere, and in Buddhism between conventional and ultimate truth. I have already suggested that this may be seen as form of quasi-knowledge which may reflect the complexly hybrid heterotopia onto the utopia/dystopia. For Derrida this is an ephemeral process which is highly reflexive, lacking any depth. It questions the nature of reality, which for Derrida is ultimately groundless. While this would not be the position of all Buddhist philosophers, there does seem to be a particular correlation between Derrida's ideas and the Madhyamika philosophy of Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna's hypothesis can, in many ways, be seen as a response to the partial systematisation of Buddhist philosophy by the Abhidharma school between the third and first centuries B.C.E.. Along with the many schools which were proliferating at this time, the Abhidharma aimed to clarify the Buddha's teaching for the growing Buddhist community in North India, initially under the tutelage of Aśoka (Streng, 1967: 30-31). Principally, it sought to analyse the 'building blocks' of existence (*dharmas*), of which there were said to be eighty-two[6] (Williams, 1989: 14-15). While the Abhidharma school recognised that ultimately these dharmas were illusory, for Nāgārjuna they allowed for far too much substantiality. They were seen as 'factors of existence', 'bases of cognition' and 'universal elements' "which unite to form the stream of moments which most people commonly call existence" (Streng: 1967: 32).

Indeed, in addition to the Hua-yen tradition, Loy also considers Derridian thought in terms of Nāgārjuna's philosophy. As A.P. Tuck (1990) suggests this is nothing new since Western interpreters have been fascinated by him since the first half of the nineteenth century (Tuck, 1990: 32ff). Indeed, as Tuck suggests, Western

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[6] Eighty-one of these were thought to be conditioned, the eighty-second being nirvana.

philosophical perceptions of Nāgārjuna have in many ways reflected developments in Western thought itself. Tuck places these into three distinct categories. The first, exemplified by the Russian scholar Fyodor I. Stcherbatsky, read Nāgārjuna "as if he were a Platonic or, more usually, Kantian transcendentalist" (Tuck, 1990: v). Many of the recognised founders of Buddhist scholarship[7], regarded Madhyamika thought as nihilistic and annihilationist. This negativity meant that Nāgārjuna was not taken particularly seriously. Stcherbatsky, however, - writing in the first decades of the twentieth century - began to challenge some of these early conceptions. While he upheld the view that nirvāṇa was annihilation:

> He was the first to write that regardless of soteriological emphasis and negative terminology, no Buddhist school, not excluding Madhyamika, was guilty of philosophical nihilism. (Tuck, 1990: 36)

While his peers regarded Nāgārjuna's conception of emptiness (śūnyatā) as evidence of nihilism, for Stcherbatsky it meant relativity, a voidness of interdependent moments in themselves (Welbon, 1968: 290; Tuck, 1990: 37). He believed that Madhyamika was a philosophy of 'radical monism' where emptiness was supposed to deny the reality of empirical phenomena, but not the absolute (Tuck, 1990: 37). Through studies of other Buddhist thinkers[8], Stcherbatsky believed he had found a way of reading Kant into Eastern philosophy where the 'intellect' constructs a synthetic world of conceptual illusion, where it "is only the transcendental, preconceptual objects of sensation that can be considered noumenal" (Tuck, 1990: 39-40). Stcherbatsky saw this in terms of a theory of 'Universal Momentariness' where there is no time, space or motion over and above a series of 'point-instants' which successively arise, and which are constructed by the imagination (Stcherbatsky, 1930: 84; Tuck, 1990: 40).

Stcherbatsky took the view that interpretations of one Buddhist school could be applied to any other. This was particularly difficult in the case of Madhyamika thought, and particularly through Nāgārjuna's equation of saṃsāra with nirvāṇa. In this context Stcherbatsky seems to suggest that Nāgārjuna does not deny that there is any disjunction between appearance and reality, seeing his paradoxical notions of the identity of two levels of reality as proof of Kant's relationship between phenomena and noumena (Tuck, 1990: 44ff).

While with hindsight we may regard many of Stcherbatsky's conclusions with a certain amount of scepticism, he makes two important contributions to the understanding of Buddhist philosophy, and particularly the philosophy of Nāgārjuna, in Western thought. First, he begins to move away from the negativity and nihilism

[7] Including Eugene Burnouf, Louis de la Vallée Poussin, Jules Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire and Max Müller.
[8] Most notably the writings of Dignāga (fourth century C.E.), and Dharmakīrti (seventh century C.E.).

which most Western interpreters had attached to Buddhism. Second, he helped to establish certain similarities between Buddhist and Western philosophy which would have an effect on both Eastern and Western thinkers (Tuck, 1990: 47ff). Indeed, it was an Indian scholar, T.R.V. Murti, who was most influenced by Stcherbatsky's work. Murti also sought to debunk the notion that Nāgārjuna was a nihilist, rather referring to him as an absolutist (Tuck, 1990: 47). Like Stcherbatsky, Murti associated absolutism with monism suggesting that "the Absolute (Śūnya) is the universal, impersonal reality of the world." (Murti, 1955: 280) As Tuck points out, however, Murti ran into difficulty in trying to prove this absolutism, eventually having to postulate the existence of two absolutisms, one epistemological and the other metaphysical, where the former is the means, and the latter the end (Murti, 1974: 19; Tuck, 1990: 50). Murti, furthermore, also used this differentiation to distinguish between what he saw as the metaphysical absolutism of the Vedānta (Murti was himself a devout Hindu) and the epistemological absolutism of Nāgārjuna, using Kant to qualify this latter position:

> The position occupied by the Madhyamika in Indian philosophy is similar to that of
> Kant in modern European philosophy...both the Madhyamika and Kant can justly
> be credited with having initiated the critical phase in philosophy in their respective
> spheres (Murti, 1955: 51).

For Tuck this idea that Nāgārjuna created some form of 'Copernican revolution' in Indian philosophy provided Murti with the reason that he needed to avoid associating Madhyamika with metaphysical absolutism (Tuck, 1990: 51). By looking at Murti's ideas *in toto*, however, one begins to get the idea that these assertions are little more than cosmetic and this creates a tension in Murti's work which remains unresolved. In other words, he has attempted to use Kantian notions of reality in conjunction with those of Nāgārjuna in an effort to resolve a problem which has arisen because he was so keen to negate the view that Nāgārjuna was a nihilist, but unable to accept that he was a monist in the same vein as Śankara. Nevertheless, this became the generally accepted approach for scholars in both Europe and India, although its shortcomings meant that it would soon be superseded by a different approach.

These Kantian analyses of Nāgārjuna, together with further developments in Western philosophy[9] brought Madhyamika to the centre of the whole structure of Buddhist thought (Tuck, 1990: 54). By the 1950's, however, the Idealist position of Stcherbatsky and Murti was beginning to come into question from philosophers who were more concerned with the logic of Nāgārjuna's arguments rather than his metaphysical position. They postulated that, for Nāgārjuna, the world of conventional truth is not 'unreal', nor is it less real than the absolute, but just as real - and just as

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[9] Tuck especially cites G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, A.J. Ayer and the Vienna Circle (Tuck, 1990: 54).

empty (Tuck, 1990: 54). Typical of these logical positivist and analytical philosophers was R.H. Robinson, for whom Buddhist texts were not so much religious treatise as objects of philosophical and mathematical study:

> The *Mādhyamikakārikā* was no longer considered a monolithic entity to be read and understood in its entirety. It was now a collection of propositions, syllogisms, and logical devices that could be isolated, translated into artificial languages, and judged for their logical validity (Tuck, 1990: 55)

Murti's analyses of Nāgārjuna, while presenting certain meeting points between Western and Eastern philosophy, had shown a degree of strain in getting them to meet. Robinson termed this the 'metaphysical' phase of Western scholarship which he regarded as unsophisticated and needlessly complex and confusing:

> The "metaphysical" debate has exhibited extreme variety of opinion, and the attempt to describe Madhyamika as an "ism" has led various people to call it nihilism, negativism, monism, relativism, irrationalism, criticism, and absolutism. Attempts to find transformulations based on analogy with Western thinkers have not gone very far. The more usual comparisons, those with Kant and Hegel, are not apposite because Kant and Hegel's structures differ too radically from any on the Indian systems in question (Robinson, 1957: 291-292; Tuck: 1990: 56).

Instead Robinson sought to explain the logic of Nāgārjuna's arguments through mathematical formulae, adopting Russellian notions of language structure, concentrating in particular on the concept of *svabhāva* ('own being' or 'self-existence'). Indeed, it was through his analysis of this that Robinson was able to distinguish Madhyamika from other Eastern philosophical systems in a way that his predecessors were not. He believes that Nāgārjuna regarded self-existence and relational existence as being mutually exclusive, that is that "no entity or state can be said to possess 'own-being' or 'intrinsic self-existence' and at the same time to exist in a relational context with other entities or states" (Tuck, 1990: 59). Robinson believed that Nāgārjuna presented this paradox, that all existent things are without intrinsic self-existence and are not dependent, in order to expose his philosophical opponents, something which ultimately failed (Tuck, 1990: 60-61).

By removing the metaphysical approach to Nāgārjuna's work, Robinson exposed raw paradoxes which he sought to simplify and explain through pure logic. This had the result in limiting the scope of *Mādhyamikakārikā* to the paradox between existence and self-existence (Tuck, 1990: 63). It was this sort of approach, therefore, which became dominant in the 1950's and 1960's but never really seemed to completely square with the entirely of Madhyamika philosophy. As Tuck suggests, these analytical interpreters could never comfortably claim that Nāgārjuna was one of them (Tuck, 1990: 74). What these studies did reveal, however, was that Madhyamika philosophy exposed the limits of language, as Robinson himself states:

Emptiness is not a term outside the expressional system, but is simply a key term within it. Those who would hypostatize emptiness are confusing the symbol system with the fact system. No metaphysical fact whatever can be established from the facts of language (Robinson, 1967: 49; Tuck, 1990: 75).

Although this statement carries with it Robinson's concerns about metaphysics, it does highlight the problem of language which confronted Nāgārjuna, and was also very much coming to the fore in Western philosophy. This common ground soon came to be recognised, as Tuck remarks:

As soon as terms such as "language game," "family resemblance," "private language," "form of life," and "ordinary language" started to filter into the conversation of students of Indian philosophy, Nāgārjuna's name was immediately, and repeatedly, linked with Wittgenstein's...this new generation of scholars began to read his *Mādhyamikakārikā* as if it were an explanatory gloss on the *Philosophical Investigations* (Tuck, 1990: 75).

Unlike such as Robinson, these scholars regarded Nāgārjuna's work in a positive light comparing, for instance, his treatment of *pratītyasamutpāda* with Wittgenstein's notion of a 'language game' (Waldo, 1978: 295f). This relationship was regarded as a two-way process, furthermore, with each being seen as a cipher for the other. Nāgārjuna's ideas were no longer regarded as something mystical or paradoxical, whereas Wittgenstein's notions were suddenly given a framework through which they could be interpreted. The latter's assertion that the 'limits of language are the limits of my world' seemed to rest easily with Nāgārjuna's equation of *saṃsāra* with *nirvāṇa*; and notions of emptiness did not seem so strange when those interpreting them were considering 'meaning as use' rather than 'meaning as representation' (Tuck, 1990: 77).

Not only did the approach to Madhyamika change, however, but also what scholars concentrated on. While such as Stcherbatsky was mostly concerned with *sunyata* and *nirvāṇa*, and Robinson with *svabhāva*, those influenced by Wittgenstein emphasised *pratītyasamutpāda*. Indeed, it is in this scholastic milieu that leads Loy to suggest that comparisons between Nāgārjuna and Indra's Net are particularly apposite since:

Madhyamika conclusions about nonsubstantiality and nonorigination are translated into the Hua-yen teachings of nonobstruction and nonimpededness (Loy, 1993: 485).

In explaining this process, Nāgārjuna suggests that the deconstruction of the self, and the self's perception of reality, can be viewed in three stages. First is the self as most people view it, a substantial and sentient entity which interacts with an objective and substantial world both of which act within objective space and time. Second is the

deconstruction of the objective self and the phenomenal world. The basis of this for Nāgārjuna lies in becoming aware that everything is essentially empty (śūnya). Indeed, he uses emptiness to express the very nature of 'ultimate reality', the third stage - the realisation of which is the soteriological goal. Emptiness, for Nāgārjuna, is something without qualities of which there can be no conception, and which contains no value. Peter Harvey gives a crude but useful example of how this can be conceived by equating emptiness with the role of zero in the decimal system. Although it is without value and essentially nothing - without it the whole system would collapse (P. Harvey, 1990: 100). As Streng - who is "self-avowedly disposed towards Wittgensteinian reformulations of philosophical issues" (Tuck, 1990: 81) - suggests, unlike many other soteriological goals emptiness is not seen as an essence which has attributes, but is a term which is used to distinguish between conventional and ultimate levels of cognition (Streng, 1967: 21). For Streng, Nāgārjuna's concept of emptiness is both noteworthy and unique in that it serves both dialectical and discursive functions. The former in the total dependence on logic for expressing ultimate truth; and the latter in the way that he applied emptiness to various ideas and symbols (Streng, 1967: 35).

Unlike the Abhidharma school, Nāgārjuna stated that there was no essential difference between anything that is perceived to exist, nor between perceptions of existence and non-existence. There were absolutely no boundaries, either spatially or temporally. This all-encompassing notion of emptiness highlights the discursive element within Nāgārjuna's work, the element which is stressed by the Abhidharma school. It is the dialectical element, however, which dominates his thinking. Indeed, it is here where the similarities with Indra's Net are most obvious in his analysis of emptiness in relation to *pratītyasamutpāda*. He considered that early Buddhist causal theories could only be true in the conventional sense, ultimate truth being devoid of any conditioning process (Streng, 1967: 59). The basis of this lay in his belief that *dharmas* are essentially empty:

Since existing things which have no self-existence are not real,
It is not possible at all that: "This thing 'becomes' upon the existence of that other one."
(*Madhyamakakarikas*, Chap.1 v.10; cited in Streng, 1967: 60).

Instead of seeing *pratityasamutpada* as a causal sequence which keeps people in the realm of rebirths, he placed great emphasis on the notion that because all things are dependent, and fundamentally empty, they have no self-existence.[10] Constructed phenomena cannot be seen as separate entities which interact, and can only be conceived in relation to other phenomena. This explains the groundlessness which Indra's Net represents, for Nāgārjuna the fundamental emptiness of existence. In other words the Net is supported by the mutuality of its individual elements but without a fundamental grounding, so the inter-connectedness of *pratityasamutpada* is essentially empty but, as Tuck suggests, is the closest that he comes to a 'description' of reality (Tuck, 1990: 82), as Loy explains:

If things originate..., there are no self-existing things; but if there are no things, then there is nothing to originate and no origination (Loy, 1993: 486).

This is the third stage, which Nāgārjuna equates with *nirvāṇa*, a realisation of this insubstantiality of existence - from which he equates *saṃsāra* with *nirvāṇa*, regarding both as being essentially empty This latter equation seems to be commensurate with Derrida's critique of Plato's cave where every signified is a mirror of every other creating an all encompassing 'construction' which is essentially empty and has no point of origin. Consequently, signifiers are part of an all-encompassing epistemological structure which has no depth of meaning as such other than for its own self-reference. Knowledge plays a key role in this. The equation of *saṃsāra* with *nirvāṇa* shows how comprehensive emptiness is - as well as emphasising its inconceivability, its inexpressibility, and its insubstantiality:

Thus, "emptiness" itself is empty in both an ontological and epistemological sense: "it" is devoid of any self-sufficient being, and it is beyond both designations "empty" and "non-empty" (Streng, 1967: 80).

Epistemologically, emptiness is not an expression or a proposition about something, but a spontaneous power (Streng, 1967: 83).

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[10] Although there are important similarities here which render a comparison between Madhyamika and Hua-yen philosophies useful, it is important to recognise certain differences which, while they do not fundamentally affect my arguments, do need to be acknowledged. This is most obvious in their respective views of causality. While both systems regard the *dharmas* as being fundamentally empty and interdependent, where nothing can exist except in a complex network of interrelationships (Tuck, 1990: 86; Williams, 1989: 133f). For the Madhyamika origination and causality do not come from the entities themselves (Williams, 1977; 1989: 65). In Hua-yen thought, however, this is subtly different where "each entity is a cause, *the* cause, for the totality..." (Williams, 1989: 133).

In order to compare with the other conceptions of knowledge which I have been discussing in this chapter, however, it is necessary to ascertain exactly what its role is. The three stages in the deconstruction of the self which Nāgārjuna outlines are dependent on the awareness of the individual. This is expressed as wisdom (*prājña*), but a wisdom which does not have any object of knowledge as such. In postulating the first two stages of objective deconstruction, however, Nāgārjuna does recognise the validity and utility of conventional truth in bringing the individual to the realisation of emptiness.

Comparative Groundlessness.

As the above examination of Western interpretations of Madhyamika thought reveals, there has been considerable disagreement of how to apply Nāgārjuna's ideas to contemporary philosophy. There is, however, a certain evolution of thought which I wish to integrate into some of the ideas and developments which I have already suggested. In order to do this I wish to return to Schopenhauer. Abelsen (1993), for instance, links T.R.V. Murti's (1955) suggestion that Nāgārjuna was not denying time, but criticising our conception of it, with the transcendental idealism of Kant and Schopenhauer. For Abelsen this is problematic since Nāgārjuna's concept of absolute emptiness tends to deny metaphysics, a position which Murti seems to uphold in his comparison with the Vedānta. He suggests, however, that Nāgārjuna may be seen as an 'implicit mystic' in that while his philosophy is not an integral part of religious insight, it may be seen as a preamble to it (Abelsen, 1993: 267). Comparing Schopenhauer to Nāgārjuna specifically, Abelsen argues that both 'pepper' their work with metaphysical terms even though both display ambiguities in relation to epistemology and metaphysics which reflect the two levels of truth (Abelsen, 1993: 267-8). Such ambiguities are central to the philosophies of both. However, these are perhaps ambiguities which go beyond the raw material of their philosophy but also strike at the way in which they have been respectively interpreted.

In citing Murti in conjunction with Schopenhauer, Abelsen may be charged with making the same mistakes as Mestrovic accuses others in his reinterpretation of *fin de siècle* thought. This may be seen in Tuck's assertion that Murti separated Vedānta and Madhyamika philosophies respectively into metaphysical and epistemological truths (Murti, 1974: 19; Tuck, 1990: 50), while later thinkers seem to have abandoned any attempt to establish any metaphysical provenance in Nāgārjuna's ideas at all. For Mestrovic (1991, 1993) this comes from an over reliance of Kantian notions of transcendental idealism which he attempts to extricate Schopenhauer from. This, I believe, can be shown by adapting my existing comparisons of Buddhist notions of different levels of truth, with Schopenhauer's discussions regarding the 'Will'. While

for Nāgārjuna the lower truth is rooted in ignorance, for Schopenhauer it is the lower pole of the *homo duplex* - the Will. Abelsen supports this by suggesting that Schopenhauer has often been misrepresented in this regard[11] as he does not advocate a destruction of substance, but an act of not-willing which "turns out to have an aspect which it manifested temporally as will to live shifting into disengagement from the world" (Abelsen, 1993: 270). While there are, quite literally, substantial differences between Nāgārjuna's and Schopenhauer's concepts of salvation, there are a number of similarities which bear comparisons. These especially lie in their deliberately stated ambiguities, which can only be overcome through a soteriological quest.

For Schopenhauer this requires a calming of the lower pole in the *homo duplex*, the will. For Nietzsche, suggests Spivak, the 'will to power' is the figurative drive which represents the impulse for forming metaphors, what Nietzsche considered as the "originary process of what the intellect presents as truth" (Spivak, 1976: xxii):

> What, therefore, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphism's.truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they *are* illusions,...coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal (Nietzsche, 1964: 180, cited in Spivak, 1976: xxii).

The will to power is an endless process of "'incessant deciphering' - figurating, interpreting, signifying through apparent identification" (Spivak, 1976: xxiii). This, argues Spivak, is important for Derrida. If Nietzsche had not presented this argument then the 'nature' of text may not have been 'questioned'. Hence it may be possible to discern an affinity between Derrida's process of putting signs 'under erasure' (*sous rature*) and Nietzsche's 'continuous sign-chains' (Spivak, 1976: xxiii-xxiv). I am not suggesting that Nietzsche's notion of will is the same as Schopenhauer's,[12] although in both philosophies there is a sense of unawareness - Nietzsche's emanating from the constant changes in will which can be found in the unconscious where nothing definite can ultimately be discerned:

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[11] Abelsen argues that a cursory glance at Schopenhauer's philosophy suggests that salvation is based on insight:

> As all malevolence is grounded in the idea that one is absolutely separated from other beings...so gentleness is grounded in the unconscious knowledge that there is no ultimate reality in individuality (Abelsen, 1993: 269).

This gentleness passes into altruism as awareness increases and one's personal interests become subordinated by the interests of others. Eventually, however, these altruists come to realise that even this altruism for others is to no avail because any kind of will is a *Will to Life* - "the metaphysical ground of all suffering". Once this is realised the altruist becomes an ascetic and "calmly awaits death" which represents the end of the physical expression of the Will to Live (Abelsen, 1993: 269).

[12] For Nietzsche the 'will to power' is an abstract process which is found in the unconscious (a vast area of the mind where the 'subject' knows nothing) which although unknown to individuals, is better known than the body (Spivak, 1976: xxv).

> How far the perspective character of existence extends or indeed whether existence has any other characteristics than this; whether existence without interpretation, without 'sense', does not become 'nonsense'; whether, on the other hand, all existence is not essentially an *interpreting* existence - that cannot be decided even by the most industrious and most scrupulously conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspective forms, and only these (Nietzsche, 1974: 336; cited in Spivak, 1976: xxvii-xxviii).

For Spivak, Nietzsche couches these problems in what seems to be an irreconcilable dichotomy which, on the one hand examines the establishment of knowledge, and on the other forgetfulness - as a positive faculty of repression of knowledge (Spivak, 1976: xxxii). This can be seen in Derrida's gesture of putting words *sous rature* - deleting and leaving legible at the same time. From this it may be possible to establish an further affinity between Derrida and Nāgārjuna. The basis for this lies in Nāgārjuna's second stage of deconstruction, where the objective self and the phenomenal world are regarded as essentially empty but have not been completely voided. Similarly Derrida's notion of placing words *sous rature* although empty of most meaning, still carries within it a trace of meaning. This, for Derrida is 'grammatology' - where the name of the structure is always inhabited by the trace (Spivak, 1976: xxix). While there is a trace of meaning in this sense there can not be a totally groundless interaction of signs which Derrida's decontructionism suggests. The possibility is there nevertheless, the utopian goal which is mutually reflected in the heterotopian sign. If this is the case there remains a degree of conventionality within Derrida's philosophy which can not be overcome when language is present, even when it is *sous rature*. This is also the case for Buddhists who will remain in the conventional realm while they continue to conceive of any phenomena, however ephemeral and empty.

This utopian space which Derrida suggests, but cannot achieve, is the extra-ideological one of which Lefebvre speaks (Lefebvre, 1991: 5) reflecting the "abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other" (Lefebvre, 1991: 6). These are linked by the quasi-knowledge which allows for the formation of hyperreal imagery where - to repeat Nietzsche's statement - "human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspective forms, and only these" (Nietzsche, 1974: 336; cited in Spivak, 1976: xxviii). Again this is primarily an epistemological search which can be seen in the creation of architectures of knowledge which contextualise certain aspects of Western thought into Foucault's discussions of heterotopias and utopias. The 'key' to this lies in the two levels of truth which Nāgārjuna sees as being central to understanding the Buddha's teaching. According to Jameson, contemporary Western forms of spatialisation have been constructed around 'existential and cultural dominants' (Jameson, 1991: 365) which

have become increasingly more transient. What I wish to question is whether certain Buddhist philosophies can be similarly regarded; how, through postulated processes of salvation through the realisation of ultimate truth, a comparable process of 'deconstruction' takes place as perception becomes increasingly more ephemeral.

As Loy suggests there are a number of affinities which can be gleaned in a comparison between Indra's Net and certain aspects of Derridan philosophy. Indeed, such comparisons can be broadened to look at other commentaries on the doctrine of pratītyasamutpāda and postmodern ideas. Both point to a degree of reality which, beneath the meniscus, lies an ephemeral realm which is devoid of all meaning. But in declaring this they run the risk of denying the very thing that their postulations are seeking to achieve. While it is useful to create these utopias, any attempt to establish them on a level of conventional truth - where the perception of objective and substantial phenomena is of primary importance - is flawed since they consist of architectures of knowledge which are incompatible, and can only be linked through quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory. Rather, in accordance with my previous assertions, it is from the point of view of individuals that any analysis of Buddhist and de-universalised social spaces are to be studied.

Although Nāgārjuna does not differentiate between a 'realm of conventional truth' as an epistemological category, and a sociological category which may be described as a 'conventional realm', his aim, along with many other Buddhist philosophers and interpreters, is to set out the means of salvation (Tuck, 1990: 79), as he speaks only of 'two truths' rather than 'two realities' (Tuck, 1990: 83). It is from this perspective that Nāgārjuna's ideas would be best assessed as the whole point of his ideas is to provide individuals who perceive things in a conventional way, with a means of achieving salvation, a remit which goes beyond that of either Wittgenstein or Derrida. From the point of view of individuals, the utopia lies in the achievement of that goal. The heterotopia consists of the varieties of religious experience which are constructed in order, so individuals believe, to make this utopia become a reality. As for Foucault the conventional realm acts as a form of 'counter-site' (Foucault, 1986: 24) which is a reflection of the utopia in which the meaning of social being is recreated and revealed (Soja, 1995: 14).

Buddhist Disneyworlds.

To discover how this may occur in practice I shall refer back to my discussions about hybrid and interstitial spaces. Here I discussed a two-fold, two-level space which exists between indigenous and colonial milieux on the sociological level, and ultimate and conventional truth on the philosophical level. On the sociological level these spaces, in the post-colonial situation at least, represent the particular class of people

who occupy them. This is also a space where individuals see themselves to be in a situation far more proximate to *nibbāna/nirvāṇa* than the ordinary lay person. Yet without embracing most of the ethical and religious requirements which those who renounce society, the *saṅgha*, adopt. On the philosophical level, the interstitial space has more to do with ideas of reality and truth. Different levels of reality and truth are inherent in the teaching of the Buddha, who seeks to provide a path which transcends what is conventionally perceived as being reality. It is between these two that the interstitial space can be found. But why is this so significant? I suggest that the answer to this lies in the perception of those who occupy the space as described previously. While it is arguable that the vast majority of Buddhists, lay and *saṅgha*, live according to conventional teaching, the interstitial space is created by those who are actually within the realm of conventional truth, but perceive themselves to be in a position more proximate to *nirvāṇa* especially when compared with those indigenous groups who are engaged in cultic practices. In other words, where lay 'Protestant' Buddhists in Sri Lanka, for instance, engage in activities which would have previously been almost the sole preserve of the *saṅgha* - meditation being probably the most obvious example - they do so with nirvanic intent rather than exclusively considering their actions in terms of *karma* and merit, although these remain factors. This can be seen in Bastow's discussion on the 'intention of action' of individuals which, in the de-universalised milieu, results in them making significant lifestyle decisions which potentially utilise synchronic and diachronic tradition and identity construction. According to Bastow this occurs in two stages of self-change, the first being where:

> The person who still thinks of himself as a person on the path may entertain the notion of a future version of himself unbound by any causal inertias, completely in control of all his physical and mental actions (Bastow, 1988: 164-5).

Here are individuals who are within the realm of conventional truth, seeking a favourable rebirth, but who can foresee a situation where they are able to overcome ignorance and craving sufficiently to be able to fully deconstruct their own personhood over a series of lifetimes the attainment of which marks out the second stage of self-change:

> The second stage is the change from the structure of the path follower to the non-structure - or quasi-structure - which is the end of the path (Bastow, 1988: 165).

This tends to suggest that there is some sort of linear development in Buddhism. To a certain extent this is true, as Bastow suggests in his discussion. As one proceeds along the path, however, the notion of 'structure' becomes less valid, and with it conceptions of time and diachronic progression.

'Protestant' Buddhists see *nirvāṇa* as a far more proximate 'utopian' goal than many of their lay counterparts in South East Asia. Given that I have already suggested that these same 'Protestant' Buddhists occupy something of an interstitial state between those seeking renunciation from society and those seeking favourable rebirths, I feel that it is not unreasonable to consider that such a space may be seen as heterotopian. Like the heterotopia, the hybrid space is not universal which although linked to particular 'slices of time', does also change over time; the sociological level of the space. At the same time the question of reality within the spaces is also comparable. By this I mean that there are also questions of quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory which have to be considered. In the 'Protestant' Buddhist hybrid space this occurs as a result of the synchronic and diachronic constructions of tradition and identity which result in the quasi-perception of previous rebirths and the construction of the self itself. Similarly, in the heterotopic space, individuals are subjected to a series of paradoxes and juxtaposing milieux which can only be resolved through the construction of a perception which similarly relies on quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory; this being the philosophical level of the space. In both cases perceptions are formed which are not necessarily akin to objective reality. As I have stressed throughout this thesis, however, it is these perceptions with which I am concerned.

From the point of view of Buddhist teaching it is *nirvāṇa* which represents 'reality'. But from the perception of the individual Buddhist operating within the realm of conventional truth *nirvāṇa* is beyond the conception of objective reality, as well as those increasingly ephemeral states of consciousness which are seen as a necessary part of the path towards *nirvāṇa*. Consequently, the role of the 'Protestant' Buddhist in the interstitial or hybrid space, provides something of an example for the Western Buddhists in the de-universalised society in terms of the way in which they locate themselves within a non-universal space which is at the same time within society, yet apart from it.

Regarding the position of the 'Protestant' Buddhists as individuals who remain restricted by the South East Asia milieu which, in the context of the hybrid space, is a modern one, I would argue that there are grounds for establishing a comparison between them and the *flâneur*. This can be seen in the way that 'Protestant' Buddhists, while still being members of the laity, are engaged in a far more individualised search for meaning which involved a certain degree of renunciation from the society to which they were indigenous. In other words, like the *flâneur* they sought meaning in a society which was beginning to change at a seemingly alarming rate, for 'Protestant' Buddhists through the processes of colonialisation and eventual independence. In both cases, then, here was a society which was becoming more hybridised where both the *flâneur* and the 'Protestant' Buddhist found themselves in

interstitial states which, to differing degrees, contained elements which could be considered to be both sacred and profane.

While I am not suggesting that these situations are by any means identical, I suggest that both occur at a time in the relative development of modernity which is comparable in terms of the degree of hybridity and change which was occurring in their societies and according to the schemas proposed by such as Baudrillard (1983) and Berman (1983). Together these two examples, which are complementary rather than identical, are useful in explaining both the continued role of non-rational elements in Western society and the nature of Buddhism in response to modernity.

In order to relate this to Buddhism in the West, however, it is clear that we must understand what is meant by the term 'Western Buddhist'. While, in the next two chapters I shall be looking at specific examples of Buddhism in the West I feel that it would be useful to first discuss Western Buddhism in more general terms. Looking at Buddhism in Britain in particular, Deirdre Green (1989) suggests that the position of specific Buddhist groups may be placed on a continuum according to their 'adherence' to 'normative' Buddhist ideas. Citing Peter Berger (1970), she suggests that this may be somewhere between the extremes of a 'supernaturalist' position where individuals maintain traditional affirmations of religion even where they contradict, for instance, accepted scientific knowledge; and on the other hand a position of 'cognitive surrender' where "modifications may go too far, so that the religion loses ground to the modern worldview altogether" (Berger, 1970: 41; Green, 1989: 278). Green then cross-references this with Martin Willson's specific study of Western Buddhism. Here she compares the supernaturalist position with Willson's notion of 'Fundamentalism' which he does not see as being possible for a Buddhist in Western society[13]. She then compares Berger's notion of cognitive surrender with Willson's 'Retreat' where separate areas of interest are compartmentalised so that, for instance, science is related only to physical facts and religion to spiritual ones (Green, 1989: 278-9). Willson argues instead that there is a point (or perhaps more precisely a series of points) which act a 'Synthesis' of the two extremes. Green then considers this idea of synthesis in terms of the Buddhist notion of skilful means (upāya) and questions whether certain Buddhist groups in Britain are engaged in this process, or have 'sold out' to Western society and culture (Green, 1989: 280ff). Here I am not so much concerned with a value judgement as to whether Western Buddhist groups have adopted skilful means or sold out, but with the fact that most Western Buddhist do, to varying extents, adopts a position of 'synthesis', what I have been calling hybridity. It

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13 Berger argues that the 'supernaturalist' position can only be maintained in a 'countercommunity' set apart from the rest of society, and while there are a number of Buddhist communities in the West which appear to do this they do not, for instance, possess the 'hinterland' of a supporting community which would enable a monk or nun to life as he/she would do in Asia.

is in this way that I seek to compare Western Buddhists with such 'Protestant' Buddhists, where I would argue, the former have then been able to take hybridisation or synthesis a stage further within the de-universalised society appropriating many of the ideas of 'Protestant' Buddhism, but in a much less localised sense, both societally and culturally. This may result in a situation which, for some Western Buddhists, Buddhism is but one of a number of heterotopias. Heterotopias which form the basis for the construction of a series of, sometimes Buddhist, utopias. These, I suggest, can be seen as sorts of metaphysical theme parks - Buddhist Disneyworlds - which Western Buddhists construct through their own quasi-perceptions; either individually or corporately.

In this chapter I have presented a series of dichotomies which I have attempted to relativise through the use of quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory. The discussion of these dichotomies in the context of religion also allows me to question the role of the sacred and the profane in these relationships. For Taylor where the world was once the locus of magic or the sacred, it has either assumed a position of neutrality, such is the shallowness of society. Or it has become so fragmented as to remove any coherent meaning (Taylor, 1989: 500). Either way he is pointing to a situation which seems to discount an important role for the sacred and the non-rational in contemporary Western society. In the final two chapters I shall use the arguments established above to show that Western society not only contains such elements, but is awash with them.

CHAPTER FIVE.
BUDDHIST NEO-TRIBALISM.

We are surrounded by emptiness but it is an emptiness filled with signs (Lefebvre, 1971).[1]

In suggesting that social space is essentially empty, Lefebvre provides a good starting place with which to elaborate upon the affinity that I have established between Buddhist philosophy and contemporary social theory. By thinking about the emptiness which is respectively present in these metaphysical and social spaces it is possible to develop a theoretical framework to compare them further; and, given the nature of the de-universalised society in which I claim they exist, to consider ways that these spaces may be combined.

De-Universalised Buddhism

In the previous chapter I considered the existence of 'Buddhist Disneyworlds' as more complex versions of the culturally hybrid phenomena which emerged in South Asia during the colonial era. This would suggest that the role of 'Protestant' Buddhism is important in understanding the relationship which Buddhism has had with Western culture since its introduction. This is discussed by Mellor (1991a) who assesses the relationship between Buddhist cultural elements and those of the society in which they find themselves. The crux of his argument is that the presence of Buddhism in England does not represent as big a departure from the norms of Western society as would first appear. He begins with the following premise:

> Religions are not free-floating, metaphysical phenomena impervious to all social, intellectual and political conditions. On the contrary, it is my contention that religions are always and everywhere embedded in social and cultural realities. The development of new forms of religious life in a particular culture is not necessarily a signifier of the collapse of the constraining forces of social structures and systems, but of these structures and systems enabling new developments to take place (Mellor, 1991a: 73).

Mellor is suggesting that religious development can, and does, occur within the framework of a society through both diachronic and synchronic interaction, and allows for the evolution of both corporate and individualist structures. This basic premise may, I suggest, be seen in terms of the de-universalised society, albeit subject to some qualification. It would, however, seem to be somewhat at odds with my discussion of postmodern spaces, since these do not appear take tradition into account. Indeed, I have previously considered the role of the postmodern space to be typified as those occupied by archetypal postmodern individuals like tourists, moving from one unconnected place to another (Bauman, 1992: 166). For Bauman

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[1] H. Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, cited in Ewen, 1990: 41.

postmodern life strategies rely on a constantly changing and continuous process, where life is lived as a series of continual presents (Bauman, 1995: 89), resulting in a continuous fluctuation of selfhood resulting from the reflexive attempts of individuals to constantly change their identities:

> *The hub of postmodern life strategy is not identity building, but the avoidance of being fixed* (Bauman, 1995: 89).

While it would seem that Bauman's theories only work if individuals are exclusively subject to postmodern phenomena, such analysis is useful for my analysis of affinities between Buddhism and societies which contain some postmodern cultural forms. This brings me to the crux of the problem of how I can reconcile Mellor's view that "religions are always and everywhere embedded in social and cultural realities" (Mellor, 1991a: 73), and Bauman's discussions regarding the severing of the present from history (Bauman, 1995: 89).

Mellor offers some useful insights into how Buddhist cultural phenomena have acted in their transition and translation into Buddhist society. He discusses the extent to which two Buddhist groups - the English Sangha and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) - which have very different ideas of how Buddhism should be presented in the West, have both seemingly utilised Western, and more particularly Protestant, ideas in their development. For Mellor this process can be traced back to both the Reformation and the Enlightenment, where there began a process which has led to the modern notion of treating the individual as what he calls a "quasi-sacred absolute" (Mellor, 1991a: 74). This trend has continued to the point where individualism can be seen as being a major contributor towards the fragmentation of society and the process of de-traditionalisation which so many contemporary thinkers consider to be complete. In other words, adherence to tradition limits one's freedom of expression, "placing limits on one's individual potential" (Mellor, 1991a: 75).

Mellor's point in discussing this is that we should acknowledge the cultural and social background of a host society before considering how the 'alien' cultural and social elements enter and settle into it; but at the same time should not assume that the two are wholly different.

> ...it would...be misleading to avoid confronting the continuities between English Buddhism and wider western trends, just because of our abstract perceptions of Buddhist doctrine (Mellor, 1991a: 76).

At the base of this discussion lies the assertion that religion is firmly located in social and cultural realities. Mellor is concerned with what happens when two sets of realities come together. In isolating common ground he is in some ways attempting to ease the tension between the two and explain how and why they have come together

in the way they have. He suggests, in particular, that the FWBO exhibits characteristics which can only be described as 'liberal' Protestant; that is where faith is placed above knowledge, the individual above the community, and where some of the central tenets of many non-Protestant forms of Christian thought are rejected:

> Protestantism is the product of such rejections, questionings and increased emphasis on the individual reaching an extreme level where they exceed boundaries of what can legitimately be called Christianity. At this point 'Buddhism' becomes a more attractive structure for individuals pursuing their spiritual goals (Mellor, 1991a: 77).

Buddhism, then, becomes a series of alternatives *within* the liberal Protestant framework. This leads to the important question of the relationship between religion and culture. Mellor has already suggested that the two are inseparable, yet for both of the Buddhist groups he studies the opposite is clearly assumed to be the case. Mellor is correct in showing that a number of Buddhist groups with considerably different outlooks are capable of existing even within the relatively tight cultural framework which he sets. In this thesis, however, I draw on examples which suggest a much freer society within which such groups can exist. While Mellor suggests very specific cultural and social anchors on which 'incoming' Buddhist groups can moor themselves; in the de-universalised society things are much more ephemeral and far less certain. Here social space lacks the definite boundaries to allow for such solid relationships to be assessed. Consequently, I consider the relationship between religion and culture to be similarly less solid.

3-D Societies.

This situation is not as simple as two series of cultural phenomena interfacing with each other. Buddhism has already been subjected to Western thought during the colonial era, forming a series of hybridities, interstitial spaces in which cultures merge to create a synthesis of religious forms. Buddhism then enters Western society with cultural accretions from that society already attached. Furthermore, these different hybridities do not act in the same way, or at the same cultural locations. Consequently Buddhism becomes involved in a series of highly differentiated interstitial spaces which act as heterotopias within the de-universalised society. Moreover, while these groups share a certain degree of similitude with regard to some fundamental Buddhist beliefs, their utopian goals can be, and are, often widely different.

Consequently, while Mellor's paper is helpful in defining the argument of the relationship between religion and culture, there exists a more complex situation in which the fragmentation of Buddhism matches the fragmentation of society as a whole. Indeed, the relationships that occur within these milieux occur locally and

globally, horizontally and vertically (within society/societies), and synchronically and diachronically, giving de-universalised cultural spaces a three-dimensional aspect.[2] Adding the notion of the continuing existence of religion to this already complex framework means that a great deal of specificity is required if I am to ascertain how it can be located.

Of particular consideration is the fact that the world may be undergoing an evolution of globalisation in which cultural processes are becoming uniform. According to Beyer this could have one of two consequences for religion. First that globalisation 'relativises' cultural elements, including religion. This, he suggests, may result in a seemingly paradoxical situation where only a global culture will exist, changing the context of particular cultures "implying transformation but not the disappearance of separate and recognizable identities" (Beyer: 1994: 9). In such a situation a religious tradition must recontextualise itself within local milieux, but with reference to global conditions. Second, Beyer argues that a religious tradition could itself move towards a global position, apart from the localised conditions with which it has become associated:

> Such a response would not only see relativization as a positive result, but also see an openness to change a prime warrant for the continued authenticity of tradition. Religion of this sort takes up the values of an emerging global culture (Beyer: 1994: 10).

He does consider, however, that it is religion on a local level which is going to dictate how it is viewed on a global scale, whereas looking at religion at the global level most world religions have a universalist agenda which, under globalising conditions, would be seen as an abstraction from socio-cultural particularisms (Beyer, 1994: 45). Again the way in which religious traditions act within such milieux depends on the extent to which they are embedded in the social and cultural realities of their local situations. These, I suggest, are not necessarily uniform over time. This can be seen through the emergence of a religious hybridity such as 'Protestant' Buddhism in Sri Lanka where the relationship between religious tradition and its cultural locality has altered, and, just as importantly, provided a new internal structure to religious tradition which makes its fragmentation far more likely. So, along with the rise of individualism, the

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[2] I would argue that this great complexity can be particularly seen in terms of the globalisation of culture which was much less comprehensive in South East Asia, both at the time of my study in chapter two and up to the present day (although I acknowledge that there may be a gradual narrowing of that gap). This can be seen both to the extent that specific elements global culture have affected these societies, and the degree and extent with which they have embraced global culture. Consequently, I suggest that because Western societies are subject to a greater variety and concentration of cultural phenomena in this way they can be regarded, in this context at least, to be more complex.

hybridity plays its part in dislodging cultural certainties. Citing Robertson (1991), Beyer underlines the importance of the individual in this process:

> [T]he increased differentiation of self and society is for Robertson at the heart of various key phenomena in the global scene, including the rise of global non-governmental organisations, social movements, inner-societal identity conflicts, and minority forms of personal and collective identification (Beyer, 1994: 57).

This underlines the increasingly complex nature of society, and the structures within it - something which is reflected in the internal framework of religion.

From this discussion I would suggest that it is possible to locate the de-universalised society within a globalisation thesis. Beyer discusses ways in which religious tradition can act within a society which exhibits some degree of globalisation. But, because of the nature of society which I am proposing, I do not think that any religion can either occupy a fully universal position, whatever its utopian outlook; neither do I think that it will be totally subject to socio-cultural particularisms. Robertson sees the relationship between universalism and particularism to be a two-fold process involving "*the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism*" (Robertson, 1992b: 100). This, he suggests, is particularly clear when analysing the role of capitalism on a global scale:

> [T]he consumerist global capitalism of our time is wrapped into the increasingly thematized particular-universal relationship in terms of the connection between globewide, universalistic supply and particularistic demand. The contemporary *market* thus involves the increasing *interpenetration* of culture and economy... [which] frequently involves the tailoring of products to increasingly specialized regional, societal, ethnic, class and gender markets (Robertson, 1992b: 100).

Although global frameworks can be perceived, they still tend to act according to local conditions where societies can be seen according to both horizontal and vertical relationships. In the case of Robertson's example, horizontal relationships can be seen in terms of the global reach of a particular organisation, and vertical ones in terms of the particular structure of individual societies. Such conditions should not be limited to capitalist organisation, however. Here Robertson is suggesting that the development of a number of marketing hybridities. Moreover, he has not limited these to geographical or cultural locations, but to a whole range of specialised 'markets'. I suggest that a similar process may occur through the global spread of a religion through the interpenetration of culture and tradition. This would also result in a series of hybridities which can be located throughout the de-universalised society. These may be defined by geographical boundaries, but more often than not will be special interest and minority groups which may exist in niches within a single or a series of societies.

These groups are often very fluid in nature, leading a number of scholars to discuss them in terms of tribes or 'neotribes' (Bauman, 1993a, 1993b, 1995; Maffesoli, 1996). Historically, tribes have usually been a body of people for whom membership is necessary for survival; and whose internal structures and contacts outside of the tribe are carefully regulated. According to Bauman this is not the case in a postmodern society, where such collectivities are little more that vehicles for individual self-definition (Bauman 1993a: 249). He likens them to the Kantian concept of *aesthetic community* which are formed in the hope of unanimity between a collection of individuals on a particular subject, but in the long run are destined to failure because it is only the *promise* of unanimity which keeps them going (Bauman, 1993a: 249-50). At first glance such communities may appear to offer a degree of solidity to a fragmented postmodern society. For Bauman, however, the reverse is true:

> ...the foremost paradox of the frantic search for communal ground of consensus is that it results in more dissipation and fragmentation, more heterogeneity (Bauman, 1993a: 251).

This is a notion of collectivities which fit many of the chief characteristics of a postmodern society: continuous presents, indefinite cultural boundaries, and a continuous reflexive search for identity on behalf of the individual. Indeed, the role of the individual is the prime characteristic in neo-tribes since they only last as long as the individual members who comprise them (Bauman, 1993b: 141). They are collectivities without tradition since they have no diachronic dimension. They also tend to be 'single issue' groups which have

> ...allegiances wrapped around one topic in public attention, and a comparatively simple topic...so that it can be absorbed by, excite and boost into action the otherwise disparate and differently 'positioned' or 'embedded' selves (Bauman, 1993b: 143).

For Bauman neo-tribes, like other postmodern phenomena, have no real roots in society, yet represent a quest by individuals to find such roots, what he terms an "obsessive search for community" (Bauman, 1993a: 248). This, he suggests leads to the retrospective construction of tradition so loved by the tourist when repackaged as *heritage* (Bauman, 1993a: 250) or nostalgia. Bauman considers that if tradition is viewed in such a way, then neo-tribal communities are at best "eruptions of sociality" (Bauman, 1993b: 141) which provide momentary comfort to their members.

Without any basis of tradition neo-tribes can be seen to be spontaneous in their formation, often in response to a particular event. Furthermore, because they have no diachronic motivation for continuing their existence, any action can be put down to the pure reflexivity of its members. As with the wider postmodern society they exist solely in the process of production (Bauman, 1995: 187). Such groups may be

ephemeral in their construction, to the extent that they do not display the intense emotions of Durkheimian effervescence, but are more akin to what Gustave Le Bon[3] terms the 'psychological crowd' (Bauman, 1993b: 141-2) which can be formed by the simultaneous presence of many individuals acting in a similar manner over a large, even global, area. Neo-tribes, then, have few if any boundaries or rules to limit them as such, and, as Bauman suggests, they

> ...lead in principle an episodic, sometimes ephemeral, life; they come into being in a moment of instant condensation - but then face daily the danger of evaporating, together with that energy of self-dedication which lent them for a time the appearance of solidity (Bauman, 1995: 187).

For Maffesoli (1996) the postmodern marks a return to the tribe, although unlike Bauman, he sees a greater role for tradition in his study of such collectivities. As Shields suggests in the Foreword to Maffesoli's book, *The Time of the Tribes* is when the mass becomes tribalised (Shields, 1996b: x). Maffesoli has come to this conclusion by marrying together Weber's perspective of participant social interaction with Durkheimian considerations of the conscience collective and "the life-affirming, Dionysian quality of the transcendent warmth of the collectivity" (Shields, 1996b: ix-x). Like Bauman this marks a shift from the social to sociality for Maffesoli, paralleled by a move from the modern to the postmodern. For Maffesoli this shift also results in a tension between the two in which individuals now occupy a 'role' within the tribe. (Maffesoli, 1996: 6). Fundamental to this is his suggestion that we are moving into an 'empathic' period of history in which religiosity is seen as an essential ingredient (Maffesoli, 1996:3) which comes about in the form of the 'emotional ambience' which is brought about by tribal development (Maffesoli, 1996: 11). For Maffesoli these ephemeral tribes contain a certain non-rational element which stems from an empathic sociality emanating from the solidarity which these groups bring.

Such a process of re-enchantment with the world can be seen in the tension between the modern and the postmodern, the former of which has be seen to have failed (Maffesoli, 1996: 32). For Maffesoli this can be seen in terms of a collective consciousness, but in a much more fluid way. Here postmodern nomads move from unconnected tribe to unconnected tribe exhibiting 'eruptions of sociality' where it is the "'we' which forms the glue holding everything together" (Maffesoli, 1996: 72). In a postmodern milieu this is complex since individuals play any number of roles simultaneously:

> Consequently, we find that the individual cannot be isolated, but rather he or she is tied, by culture, communication, leisure or fashion, to a community which perhaps

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[3] G. Le Bon - 1907, *Psychologie des foules* (Paris: Alcan), p.12: cited in Bauman (1993b) p.142.

no longer possesses the same qualities as during the Middle Ages, but has nonetheless the same form (Maffesoli, 1996: 81).

This can be seen as a network of identities which form as a result of a series of synchronic and diachronic lifestyle choices. These are constantly crystallising and fragmenting tribal affiliations which give the appearance, at least, of solidity and community, thus giving rise to feelings of dependence, purpose, solidarity and empathy.

Although Maffesoli does not allude to it, this situation bears many of the hallmarks of what I would term a 'postmodern *fin de siècle*', which contains many of the attributes of the previous *fin de siècle* but within a more ephemeral framework. Indeed, according to Mestrovic, there are many similarities between the two, in particular that both are marked by 'irrationalism, cynicism, and disenchantment', which are currently only disguised under the rubric of postmodernism (Mestrovic, 1991: 2):

> Despite the postmodernist camouflage of fun and play, a feeling of gloom and doom is associated with the notion of the *fin de siècle* (Mestrovic, 1991: 4).

Like Maffesoli, Mestrovic considers an upturn in religious activity as the master narratives of the Enlightenment fade, but suggests that this is something which has been ignored by modernist and postmodernist scholars alike (Mestrovic, 1991: 13). Suggesting that the previous *fin de siècle* is marked more by compassion and desire than rationality, he considers that thinkers such as Schopenhauer and Durkheim address questions of the heart above those of the mind (Mestrovic, 1991: 16). Like the postmodernists, they rebelled against modernity, but unlike them they left room for discourse. Indeed, Mestrovic argues that postmodernity has rendered everything banal through the homogenisation of what used to be exotic (Mestrovic, 1991: 25) or meaningful, including scholarship itself which, during the twentieth century, has merely represented a "vulgarization of *fin de siècle* intellectual life" (Mestrovic, 1991: 27). Mestrovic is suggesting that as an insurrection against modernity, postmodernity represents nothing new:

> By contrast, the previous *fin de siècle* sought truly to rebel against modernity's vicious abstractionism, its overemphasis on the mind - and it largely failed in this attempt at rebellion (Mestrovic, 1991: 28).

Modernity's attempts to stifle and discontinue religious narratives is countered by both Durkheim and Simmel in their consideration of values as habits (Mestrovic, 1991: 32). This is shown by Mestrovic in citing Durkheim and Mauss

> ...it is the ensemble of mental *habits* by virtue of which we conceive things and facts in the form of co-ordinated or hierarchized groups (Durkheim and Mauss, [1902] 1975: 88; Mestrovic's emphasis).

Translating this to the present, it would seem that habits are an important part of the cohesion of contemporary tribes. Through social ritual these link the actions of individuals to a diachronic, if ever changing, process - one of the few things which allows for tradition in the postmodern world. As Mestrovic points out:

> This need may explain the fanaticism exhibited by fans of sporting, music and other events that capture what Durkheim called 'collective effervescence' in postmodern life. There can be no doubt that despite modernity, we have our totems and totemic systems - witness any football game...(Mestrovic, 1991: 40-1).

This adds a diachronic element to postmodern neo-tribalism, providing a good example of how and why collectivities may exist within an ephemeral and boundary-less culture which could be seen as adimensional. This, suggests Mestrovic, can be seen in certain affinities between Durkheim's sociology and Schopenhauer's philosophy. As I have suggested, for Mestrovic, it is clear that Durkheim shared Schopenhauer's assertions that the 'will to life' or the 'heart' is superior to the mind or rationality (Mestrovic, 1991: 43). This comes out in Durkheim's discussion of the sacred, which, he suggests, appeals to feelings and desires spontaneously. He regards the new sense of individualism to be a cult which will replace traditional religions (Mestrovic, 1991: 43-4). Most interestingly from my point of view, Durkheim seeks to distinguish between the cult of individualism and an individualism which leads to such as egoism, anomie and narcissism:

> For Durkheim as for Schopenhauer, egoism is a state in which the unfettered, modern will tramples on the 'will to life' of other persons due to lack of compassion (Mestrovic, 1991: 44).

For Mestrovic, Durkheim's use of the cult of the individual and anomie was highly innovative in that they both invoked a Nietzschean 'cult of feeling', as both "resonate with collective representations that humankind has constructed to express some of its most basic and essential needs" (Mestrovic, 1991: 45). This analysis seems to suggest that there was room for metaphysical speculation within *fin de siècle* thought which can be applied today. This has become hidden, however, in the desire for rationality and reason which has accompanied much post-Enlightenment thought. Moreover, according to Mestrovic, the supposed breaking down of these narratives in postmodern thought has further misrepresented *fin de siècle* ideas into the banal 'fun' versions of serious messages (Mestrovic, 1991: 51). Typical, and in many ways representative, of this trend has been the tendency to ignore ideas concerning the unconscious. This seems to be something of a leitmotiv in *fin de siècle* thought, being considered by Schopenhauer, Durkheim and Simmel, as well as Freud, which, according to Mestrovic, expresses modernity, but also undercuts it in the way that it

can defy rational social action (Mestrovic, 1991: 68). In Simmel's case this can be seen in a theory of apperception:

> [T]he ability to grasp unconsciously and intuitively - on the basis of feelings - the unity, coherence, and order in the multiplicity and heterogeneity of sense perceptions (Mestrovic, 1991: 68-9).

As Mestrovic points out this is characteristic of *fin de siècle* thought in its emphasis on feelings. Indeed, similarities can be made with Durkheim in the way he links the past to the present through collective representations (Mestrovic, 1991: 145). I suggest that it is possible to construct a tradition within a de-universalised framework which allows for the existence of such collectives, however ephemeral.

There seems to be a theme running through the work of both Maffesoli and Mestrovic which may provide a means of explaining this. This lies in the suggestion that there are two levels of perception within contemporary society. In Maffesoli's work this lies in the tension which exists between the social of modernity and sociality of postmodernity; and in *fin de siècle* thought primarily through the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious - although there are a number of other factors which can be derived from this and may prove significant. What seems to be the case in both instances is that there is a non-rational element which persists and can be seen to encourage continued references to tradition by individuals within collectives. Maffesoli applies this in a discussion of mysticism which he sees as

> ...a popular repository where, beyond individualism and its projective activism, experience and imagination reinforce one another; their synergy forming these *symbolic wholes* which are the basis...of any societal activity (Maffesoli, 1996: 59).

This, he suggests, creates a religious space which acts as a repository for the rational and the non-rational through synchronic and diachronic interaction, and can be seen in popular or cultic religions rather than in the orthodox monoliths which have represented large-scale universal societies. The religious space which Maffesoli presents is more in keeping with the de-universalised society where a tension exists between the completely rational approach which modernity is supposed to espouse, and a non-rational element within postmodernity. Postmodernism is a utopia - a mental space in which we are not. Mestrovic explains this as postmodern schizophrenia where our lives are continually marked by magic and superstition, while sociologists continue to espouse Comte and the rational process (Mestrovic, 1991: 149). While postmodern spaces can be characterised by their textual and temporal pluralities, and internally the postmodern does allow for this schizophrenia, this cannot be translated into any realistic milieu. In other words while it is theoretically possible that such a juxtaposition can occur, there would be few postmodern thinkers who would advocate it. Nevertheless, in the context of the utopia/dystopia of

postmodernity and the heterotopia of perceptive reality I suggest that such a juxtaposition can be legitimated theoretically within the framework that I have suggested in chapter four - although the espousal of any diachronic dimension may significantly undermine this.

This is resolved to some degree if applied to my concept of the 3-D society, where the non-rational acts as an ineffable fourth dimension which renders religious spaces distinct from other heterotopias, allowing for the multiple levels of reality which such as Buddhism advocates. This can be seen in the *fin de siècle* as interpreted by Mestrovic, and especially through Simmel's and Durkheim's analysis of the use of tradition in both the rational/conscious and the non-rational/unconscious in the formation of collectivities. This can be seen in the formation of a series of de-universalised spaces where religious sensibilities can be stressed in an environment which is fragmented and relatively ephemeral, although perhaps not to the extent that Bauman and Maffesoli suggest.

In summary, so far in this chapter I have discussed three ways in which the relationship between culture and society can be contextualised. First, I looked at Mellor's suggestion that religious phenomena are embedded social and cultural realities, providing a fairly rigid framework within which they can operate. Second, I discussed the role of globalisation, suggesting that Robertson's theories of interpenetration most closely match the nature of the de-universalised society, allowing for the creation of a series of hybridities which are linked to both universal and particular processes. Third, I examined the role of neo-tribes, collectivities which are as ephemeral as the postmodern society which they are said to occupy, but whose relationship with tradition is, in my opinion, far too tenuous. By applying a measure which allows a diachronic dimension, however, I have shown that postmodern thought remains in the realm of theoretical utopianism when applied to society generally. Finally, although I suggest that, of the three, only Robertson's theories match the nature of the de-universalised society, the other two are useful as they provide a framework of checks and balances when discussing the role of community and collectivity.

Engaged Buddhism: background and roots

Discussing the development of hybrid spaces in South East Asia, I examined the interaction between two types of culture: the colonial, and those which were indigenous to a number of colonial milieux. These, I suggested, may be seen as elementary examples of the more complex spaces found latterly, and increasingly, on a global scale. Hence the paradox of globalisation and particularisation which I highlighted in chapter one, and which is an integral part of the de-universalised

society. By drawing on the theories already discussed in this chapter I shall examine the nature of social action in contemporary Buddhism. I suggest that Buddhism reflects many of these ideas, pointing to the possible existence of a society which is both globalised and particularised, yet still possesses a traditional, diachronic, dimension which allows for the persistence of religion.

To understand the nature of Buddhist social action in the West it is necessary to examine the developments which inspired it, and latterly run parallel to it, in the Buddhist countries of Asia. According to Sulak Sivaraksa - a Thai committed to the need for Buddhist social action throughout the world:

> Historically and traditionally, the Buddhists have been involved with social action all along, because Buddhism is in fact a prescription for the restructuring of human consciousness as well as the restructuring of human society; without one the other would be ineffective (Sivaraksa, 1983: 124).

This is something which Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988) examine in their analysis of the Sri Lankan Sarvodaya Movement in a chapter entitled 'The Creation of Tradition'. Here they draw on Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) ideas regarding 'the invention of tradition' stating that new movements such as Sarvodaya

> ...get their legitimation from tradition: each is explicitly perceived as a re-creation of a lost tradition or simply as an old tradition continuing (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 241).

Importantly they go on to state that this is only the case for those looking from the outside inwards. For those within a movement it is an accurate re-creation or expression of the past. This is not a re-creation of the past as spectacle, as in a tourist site, but a full representation of Buddhist doctrine and ethics in a twentieth century Sri Lankan Buddhist hybrid space, rooted in the Protestant Buddhism of Anagarika Dharmapala (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 243). Founded in 1958 by A.T. Ariyaratna, the Sarvodaya Movement's principal cause was rural development.[4] As with Sivaraksa, Ariyaratna's aim was not purely social action but a wider ambition of self and societal change according to traditional Buddhist values. This can be seen in Ariyaratna's interpretation of the Sanskrit word *sarvodāya*, which is generally translated as 'the welfare of all'; although Ariyaratna, without justification, suggests that *udāya* ('rising') can be translated as 'awakening', reflecting his own spiritual awakening as the result of his self-less labours. He has, nevertheless, constructed a movement which is in many ways archetypal of the 'Protestant' Buddhist hybrid spaces of Sri Lanka. A movement which attempts a return to

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[4] The Movement began as the result of a small-scale project in a small low-caste rural community in Sri Lanka, from which Ariyaratna returned 'spiritually transformed' with a vision for all to engage in self-less labour and create an idealised view of the Sri Lankan village (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 243-4).

'traditional' village life by 'traditional' Buddhist means, achieved through practical this-worldly asceticism:

It was a profound vision of involvement in the world, expressed in Buddhist terms...and the high point of Protestant Buddhism (Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988: 245).

While being typical of its own 'Protestant' Buddhist milieu, the Sarvodāya Movement also highlights the major themes of Buddhist social action which have become prevalent in the West. These include a heightened personal awareness, the desire for universal societal change, and a legitimation for action which can be traced back to the Buddha himself. Groups like Sarvodāya are important in the process of the transition and translation of Buddhism to the West, and underline the need to understanding the hybrid spaces from which they came. They bring Buddhist ethical imperatives into the realm of the laity, suggesting that this-worldly activity is vital in enhancing the Buddhist's individual awareness, as well as the corporate awareness of society.

According to one of its leading proponents, Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist social action can only be achieved successfully in conjunction with personal practice (Kraft, 1993: 46). Nhat Hanh's origins were in Vietnam where, as a peace campaigner during the war in the late 1960's and early 1970's, he coined the phrase 'engaged Buddhism', often referred to as 'socially engaged Buddhism'. He saw the need to combine an inner peace obtained through meditation, and radical social and political action which he has continued against Vietnam's communist government.[5] Central to this approach lies Nhat Hanh's stress on non-dualism, of *being peace* in our own lives as part of a global peace-making process. He is suggesting a certain non-duality between the individual and the earth, which he terms our 'large self' (Sivaraksa, 1990: 88). This perception of oneness is also applied to relations with fellow human beings. This is typified by the Tiep Hien[6] order which Nhat Hanh created during the Vietnam War, which, according to Sivaraksa is

...designed explicitly to address social justice and peace issues, sensitizing the participant to test his/her behaviour in relation to the needs of the larger community, while freeing him/her from limiting patterns (Sivaraksa, 1990: 88-9).

Ordination to the Order still requires the ordinand to take refuge in the Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha*, and undertake to keep the Five Precepts, but these are modified versions which stress each person's interconnectedness with everything else. The fifth precept, for example, is interpreted thus:

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[5] Sivaraksa also stresses this synthesis highlighting the need for those involved in such as social welfare to attend regular retreats (Sivaraksa, 1992: 68).
[6] The 'Order of Interbeing'.

Destroying your body with alcohol and other intoxicants is to betray your ancestors, your parents and also to betray the future generations (Cited in Sivaraksa, 1990: 89).

Interconnection for Nhat Hanh has both diachronic and synchronic elements, as can be seen in his perspective on karma, which he seems to equate with "some form of genetic inheritance and transmission" (Batchelor, 1992a: 20). This is somewhat removed from usual Buddhist conceptions of rebirth since it suggests a far more substantial karmic process, stressing his ideas of interconnectedness.

Buddhists in the West began to feel some affinity with their peers in the East, especially those who were seemingly under tyrannical regimes, most obviously in communist South East Asia, but also in countries such as Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka whose governments were becoming increasingly autocratic. This was important for Westerners because these countries provided the 'source' of Buddhism, as Paula Green comments in an article about Burma:

[I]f we are concerned about the transmission of the dharma to societies in the twenty-first century, we might try to understand, albeit with humility, this paradox of a Buddhist nation in self-inflicted agony (Green, 1991: 53).

Many Buddhists, especially those who are practising some form of engaged spirituality, regard the establishment of a global Buddhist network as something of a priority. However, Buddhists in different geographical positions have different social concerns. Eastern Buddhists' primary concerns are with human rights, while Western Buddhist tend to concentrate on environmental issues. As Ken Jones suggests, this may lead to a number of different engaged Buddhisms:

[T]hey could be the beginnings of a global Buddhist dynamism which, allied with other engaged spirituality, could make a worthwhile contribution to world peace and social justice (Jones, 1989: 280).

For Jones this could be achieved through the establishment of an 'Indra's Net' of engaged spirituality which would act as a global force against all the injustices of the world as a way of achieving their utopian goals through the utilisation of core Buddhist teaching.

In the Net: the importance of awareness.

Such a global organisation would not just be on a gross level, but, in order to satisfy these utopian desires, be on a much deeper spiritual and metaphysical level. This is where the realisation of corporate and individual interconnectedness is important, and marks another fundamental Buddhist requirement, a higher awareness of both gross

and subtle factors. This is reflected in an article by Bastow (1994) who argues that there are three levels of awareness in Pali Buddhism. Of these he suggests that the first two are closely related, being in the realm of conventional truth (Bastow, 1994: 5), while the third employs "the idea that the Buddha's enlightenment involved a vision of the true metaphysical nature of reality" (Bastow, 1994: 13).

The first level of awareness which Bastow discerns is that of ordinary people who are ignorant of the true causes and consequences of their actions. He suggests that the lives of such people cannot be autonomous because, unbeknown to them, their actions are "largely controlled by habits of anger and desire" (Bastow, 1994: 9). Autonomy of action can only begin to be achieved through an awareness of karma as a important factor in engaging in positive moral action. At this level self-interest plays an important part as if the intention is there, then the accumulation of merit (puñña) is possible (Bastow, 1994: 8). While this is a rather crude description on my part, it does begin to explain how even basic awareness in Buddhism affects the actions of individuals. But this does not in itself lead to any realistic autonomy since individuals remain unaware of the causal framework in which such action is taking place, that of paticca samupādda. While individuals act more reflexively they do so in ignorance of the true soteriological implications.

This is something which is addressed by Bastow's second level of awareness which he describes as "a passage from transparency to opaqueness" (Bastow, 1994: 9). This involves a sort of 'bifurcation of the self' in which individuals go beyond the karmic reflexivity of the first level to look at the self from an objective point of view realising how out of control it is:

> To the unselfconscious person, his mental attributes are transparent; he sees the world through them, but does not stay his eye on them. Similarly in the realm of will, his desires straightforwardly determine his actions (Bastow, 1994: 9).

Individuals must realise this so they can come to a position where, intellectually, they become aware of the impermanence and insubstantiality of existence as is manifest in the doctrine of paticca samuppāda, but they are still faced with the hindrance of

> ..their mental habits...[which] stand between them and the world as it really is, as would an opaque pane of glass (Bastow, 1994: 9).

Through a process of focused reflexivity individuals become conscious of the degree to which the mind must be trained for it to become more fully aware. This awareness comes with the cessation of dukkha, which leads to a corresponding realisation of the 'nature' of paticca samuppāda. According to the Buddha's teaching of the Four Noble Truths, this is achieved through adherence to the Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Eight-

fold Path, a basic statement of mental, physical and ethical requirements[7] which must be adhered to if the Buddhist is to attain the third level of awareness. Central to this is meditative practice, an inner reflexivity which will heighten awareness of both the self and the external world, particularly of 'others'. This is usually explained as mindfulness (sāti) which, according to Bastow

> ...involves a dispassionate survey of one's own stream of consciousness; and the extension of this survey to the consciousness of others (Bastow, 1994: 13).

This, he suggests, leads individuals to become aware of the ever-changing world of experiences which were categorised into three 'taxonomies' (Bastow, 1994: 13). First is the realisation of a transient world of consciousness (anicca). Second that there is no 'abiding self' to which experiences are attached (anattā), and third, that all experiences, and the subsequent awareness which comes as a result of them, are interrelated. (Bastow, 1994: 14) At this level the processes which are represented by the doctrine of paṭicca samuppāda become clear, revealing the illusory construction of the substantial self. Given this, Bastow poses the question of whether this can be regarded as a form of self-awareness.

He offers two interpretations of this analysis. First he suggests that when considering the relationship between level two and level three, for practical purposes the Buddha perceives things in level two terms (Bastow, 1994: 15), projecting his clear insight pragmatically onto a level which represents a radically different degree of sentience. This is a relatively straight-forward appreciation of the relationship between conventional and ultimate truth in Buddhism. Bastow's second, interpretation, however, is a little more complex. Here he suggests that the Buddha and the arahat achieve a kind of 'non-self understanding' which "constitutes not merely his understanding of reality, but also his 'self'-awareness". While in the first interpretation the self-awareness of the Buddha was dual, in the second it is unitary (Bastow, 1994: 16):

> [I]t is an intrinsic aspect of his self-awareness that he himself has only provisional insubstantial existence (Bastow, 1994: 17).

Bastow offers no preference for either of the above interpretations. Although I suggest that they are particularly useful when discussed with the later development of emptiness. Levels of awareness and emptiness both have at their centre the notion

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[7] The eight elements of this path are:

Wisdom (paññā)	Moral virtue (sīla)	Meditative cultivation (samādhi)
1. Right view	3. Right speech	6. Right effort
2. Right thought	4. Right action	7. Right mindfulness
	5. Right livelihood	8. Right concentration.
		(Harvey, 1990: 68)

of *praītyasamutpāda* providing a sense of interconnectedness similar to that which is exemplified by the analogy of Indra's Net.[8] For instance I would suggest that there are some general similarities between Bastow's three levels of awareness and Nāgārjuna's three stage deconstruction of self. This is to some extent self-evident since for Nāgārjuna the deconstruction of self requires individuals to become aware of the inherent emptiness of everything.

From this point of view it would seems that the level of awareness of the individual would be of great importance given that the fundamental soteriological search is an epistemological one, the quest for meaning in the realisation of the utopia. In the case of Western engaged Buddhism, the heterotopia will not be purely Buddhist, but the complex hybrid which marks most de-universalised spaces. Although levels of Buddhist awareness are important in observing such groups. By examining Western Buddhism in such a way I shall be able to determine the extent with which engaged Buddhist thinkers adhere to a normative form of Buddhism as outlined by Bastow.[9] Also, using the affinities which I have already established between Buddhist philosophy and contemporary social theory, I shall be in a position to discuss a point of contact between the two through a discussion of the degrees of reflexivity which are inherent in the two processes.

As a starting point for this I shall return to Nhat Hanh's discussions of karma which Batchelor suggests he sees as being "some form of genetic inheritance and transmission" (Batchelor, 1992a: 20). While this is being mainly addressed to those who wish to become part of Nhat Hanh's order in Vietnam, it would also be useful to ascertain how this teaching would be received in the West, given the large amount of time he spends here.[10] This underlines the importance of a global network of

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[8] This is not to say that Theravāda, Madhyamika and Hua-yen sources can in themselves be conflated to any exacting degree. There are, however, a number of general similarities which render them important to my argument. In other words, while there are considerable differences in the nature of causality, ontology and reality between them which would render the formal declaration of a generic Buddhist philosophy impossible, there are certain trends which each of them possess that share enough commonality to render them mutually comparable with certain aspects of Western Buddhism which, in a number of cases, may not have the same regard for the mutual exclusivity of individual schools. This, in a sense, is part of my more general argument regarding the nature of the de-universalised society, that while the provenance of, and distinctions between, specific religious ideas should be acknowledged and examined, there many cases are emerging where the boundaries between them are being eroded.

[9] Acknowledging that he concentrates on Theravāda Buddhism.

[10] For Westerners karma carries less cultural baggage, and this highlights one of the problems which is inherent in the transition and translation of a religious tradition into another culture. While such as the Sarvodāya Movement is able to 'invent' tradition in a Buddhist context, in a society where there is little tradition of Buddhism the process is different. In stressing the genetic inheritance of *karma* Nhat Hanh is doing two things. First he is emphasising the importance of *karma* in Buddhism. This is often not appreciated in Western Buddhism, perhaps because people who have not been lifelong Buddhists find it difficult to place their actions when they were not Buddhists, in a karmic context. In other words before they made

engaged Buddhism. Not only does it allow Western Buddhists to have a certain degree of empathy with Eastern Buddhists, it also emphasises Nhat Hanh's ideas of interconnectedness. An essential element of this being awareness and how it is related to social action. Jones suggests that part of the problem lies in the social conditioning to which Westerners are subjected and which "can kammaically blind us even to an elementary ethical awareness" (Jones, 1989: 74). It is only through awareness that ethically questionable activities can be realised. In order to relate this to Buddhist doctrine, and given that Western Buddhists to not adhere to one particular school, I suggest that the nature of such awareness may be seen in terms of both Bastow's (1994) discussions of awareness in Theravāda schools, and Nāgārjuna's philosophy of emptiness in terms of the changing perceptions of the 'individual'. Indeed, while I accept that there are marked differences between the two, I do feel that there is a certain commonality which is useful in this context. In very general terms, for both there occurs a process in which 'individuals' become aware of increasingly more ephemeral phenomena, realising in the process a fundamental interconnection between all things. This underlines the importance of the doctrine of *paticca samuppāda/pratītyasamutpāda* which expounds this process. Given that in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the level of awareness is inextricably linked to ethical action through *paticca samuppāda/pratītyasamutpāda*, then this both underlines the importance of awareness to both socially active Buddhists and to the realisation of interconnection both physically and environmentally. In seeking this, therefore Western Buddhists are able to place themselves within the same 'framework' as their Eastern counterparts, as well as enabling them to realise the importance of social action within such a framework. In broad terms this could be seen as a global awareness with local concerns, as Kenneth Kraft suggests:

> Whereas Buddhism was once identified only with particular cultures, the modern world allows for a shared understanding of Buddhism that bridges cultural variations without denying them (Kraft, 1993: 48).

He goes on to suggest that engaged Buddhists should be part of any global Buddhism in their striving for an "harmonious functioning of society" (Kraft, 1993: 48). That is a society which functions with a greater sense of awareness than at present.

From this it is possible to see social action in the context of Buddhist philosophy, and how this philosophy contributes to the formation of the hybrid social movements

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the 'lifestyle' decision which may in some ways be regarded as a 'rebirth'. This brings me to the second, related reason. Those Westerners who have been brought up as Buddhists would be at most second or third generation. This may lessen the importance of *karma* and rebirth since there is little or no ancestral heritage to their Buddhism. In highlighting this element of karmic burden, I think that Nhat Hanh recognises this problem and perhaps wishes Western Buddhists to see their Eastern counterparts as their spiritual ancestors.

which constitute engaged Buddhism. This brings me back to Nhat Hanh's notion of the 'large self', an awareness of the fundamental interconnection of humans and the earth. Such an outlook has a resonance with what has become known as the philosophy of 'deep ecology' which represents a cultivation of consciousness through which humans are able to empathically share the joys and sorrows of their fellow creatures. This, according to Jones, contrasts with environmentalism which he sees as

> ...a benevolent form of anthropocentrism which casts humankind in the role of paternalistic lord of creation (Jones, 1989: 139).

For Jones, deep ecology requires an awareness akin to Bastow's second level, as well as a subtle form of selflessness which also comes with this level of awareness - allowing individuals the degree of autonomy to make a difference without a high degree of self-interest. Jones puts this into a Buddhist perspective further by applying the notion of Indra's Net, relating it to the notion of 'permaculture', an ecological system in which full use is made of the earth's diversity through an understanding of the interdependence and interaction of these diverse parts (Jones, 1989: 140). In other words, working with rather than against nature. Given that Indra's Net is all-embracing, Jones suggests that the analogy can be taken further to include the "larger and more complex systems of production and exchange" (Jones, 1989: 141).

Applying Indra's Net to these deep ecology solutions illustrates how engaged Buddhists are attempting to relate the spiritual dimension of Buddhism to the 'conventional' environment:

> Indra's Net can prompt our understanding at several different possible levels, ranging from the basic level of intellectual analysis through moral precept and practice to fine-grained insight (Jones, 1989: 143).

Here is a complex interconnection of awareness and action which is inherent in both the ecological and Buddhist philosophies which underpin it. In order to put such claims in context, however, it would be useful to look at the role of environmental ethics in Western philosophy. I shall then compare this relationship with those which may be potentially found between Eastern philosophy and environmentalism, finally focusing in on Buddhist ideas.

Eastern Approaches to Environmental Ethics.

According to J. Baird Callicott, while environmental ethics seem to be one of a number of applied ethics to have emerged this century,[11] they do appear to occupy a unique

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[11] Others including biomedical, business and various other types of professional ethics. (Callicott, 1987: 115)

position. This, he suggests, is because environmental ethics are a sort of *anti*-applied ethics, which, when all the problems considered are taken together

> ...appear to be of such ubiquity, magnitude, recalcitrance, and synergistic complexity, that they force on philosophy the task not of applying familiar ethical theories...but of completely reconstructing moral theory (and a supporting metaphysics) in order to adequately and effectively deal with them (Callicott, 1987: 115).

By this he means that it is traditional Western metaphysical and moral imperatives which are the root problem of environmental ethics, suggesting that the environmental crisis itself is largely of Western making. He argues that in order to begin to resolve these problems two issues must be addressed. First, the foundations of Western metaphysics should be brought into line with ecological concerns; and second, ethical theory should encompass 'non-human natural entities' as well as nature as a whole (Callicott: 1987: 117).

Callicott suggests that some of the fundamental barriers to this lie a the very basis of Western thought. He particularly cites the Judeo-Christian notion of the uniqueness of human beings, together with Greek theories of nature as atomistic:

> The environmental crisis may at least in part be diagnosed as a symptom and a measure of the mismatch between the atomistic-mechanistic image of nature inherited from the Greeks...one the one hand, and the holistic-organic reality disclosed by contemporary ecology...on the other (Callicott: 1987: 118).

As a consequence the 'natural' environment has become engineered to human specifications without reference to detrimental ecological consequences (Callicott: 1987: 119). Rolston also considers the short-comings of Western thought in discussing ecological issues, which he sees as evident in the relationships between both religion and nature, and science and nature. He cites the fact that for the past century increasingly fewer Christians accept the Genesis creation story literally, the Bible no longer being regarded as the basis for a scientific agenda (Rolston, 1987: 172). More than this, however, the relationship between science and ecology is also being questioned.

In his book *Risk Society* (1992), Ulrich Beck reflects on both relationships. He argues that modernisation took place against the backdrop of both traditional morality, and at a time when nature and religion were becoming demystified:

> *Just as modernization dissolved the structure of feudal society in the nineteenth century and produced the industrial society, modernization today is dissolving industrial society and another modernity is coming into being* (Beck, 1992: 10).

In other words modernisation is consuming and losing its other, becoming a reflexive modernisation, a process in which the very factors of modernisation are being

demystified. Beck does not see this as the end of modernity, rather the beginning of modernity "*beyond* its classical design" (Beck, 1992: 10). One of the principal results of this transition is that progress is no longer the benchmark for assessing contemporary society. Instead power is judged according to the production of risks (Beck, 1992: 13).

The problem of scarcity has become increasingly less evident in Western society during the second half of the twentieth century. Technological and social progress - the development of welfare states for instance - has brought the West, and particularly the middle classes, to a position where "the struggle for one's 'daily bread' has lost its urgency" (Beck, 1992: 20). With this came a negative perception of the sources of wealth themselves:

> In the modernization process, more and more *destructive* forces are also being unleashed, forces before which the human imagination stands in awe. Both sources force feed on a growing critique of modernization... (Beck, 1992: 20).

Beck suggests that should this continue the 'wealth-distributing' society would become a 'risk-distributing' society. These are not the personal risks which individuals have always accepted, however, but global dangers which, as far as Beck is concerned, effect the very nature of humanity's existence. Risk, in this sense is as a result of industrialisation, the global ecology and economic factors which cause these problems:

> The concept of risk is directly bound to the concept of reflexive modernization. *Risk* may be defined as a *systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself* (Beck, 1992: 21).

For Beck, if risk were to become the major factor in contemporary Western society, and modernisation were to become fully reflexive, then fear of global tragedy would undermine all other categories found within society, including space and time, societal stratification, and geographical boundaries. In this sense the risk society reflects the globalised society, the risks are global risks. There are, however, also localised possibilities of risks which may effect a single geographical area of strata of society. For instance, geographically localised events such as the Chernobyl or Bhopal disasters, or socially localised events such as the stock market crash of 1987 which, while being on a largely global scale, did not directly effect the whole of society.

Seeing risks as "mathematical condensations of wounded images of a life worth living", Beck argues that they are still principally localised. Furthermore, because it is not possible to actually experience these risks, they are accepted with a certain degree of trust (Beck, 1992: 28). It is in this sense that Giddens's comments about the role of experts in contemporary Western society are closely related to Beck's ideas. Giddens suggests that abstract systems are formed which attempt to "create

large areas of relative security for the continuation of day-to-day life" (Giddens, 1991: 133). These are designed to give individuals piece of mind, although the advice they give is so subjective and particular that in the context of a highly reflexive society it is certainly "only valid until further notice" (Giddens, 1991: 32). Beck's thesis does provide a different perspective on the role of the expert, and especially expert knowledge, which will ultimately have a bearing on the role of Western, and particularly engaged, Buddhism.

In order to elaborate on this I shall reiterate a comment of Giddens:

> No amount of accumulated knowledge about social life could encompass all circumstances of its implementation, even if such knowledge were wholly distinct from the environment to which it applied. If our knowledge about the social world simply got better and better, the scope of unintended consequences might become more and more confined and unwanted consequences rare. However, the reflexivity of modern social life blocks off this possibility... (Giddens, 1990: 44-5).

Here Giddens points out the relationship between knowledge and a society in which reflexivity is a major factor. This is something which the risk strategies that Beck examines, attempts to overcome. Indeed, he is particularly concerned with the way in which knowledge of risks is imparted. He sees this in the context of an immiseration of Western society. This is not an immiseration in economic terms but an immiseration of knowledge. By this he means that things which were once considered to be a safe and necessary part of progress, scientific and technological advances in particular, are suddenly revealed as being dangerous (Beck, 1992: 51-2). Because this is an immiseration of knowledge, however, its chief effects are on those who have access to the knowledge. In other words, it is only those who are *aware* of the danger who perceive the risk. This occurs on a number of different levels. Over time risks may become more apparent, such as the dangers of smoking - which have gradually become accepted by a wider society. Yet risks may also become less apparent. This can occur if they are discounted or superseded by other risks, the reasons for 'cot-deaths' being a case in point. In this sense risks, or at least the perception of risks are, like many other aspects of contemporary Western society, in a state of flux - reflexively modernised as Beck suggests.

The nature of risk perception is further complicated by the way in which knowledge is engineered by those 'experts' who reveal the risk. Indeed, the use of language is very important here. This is especially the case where it appears that risks are being either dealt with or underplayed, often using the mass media as a medium for such a message. This is well explained by the American Hip-Hop Band 'The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy' on their track 'Television, The Drug of the Nation':

> T.V. is the place where phrases are redefined like 'recession' to 'necessary downturn', 'crude oil' on a beach to 'mousse', 'civilian death' to 'collateral

damages', and being killed by your own Army is now called 'friendly fire' (The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, 1992).

Here the perception of risk is reduced by replacing a value-laden term with an oxymoron. This provides for a widespread knowledge of risk, but expresses it so as to engender a low level of concern. A similar process is in operation in the setting of 'safe limits' which rely on the naïveté, or lack of awareness, of individuals. Safety regulations are set by 'experts' on whom individuals rely. If adhered to they offer piece of mind even though they may not be not worth the paper they are written on (Beck, 1992: 42). It is an awareness of this which Beck sees as reflexive modernisation. A situation where risks are scientised in order to allay fears, only for a greater awareness of these risks to be sought through external scientific analysis:

> With reflexive modernization, public risk consciousness and risk conflicts will lead to *forms of scientization of the protest against science* (Beck, 1992: 161).

Most importantly for Beck this leads to a reflexive process within modern society in which "*the publicly transmitted criticism of the previous development becomes the motor of expansion*" (Beck, 1992: 161). While Western society does not, as yet at least, represent a risk society it does display many of attributes which suggest that a process of reflexive modernisation is taking place in certain parts of society, something which is evident in the development of environmental movements.

It is this sort of process which has led to the emergence of Buddhist environmental groups. Indeed it seems that a perception of environmental risks may be seen to coincide with levels of awareness in Buddhism where a number of writers suggest the compatibility between Eastern philosophies and environmentalism or ecology. Callicott, having previously explained why Western metaphysical and moral imperatives are at the root problem of environmental ethics, looks to Eastern traditions for potential solutions. He especially considers philosophies which suggest the presence of a single inner substance within everything, as personified by the relationship between *ātman* and *brahman* in Upanisadic thought (Callicott: 1987: 123), and the role of the *jīva* and *ajīva* in Jainism. There are important differences between the two, although they do share the idea of a fundamental essence which resides in all things, a standpoint which would answer a number of the criticisms levelled at Western philosophy by Callicott. In Jainism this is more fully answered in the doctrine of *ahiṁsa* which upholds the axiom of non-injury to all living things, including the four elements of wind, air, earth and water. Here, at a basic level, all living things can be seen to make up a single organic ecosystem (Callicott, 1987: 124).

While these provide good examples of the relationship between nature and Indian philosophy, in classical Buddhism these theories are viewed differently. There is no essence, however insubstantial, which emphasises the relationship between humans

and nature. There is, however, an awareness of non-duality which can be cultivated, and is regarded as essential to Buddhist environmental concerns. This can be expressed through the example of Indra's Net, knowledge of which is gained through spiritual practice. According to Rolston Indra's Net seems to provide a model of both horizontal (scientific, empirical, phenomenal) and vertical (noumenal, metaphysical) models of nature which are necessary if it is to be valued (Rolston, 1987: 184). He is, nevertheless, sceptical about how these categories can be reconciled. Certainly Indra's Net expresses the interconnected nature of all things yet, at the same time, phenomenal elements are ultimately the result of desire and craving. While through the doctrine of karma, individuals still act as moral agents.

The problem which Rolston poses is one of the relationship between conventional and ultimate truth in Buddhism. At the ultimate level a oneness with, and concern for, nature is paradoxical since it is part of the realm of desire, craving and suffering which act as soteriological barriers. On the conventional level, however, individuals consider that they have a moral imperative to express their relationship with nature in a way which would be karmically positive. In terms of Bastow's analysis of awareness in Pali Buddhism, this represents the transparency which is marked by this karmic reflexivity of the first level. While the second level of awareness can be equated with a realisation of the non-duality inherent in Indra's Net.

These are problems which Inada (1987) tries to resolve. He asserts that the principal doctrines of Buddhist philosophy tend to "focus on the nature of experiential reality" (Inada, 1987: 139), whether it be enlightened or unenlightened - what Inada refers to as 'the principal parity of existence' (Inada, 1987: 140). This, he suggests, is explained by Nagarjuna in proposing that there is essentially no difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Indeed, there is considerable evidence from Buddhist scripture to uphold this claim, from the Majjhima Nikāya, for instance:

> Whoever sees conditioned genesis (paṭiccasamuppāda/pratītyasamutpāda) sees dhamma (truth of existence); whoever sees dhamma sees conditioned genesis (Cited in Inada: 1987: 140).

The parity principal suggests that reality actually has two facets which are "lodged in the selfsame ground of existence" (Inada, 1987: 141), one conditioned and the other not. In the Mahāyāna tradition this is seen in terms of form and emptiness which is conceptualised in the Bodhisattva Ideal. Inada considers that the doctrine of emptiness is the key to such experience. In the Heart Sūtra the bodhisattva sees the empirical realm of experience as being totally empty, and therefore non-dual. It is the relationship between the bodhisattva and the empirical realm which is vital to understand. I would suggest that the awareness which the bodhisattva has is akin to Bastow's second interpretation of enlightened awareness, a self-awareness of a

provisional insubstantial existence (Bastow, 1994: 17). This is what leads bodhisattvas to exhibit a mixture of wisdom ((*prajña*) - the ontological mode) and compassion ((*karuṇā*) - the conceptual mode) to delay their entry into *nirvāṇa* in order to help others reach the same goal. This can be seen as an ideal model for social and environmental concern and action:

> The acts of the Bodhisattva are, then, a graphic exemplification of an experiential reality of a free and open nature, where the conceptual and ontological modes of perception are no longer distinct and different but, rather, mutually supportive and identifiable (Inada, 1987: 146).

From this description of the Bodhisattva Ideal it is possible to construct a positive attitude towards the environment and social action. Individuals are part of a non-dual environment which is essentially empty, but because they are not aware of this, they do not take care of it. In order to reverse this they must be aware of their oneness with nature which is ultimately bound up with Enlightenment, Nāgārjuna's identification of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. In Mahāyāna Buddhism it is the awareness of emptiness which paradoxically "gives substance to the perceptual elements...and which serves as the ground for relational function" (Inada, 1987: 148-9). Again, therefore, it is the actual perception of individuals which is important in establishing their relationship with nature.

Buddhist Social Action.

It seems that the principal relationship between Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist social action is that of interconnection. This is something which Nhat Hanh has emphasised, and is particularly relevant because of its acceptability to Buddhists of many schools. All positive action will have a positive effect on everything else. There are, however, differences as to the nature of this action. Principal amongst these seems to be the extent to which such action should be passive or active, and the degree of militancy which should be shown.

Compassion is usually seen as the fundamental basis for such action. According to Andrew Schelling, any radical response must take the actions of the Buddha as its precedent. In particular he cites the Jataka Tales, stories of the Buddha's rebirths, as examples of this (Schelling, 1991: 10-1). These stories are generally seen as the forerunners to the concept of skilful means (*upāya*) which is so prevalent in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. And while the term *upāya* was not explicitly mentioned it seems clear that there is a connection between the two:

> They show that there was a real continuity in the way in which the nature and intention of the various specific forms of Buddhist teaching were supposed to be understood (Pye, 1978: 121).

It is Schelling's conception that eco-activists, by risking their own well-being, are fulfilling the spirit of the Jataka Tales:

> Buddhists believe that we are all incipient Buddhas, migrating through incalculable reaches of time and space, navigating a complicated succession of births, each on course to ultimate Buddhahood. In other words, the stories of the Buddha's previous rebirths are not someone else's but our own (Schelling, 1991: 13).

This comment brings together much that I have been talking about, and establishes the nature of a Buddhist hybrid space. First is the diachronic element. Like Nhat Hanh, Schelling establishes a diachronic element, so important for Buddhists without their own religious heritage. Second, he establishes a soteriological goal, a utopia - a reflection of which will influence the nature of the engaged heterotopia. Third, and inherent in the other two, is this sense of interconnectedness both synchronically and diachronically. Finally, Buddhism mentioned here is only one of a number of cultural sources for the engaged heterotopia, and although it may the principal one which inspires such selfless action it seems clear that the fragmentation of Buddhism, of which these groups are part, have more than just a Buddhist agenda. As Harris suggests, though, this does not necessarily mean that this will result in substantial deviations from tradition (Harris, 1995: 200).

Harris traces the roots of 'EcoBuddhism' to the counter-culture, although perhaps the initial impetus was provided by America's 'Beat Generation', and in particular through the work of Jack Kerouac, Alan Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, the three protagonists of Kerouac's novel *The Dharma Bums*, first published in 1957. As with their Western predecessors, all came to Buddhism by literary means - only Snyder began practising in the 50s (R. Fields, 1995: 75-8). Their importance lies in their influence on the counter-culture, particularly Snyder's whose poetry reflected his passion for the environment. Indeed, as Lynn White suggests, it was the beatniks who were first responsible for the West Coast environmental movement through their affinity with Zen Buddhism (White, 1967: 1206; cited in Callicott, 1987: 120).

Probably Snyder's best known work is his 'Smokey the Bear Sutra' which, as Callicott suggests:

> ...parodies the format of Mahāyāna Buddhist sutras but supplies it with an evolutionary-ecological metaphysics and environmental activist message (Callicott, 1987: 120).

He presents the story of the Buddha in a future rebirth in America "clad in blue work overalls, and a stetson hat, in the wrathful form of Smokey the Bear" (Harris, 1995: 202):

And if anyone is threatened by advertising, air pollution, or the police, they should chant SMOKEY THE BEAR'S WAR SPELL: DROWN THEIR BUTTS CRUSH THEIR BUTTS DROWN THEIR BUTTS CRUSH THEIR BUTTS

And SMOKEY THE BEAR will surely appear to put the enemy out with his vajra-shovel (Cited in Callicott, 1987: 120).

This is a good example of the way in which a hybrid space, a Buddhist heterotopia, is formed, through the meeting of two distinct cultural forms, yet because of its interstitial nature can be seen to hold diachronic provenance from both. The Smokey the Bear Sutra, along with much art and literature captured the zeitgeist of the West, and West Coast America in particular. Yet, according to Harris, such literature does not represent a significant shift from Buddhist thought. He suggests that such expressions of Buddhist environmentalism exemplify two of the main factors of Buddhist modernism which are characterised by Heinz Bechert (1972). First, the move to universalise the *sangha*, which shows a certain tendency to dissolve traditional boundaries between the mundane and supermundane. (Harris, 1995: 203) Second, that environmental activity, as it proceeds from scientific observation "reflects a 'tacit elimination of traditional cosmology'" (Harris, 1995: 203, Bechert, 1972: 91). In addition to these, a number of significant similarities are also evident. Again these lie in the common conception of interconnectedness shared by both Buddhism and deep ecology. Indeed, Harris suggests that the former could be regarded as something of an authentication of the latter (Harris, 1995: 204), in which "[d]eep ecology itself represents a Buddhification of Western metaphysics" (Harris, 1995: 205).

What Buddhism lacks, however, is a teleological element. This, according to Harris, may be seen in encounters with process theology - making ecoBuddhism more responsive to an environmentalist ethic:

> EcoBuddhism, then, seems to possess a variety of exogenous elements somehow tacked on to a traditional Buddhist core which is incapable, without modification, of responding to the present environmental crisis. Since it preserves the centrality of the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*, in a symmetric form perhaps characteristic of the most ancient sources, ecoBuddhism passes the test of authenticity set by Matsumoto and Hakamaya[12](Harris, 1995: 206).

While this is a something of a arbitrary measure of normative Buddhism, it does provide me with a central point of reference which has been a recurring theme throughout this chapter. Through *paticca samuppāda* I have established the importance of the concept of Indra's Net and its relation to emptiness and awareness. It is this which forms the basis for the dual level of reality, particularly through the skilful interpretation of Indra's Net. Conventional truth is marked by the interaction of

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[12] Matsumoto (1989) and Hakamaya (1989), have suggested that many Buddhist movements have failed to maintain this doctrine. They suggest that *pratītyasamutpāda* is the fundamental doctrine from which all authentic Buddhist notions proceed (Harris, 1995: 199).

phenomena, while the fundamental insubstantiality of such phenomena lies in their ultimate groundlessness.

In their concern for the environment and justice ecoBuddhists, and engaged Buddhists generally, show themselves to be at a level of awareness which - in Buddhist terms - sees the interconnection of all this but do not fully relate it to the groundlessness of existence. On a more mundane level engaged Buddhism is significant since it places a strong emphasis on ethics. This is not only soteriologically important in terms of measuring the normativity of such groups, but is also vital in assessing their level of cultural interaction with contemporary Western society.

Engaged Buddhist groups in many ways offer a good example of a de-universalised space. They draw on cultural and traditional elements from both Western and Eastern societies, and consequently have both synchronic and diachronic dimensions which interact with both the local and the global, and act vertically and horizontally within society. To this can be added a fourth dimension which comes as a result first of the sociality which individuals feel in their belonging to such a group; and second from the soteriological/utopian goal of which the space is partially a reflection.

In this sense the engaged Buddhist group can act as something of a microcosm for Western society generally. A 'religious' group which is relatively ephemeral in that its members come together through certain shared allegiances (Bauman, 1993b: 143), through a mixture of both diachronic and synchronic ties. Western Soto Zen ordinands are given a direct lineage from themselves back to the Buddha; while members of the Western Buddhist Order (WBO) share a common heritage, and usually a common lifestyle within communities - although in both cases an interaction with Western society and culture is emphasised. Even the English Sangha, who self-consciously attempt to keep rigidly to traditional Thai Theravāda Buddhist monasticism, has made a series of adjustments to Western life which underlines the cultural interaction which goes on (Mellor, 1991a).

While there are degrees with which Buddhist groups interact with Western society (Green, 1989; Mellor, 1991a) they do represent heterotopias which may be seen as typical of any series of heterotopias which exist in Western society. That is a series of de-universalised spaces that have discernible, but relatively ephemeral boundaries which allow for the existence of both the traditional and the non-rational, but have no monopoly over the sociality of individuals. In the next chapter I shall examine the nature of such ephemeral boundaries, questioning whether or not they can be transgressed. Concentrating in particular of the nature of the body and individual identity, I shall examine potential comparisons which may be made between the experience of individuals who interact with new technologies such as virtual reality and cyberspace, and those who practice Buddhist meditation. Examining the location

of such experiences I shall set both within the context of the theories which I have developed in this thesis, discussing further and future potential roles and locations for religion in contemporary Western society.

CHAPTER SIX
SURFING INDRA'S NET

I'm a mid-art populist and postmodernist Buddhist surfing his way through the chaos of the late twentieth century (David Bowie).[1]

While Bowie's remarks may allude more to his pretensions than any substantial comment on the nature of contemporary Western society, they do highlight a number of examples of the way in which Buddhists may perceive of their positions in such a milieu. As shown in the previous chapter Buddhists can experience sociality through a number of different synchronic and diachronic allegiances. These result in the formation of a number of what have been referred to as neo-tribes, groups which are formed for a short period of time, or which fluctuate in their internal and external interactions. This has helped to develop the affinities which I believe exist between Buddhism and contemporary Western society, although this was something which I principally explored within the conventional realm. In this chapter I wish to take this a stage further by exploring the nature of a number of new technologies which seem set to fundamentally alter the nature of the society which I have been describing. Through this I hope to further the existing affinities which I have established between Buddhism and the West, and as a result suggest a number of new strategies for exploring religious phenomena as a consequence of these changes, finally speculating on the future of both religion and its study.

Body Reject? Beyond the Interstitial Skin.

While postmodern thought has advocated the collapsing of many boundaries, most notably between high and mass culture, it has tended not to suggest a wholesale deconstruction of the body - retaining the skin as a boundary which separates the self from the 'other'. As Shilling points out, the body in consumer culture becomes of increasing importance as a bearer of symbolic value (Shilling, 1993: 2-3). Indeed, for some the body has become a consumer site to the extent where consumption is regarded as its sole activity. This has been taken up by a number of performance artists, most notably Orlan who engages in plastic surgery as part of her performance, replaying a video of the operation at further performances. She critiques the use of the body as a consumer site since many of her operations are designed to make her look less attractive[2]. This is an extreme example of what Bauman sees as the postmodern body which is most marked by its privatisation. It goes beyond fashion in terms of how the body is adorned, attempting to achieve a particular physical shape

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[1] *The Sunday Times* (9/4/95).
[2] Her latest project is to have her nose made as large as can be physically supported by her face.

and form. This, he suggests, leads to a feeling of inadequacy which can only be countered by the individuals themselves (Bauman, 1995: 113). He stresses the anxiety which results from this process:

> I propose that this product of the 'privatization' of the body and of the agencies of social production of the body is the 'primal scene' of postmodern ambivalence (Bauman, 1995: 119).

Bauman suggests that this comes about because of two competing processes which operate with the postmodern body - 'proteophobia' and 'fixeophobia', respectively the fear of never reaching the peak, and the fear of reaching it - which together allow no experience to be seen as the ultimate and no sensation to be seen as undesirable (Bauman, 1995: 120).

For Bauman this privatisation of the body means that it is individuals who are responsible for the boundary of the body, and the territory therein must be protected from outside invasion by that which is thought to prevent the attainment of the ultimate goal. This results in what Shilling calls 'body projects', where individuals recognise that their own bodies are open to reconstruction according to their own designation (Shilling, 1993: 5). This may not reflect the all-consuming extremes of Bauman, but is significant in the way that individuals pay so much attention to their bodies. As with other elements of postmodern thinking, Bauman's position perhaps represents a small but significant proportion of society, as critiqued by Orlan - but not society as a whole. This merging of roles in the body can be seen in the context of the de-universalised society which similarly looks at trends which, while not being completely postmodern, do contain certain elements which benefit from studies of postmodernity. For both Shilling and Bauman (1992), the project of the body is ultimately marked by death - a boundary which has so far been extendible yet unbreachable.

According to Shilling sociological approaches to the body, limited as they are, can, historically, be seen in two senses in what he calls an 'absent presence' (Shilling, 1993: 9):

> It has been absent in the sense that sociology has rarely focused on the embodied human as an object of importance in its own right...However, it is also possible to argue that the body has been present at the very heart of the sociological imagination (Shilling, 1993: 19)

For Shilling, the body is implicitly present in classical sociology. Yet, as he points out, individuals' experiences are mediated through their bodies and as such present a basis on which to discuss the structure of society through analyses of difference and interaction as well as discussing the attributes of embodiment, much of which has

been largely understated over the years (Shilling, 1993: 22-3). It seems from the evidence which Shilling presents that the importance of the body has been underestimated by sociologists over the years, although it seems that this is now beginning to change. Shilling suggests that this has a number of causes; feminist calls for women to reclaim their bodies; the increasing numbers of elderly people found in Western societies; the body seen increasingly as a consumer site; and uncertainty of what bodies actually are (Shilling, 1993: 31). The latter point, in particular, seems to suggest a certain rationalisation of the body, both by the self and others. However, while such a process is generally intended to provide meaning for individuals, it can also lead to questions about where the boundaries of the body actually lie (Shilling, 1993: 38). This is an indistinction which will only increase in the future as technologies seek to blur the interface between human and 'machine'.

Allied with the quest for meaning in the body lies concern for it as a bearer of symbolic value, something which Shilling highlights through his analysis of Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (Shilling, 1993: 127ff). This involves an examination of how the body has become commodified in modern societies, and is significant in the analysis of power structures within them. In particular, Shilling suggests the three principal factors which contribute to the social class of a body; social location, habitus, and taste (Shilling, 1993: 129). This allows a degree of flexibility which takes into account the reflexive actions of individuals in their continuous search for alternative lifestyle choices, and as such fits well into the model for the de-universalised society. In terms of my establishment of the nature of space in such a milieu, habitus is of particular interest. Indeed, Soja connects it to Foucault's notion of heterotopic space, linking it to Lefebvre's *l'espace vécu*:

> ...actually lived and socially created spatiality, concrete and abstract at the same time, the habitus of social practices (Soja, 1989: 18).

From this analysis it is possible to suggest a position for the body within the heterotopic space as one which is subject to reflexive demands, within certain parameters which are placed upon it, and can act within the heterotopic space with all the consequences that this brings. For Lefebvre the nature of habitus is important for the establishment of the nature of space in the West. In Greek philosophy it was spatial habitus which provided essential concepts of form, function and structure (Lefebvre, 1991: 239), although this was within a relatively tight framework. This was relaxed slightly in Roman thought where intuitus was transformed into habitus (Lefebvre, 1991: 245-6) allowing for more emphasis on representational space which resulted in a greater flexibility in habitus.

I include these brief examples to show the early nature of habitus, in civilisations which were relatively fixed in terms of their use of space. The construction of space

in the Roman Empire, for instance, was such that all roads did, representationally at least, lead to Rome. Yet there is a similarity in the way in which social space is created today in that it takes the body into account. While space has become fragmented and heterotopic, the body still remains an essential consideration in its construction. The principal difference is that social space now must take a high degree of individuality into account. Indeed, Shilling considers the individualisation of the body to be one of the three principal characteristics of a civilised body, along with its socialisation and rationalisation (Shilling, 1993: 166). Drawing mainly on the work of Norbert Elias, Shilling suggests that the development of civilised bodies tends to leave individuals alone with their bodies, and as a consequence can become stale with them. In the past this has been obviated through the existence of "trans-personal social and religious meaning systems":

> In contemporary society, however, individuals are increasingly left alone with a heightened reflexivity about the limitations of their civilised bodies, yet are without meaningful socially legitimated resources for justifying this situation (Shilling, 1993: 167).

This can be partially obviated by the 'eruptions of sociality' (Bauman, 1993b: 141) of neo-tribal activity, which will provide a temporary respite from such feelings, putting the boundaries of the body under more pressure than ever before. By this I mean that the reflexive nature of modern individuals, in their continual quest for meaning and identity, may be beginning to find the body to be too restrictive for contemporary social orders. Here self-identity and the body have become 'reflexively organised projects' (Giddens, 1991; Shilling, 1993: 181), where "the body has become an increasingly inadequate basis on which this project of the self can be built" (Shilling, 1993: 182). As Shilling points out, part of this problem lies with technological developments which, along with the rise of abstract systems, "have called into question our sense of what the body is" (Shilling, 1993: 182). This has meant that the body has shifted from the natural to the social having "a thoroughly permeable 'outer layer' which the reflexive project of the self and externally formed abstract systems enter" (Giddens, 1991: 218; Shilling, 1993: 182).

In contemporary Western society the body seems to be moving away from what was hitherto seen as natural, where individuals have greater control of the shape and 'style' of their bodies. Instead it is becoming increasingly marked by culture:

> The body is increasingly open to reconstruction in high modernity, but it still provides a basis for the social relations and technological advances which facilitate that reconstruction. Indeed, the resistance of the flesh still places very real limits on the degree to which the body can be reconstructed in line with the self-identity of its owner (Shilling, 1993: 185)

In the next section I shall begin to explore ways in which these limits may be crossed, primarily through the introduction of technology, before discussing the implications that this will have in the study of Buddhism.

Techno-bodies.

Within the next thirty years the fear that we may not be able to distinguish real humans from replicants will no longer be just science fiction (Deitch, 1992: 17).

For Deitch the beginning of this process lies in the constant reflexive reinvention of self-identity which modern society brings. He cites such as Madonna, Michael Jackson and Ivana Trump as shuffling "reality and fantasy into a reassembled fictional personality" (Deitch, 1992: 20-1). These are the most likely targets of Orlan's critique, where the reflexivity of individuals render their own bodies as consumer sites. This can be seen in the increase in plastic surgery which has taken place over the last twenty years, and has been accompanied by a marked shift in attitude towards its effects. Certainly in the 1970s individuals did undergo attempts to alter their appearances, but usually in the form of subtle enhancement. This seems to be less of factor in the 1990s where Michael Jackson's 'twee' nose or Pamela Anderson's breasts are far from 'natural'. For Shilling, this is where the body shifts from the natural to the social (Shilling, 1993: 182):

Our new technological and sociological environment is gradually shaping a new concept of self, a new construction of what it means to be a human being (Deitch, 1992: 22).

If this is the case then shifting identities can go deeper than lifestyle choices, an intrinsic altering of the body going beyond adornment or dieting. Here are body projects which can radically alter the appearance of individuals almost to order. Nevertheless, although changes in the body and identity are occurring in contemporary Western society, most scholars feel that the material body has and will remain a constant factor in postmodernity, and even in the 'post-human' society (Balsamo, 1995: 220) to which Deitch alludes.

Of the exceptions to this majority view, probably the most prominent is Arthur Kroker who suggests that the postmodern body is actually a disappearing body which has no ontological status "separate from the proliferation of rhetorics that now invest the body with simulated meaning" (Balsamo, 1995: 218). For Kroker, the body has been "exhausted, exteriorized, inscribed to excess, invaded by language, dissolved over the mediascape, and functional only as a 'passive screen for the hystericizations and panic mythologies of the (disappearing) public realm'" (Balsamo, 1995: 219; Kroker and Kroker, 1987: 28), this being the dominant language of postmodern power. This has led Kroker to develop theories of the body which seem to be influenced by

science fiction writing, and in particular the genre of cyberpunk - generally thought to have originated with William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* (Gibson [1984] 1993). Here Gibson coins the word *cyberspace* which has become synonymous with a sort of parallel reality within a computer matrix. Since then there have been many interpretations of what cyberspace is, from which Marcus Novak has constructed a composite definition:

> Cyberspace is a completely spatialized visualization of all information in global information processing systems, along pathways provided by present and future communications networks, enabling full copresence and interaction of multiple users, allowing input and output from and to the full human sensorium, permitting simulations of real and virtual realities, remote data collection and control through telepresence, and total integration and intercommunication with a full range of intelligent products and environments in real space (Novak, 1991: 225).

This amalgamation of explanations underlines how broad the term cyberspace is, certainly beyond Gibson's original definition as:

> A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions...A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system...Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding... (Gibson, [1984] 1993: 67)

For Gibson cyberspace provides a dystopic vision of the future. Yet, as Featherstone and Burrows point out, much of the speculation about cyberculture is utopian in nature (although they are of the opinion that the ideas outlined by cyberpunk may provide a *"theoretically* coherent vision of a very near future which is...about to collapse on the present" (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995: 8)). As Novak's definition shows, Gibson's vision no longer represents the full meaning of cyberspace. A significant part of this is virtual reality, a term coined initially by computer scientist Jaron Lanier. Virtual reality exists within cyberspace and, with current technology, can be accessed through the wearing of specially wired headphones, gloves, goggles and a body suit[3] (Sterling, 1990: 54). These provide the interface between individuals and the computer, giving them the perception of being in a space which is entirely computer generated.

The existence of virtual realities and cyberspace calls into question the nature of human embodiment. In *Neuromancer* Gibson describes the experience of Case, the principal character of the novel, in coming out of cyberspace:

> For Case, who'd lived in the bodiless exultation of cyberspace, it was the Fall...The body was meat. Case fell into the prison of his own flesh (Gibson, [1984] 1993: 12).

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[3] An immense amount of research is being carried out in the field of virtual reality meaning that the interface between human and machine will become much less cumbersome over the next decade.

Within cyberspace Case projects his "disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination of the matrix" (Gibson, [1984] 1993). His body is no longer the locus of his experience. This for Nigel Clark, represents one of Gibson's notions of cyberspatial embodiment; the other being 'simstim'[4] where human bodies "act as receptive surfaces for images projected by the media" (Clark, 1995: 123) which, says Clark, is reminiscent of Thomas Foster's comment that "all bodies function as signifying surfaces" (Foster, 1993: 2).

Having made such a considerable impact on Western culture, Cyberpunk - and Gibson's novels in particular - seems to provide a good basis from which to discuss contemporary forms of embodiment. Gibson's vision is one which presents a 'negation of embodiment' (Cherniavsky, 1993: 36). This is useful from my point of view because it provides a realistic speculation for the interaction between human and machine. Indeed, in many ways this seems to be the logical extension for individuals who increasingly feel limited by their bodies. For Veronica Hollinger the interface between the body and the machine in cyberpunk

> ...radically decentres the human body, the sacred icon of the essential self, in the same way that the virtual reality of cyberspace works to decenter conventional humanist notions of an unproblematical 'real' (Hollinger, 1991: 207).

This post-humanist view bears a certain similarity with my previous discussions on heterotopias and utopias. Here I suggest that the 'real' (in Hollinger's sense) can be equated with the heterotopia, and cyberspace with utopia as a space which is not quantifiable, but does have a marked effect on the space, or the body, in which the consciousness is located. This reveals an important proviso that although individuals actually perceive to experience events within cyberspace - unlike for Gibson - the location of that experience remains within the body.

This can be forgotten when examining the nature of cyberspace, and virtual reality especially. The tendency towards utopianism has led those who are developing it to become carried away with the potentialities of cyber-technologies, abandoning Gibson's dystopian vision for one which will actually liberate individuals from the constraints of their bodies (Robins, 1995: 139):

> Virtual reality is, or is imagined as, 'a combination of the objectivity of the physical world with the unlimitedness and the uncensored content normally associated with dreams or imagination' (Robins, 1995: 139; Lanier, 1990: 188).

While I acknowledge that people such as Lanier have to sell their work for potential investors, especially in the commercial sector, it is important that we do not get too carried away with their utopian visions.

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[4] 'Simulated stimulation', where individuals inhabit the bodies of celebrities and, through digital recording, experience 'soap-like scenarios' as them (Clark, 1995: 123).

The body is central to objections made about the liberating role of virtual reality, as Balsamo suggests, it does not disappear when interfaced with cyber-technology (Balsamo, 1995: 229), rather it is an extension of the physical. It is, therefore, necessary to consider different ways in which bodies are technologically engaged. Failure to do this, says Balsamo "is to perpetuate a serious misreading of postmodernity as structured by a uniformly dominant cultural logic" (Balsamo, 1995: 233).

So far I have merely established the existence of such technologies and briefly touched on the potential which they may have in establishing possible future notions of embodiment. In the rest of this chapter I shall concentrate on three potential ways in which the boundaries of the body may be traversed. The first two involve the interface between humans and technology through, respectively, the exploration of virtual reality/cyberspace, and the cyborg - "a hybrid of machine and organism" (Haraway, 1991: 149). The third way is nothing new, that of potential metaphysical transgressions of the body. I shall then draw on earlier affinities between contemporary Western society and Buddhism to suggest a continuation of such processes, and to discuss the potential role of religion in what is often referred to as a post-human society.

Virtually Sacred Reality.

Having established some sort of realistic boundaries for discussing the nature of virtual reality and cyberspace I shall now discuss the nature of identity within such environments. For Gibson we are approaching a time in which self-identities garnered through actual physical experiences are not able to compete with those of 'hyperreal', 'simulated', 'disembodied' cyberspace (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995: 12). Indeed, as Larry McCaffery suggests, cyberpunk

> ...became a significant movement within postmodernism because of its ability to
> present an intense, vital, and often darkly humorous vision of the world space of
> multinational capitalism... (McCaffery, 1991: 12).

Cyberpunk seems to move effortlessly through a multiplicity of styles and genres, leading George Slusser to suggest that it is to traditional narrative what MTV is to feature film (Slusser, 1991: 334). Cyberpunk makes many of the same assumptions about identity as postmodernism, emphasising its fragmentation, and most of all being susceptible to what Jameson sees as the relentless invasion of culture into society. Discussing the protagonists of Gibson's novels Darko Suvin suggests:

> They have been socialized into the new space of the 1980s, which "involves
> suppression of distance...and the relentless saturation of any remaining voids and

empty places...[The body] is now exposed to the perpetual barrage of immediacy from which all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed" (Suvin, 1991: 352; Jameson, 1988: 351)

Cyberpunk traverses many of the boundaries that postmodernity does, rooted as it is in eighties pop culture. However, according to Sterling, this also has important ramifications for academic study as the gap between disciplines crumbles:

Traditionally, there has been a yawning cultural gulf between the sciences and the humanities: a gulf between literary culture, the formal world of art and politics, and the culture of science, the world of engineering and industry (Sterling, 1991: 345).

It is important that recognition is given to this phenomena by both the sciences and the humanities as each comes to have an increasingly greater effect on the other. Indeed, it is from such a situation that I justify this paragraph as the boundary between the two become less distinct. Like the relationship between the body and virtual reality, however, I am not suggesting that this boundary can, or should be, completely eliminated. Nevertheless there is a certain correlation which is evident between cyberpunks' attempts to deconstruct all boundaries, most notably those between the body and technology. Both the mind and the body is invaded by technology as society is restructured by culture (Hollinger, 1991: 209), rendering the protagonists of cyberpunk novels as hybrids of a global culture which accessed through, and as a result of, seamless mental and physical connections to a vast computer matrix.

Cyberpunk is fiction, yet it needs to be taken as seriously as other forms of postmodern speculation. It points to a dystopia which seems feasible, yet at this moment in time unattainable. Like other forms of postmodern theory it offers a valuable marker from which to view contemporary society, yet goes beyond the reality of our current situation. In discussing the role of the body in relation to technology, therefore, I suggest that it is necessary to draw back from the 'excesses' of cyberpunk, but take into account the trend which it is suggesting. While cyberpunk talks of body and mind invasion by technology, I suggest that interaction is a more measured term to use in describing the relationship between the two. This position allows me to begin to integrate ideas of virtual reality into the study of the development of modernity, and the role which religion can play in it. Hence while postmodern thinkers talk of a disjunction in the post-enlightenment process, I have maintained throughout this study that this is not the case. Rather there has been a continuation of this project which has nevertheless altered and displayed some elements evident in postmodern thought.

The same may be said of virtual reality and cyberspace which may well mark a new level of cultural restructuring in society, particularly in terms of the close interaction of the body with the machine. This will occur if, as Csicsery-Ronay suggests:

> VR scenarios can produce experiences of reality as vivid as 'natural' reality..., the question arises whether VR scenarios, even if they are clearly recognised as artificial by those interacting with them, might be considered of equal value with, or indeed preferable to, natural reality (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 1).

If this is the case, it raises some important questions about perception of experience in and of virtual reality. I have already stated that the ultimate location of experiences in virtual reality remain in the body. Together with Csicsery-Ronay's argument of the potential perceived reality of virtual environments this may have some important consequences for the study of religion:

> The challenge to epistemology and ontology that VR appears to presage can be viewed as an aspect of the inexorable unfolding [of] the Enlightenment project of demystification and demythologizing, revealing the material contingency behind religious-spiritual-ideological illusion (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 1)

By placing it within the enlightenment project, he sees virtual reality as an integral part of the development of modernity. Furthermore, in suggesting that individuals' perception of experiences which occur 'in' virtual reality are, to them, of equal value as those experiences in the 'natural' environment, he opens up to possibility of individuals' experiencing "a plethora of possible alternative experiences of reality" (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 1). Through this analysis Csicsery-Ronay argues that there are a number ways in which religious phenomena can occur through interaction with virtual environments.

First is through peak experiences, those moments where awareness is heightened to such an extent that the actual experience "dissolves into meaning" (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 3). Virtual reality, claims Csicsery-Ronay, is, almost by definition, a technology of experience. This confirms my suggestion that it is the perception of individuals which is importance in judging their experiences, and their reflexive reaction to them. It also underlines the importance of the search for meaning as a constant in the project of modernity. As Featherstone and Burrows point out there are a number of similarities which can be drawn between the urban and virtual environments, seeing the latter as

> ...a digitised parallel world which from 'above' might appear as a rationally planned city (Le Corbusier's metropolis) but from 'below' reveals itself as a Benjaminesque labyrinthine city, in which no one can get the bird's eye view of the plan, but everyone has to effectively operate at street level... (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995: 11).

This being the case it is possible to put forward the possibility of individuals acting like cyber-*flâneurs*, continually searching for meaning, but in far more ephemeral environments, the construction of which are far more under their control - creating what Csicsery-Ronay terms quasi-peak experiences. This is important since it suggests that such experiences can be seen in the same way as quasi-memories and quasi-knowledge, further stressing the importance of the perception of individuals.

Here is a situation where individuals can create their own environments which are, in their perception, real, and through which they can search for meaning - in this case religious meaning. Csicsery-Ronay argues that it is possible to say that such experiences are indistinguishable from 'natural' reality. This, I suggest, is going too far as he does not take into account the quasi-memories and quasi-knowledge which act as filters of perception in individuals who are constructing such sites, and provide the diachronic element which is usually important in religious identity.

Csicsery-Ronay's second potential religious use for virtual reality, comes from the creation of the virtual environments themselves. He argues that places of ritual or worship, such as temples, are, to a certain extent, controlled and programmed virtual spaces (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 4). From this he speculates whether ritual spaces can be reproduced in virtual reality:

> For any such virtual venues to become associated with sacred sites, they would have to elicit the assent of many people, and be regularizable (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995: 4).

For Csicsery-Ronay this means that if a collectivity decided on certain parameters in forming such a virtual space, these would then be relatively static despite the great potential for change which would exist in the environment. In this situation the collectivity would have a great deal of control over the exact nature of the ritual space. It would, however, only be of use if peak experiences, or rather quasi-peak experiences, are attainable. These can then be associated with pasts and futures through quasi-memory and quasi-knowledge.

For this to be attainable, cyberspace and virtual reality will need to be seen as social spaces themselves for, as Tomas argues

> ...there is reason to believe that these technologies might constitute the central phase in a post-industrial 'rite of passage' between organically human and cyberpsychically digital life-forms as reconfigured through computer software systems. Should this prove to be correct, existing theories of ritual processes can provide important insights into the socially engineered cultural dimensions of cyberspace, and its social function as presently conceived (Tomas, 1991: 33).

This has important consequences regarding the location and efficacy of the body in such situations. Tomas suggests that up to now it is Euclidean space which has provided the framework for Western culture. Drawing on the work of Michel Serres

(1983), Tomas sees this as the master space because while it governs communication, it is also a binary construct of sacred and profane; the former being social and profane and of a Euclidean nature, the latter being sacred or liminal (Tomas, 1991: 34). The question is, whether both can be transferred into cyberspace.

Before deciding this I shall take a brief look at the nature of sacred or liminal space as described by Victor Turner. For Turner, this takes the form of what he calls 'anti-structure', which he does not so much set against 'structure' but sees as a complementary device to explain the nature of liminality and communitas which occur in the central phase of a rite of passage, and which actually changes the status of the individual or group. In a religious sense anti-structure marks the liminal phase which is between the categories of ordinary social life (Turner, 1974: 273). Where there is more than one person undergoing the ritual, the relationship between them is defined by Turner as communitas:

> The bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, nonrational, existential...relationships (Turner, 1974: 274).

Communitas, also spontaneous, is immediate and concrete - set in the liminal experience. There is a certain tension between it and structure since it liberates people from normalcy. However, as Turner suggests, this can not be a lasting condition if society is to continue in an orderly way (Turner, 1974: 274). Consequently, while the liminal state is of pivotal importance in the ritual, as an element in a rite of passage it is by its very nature ephemeral. Furthermore, the idea of communitas seems to possess some similarities to the concept of neo-tribes. This helps to explain how neo-tribes are more than just eruptions of sociality, but collectivities which have diachronic dimensions to them. This would certainly be the case in those countries which have undergone moments of enunciation - rites of passage in the development of societies - which have caused a collective change of perception. Diachronically these are interstitial moments which bring together multifarious elements that form a hybrid which often cannot form itself in what may be the chaotic circumstances of such as revolution - but whose aftermath is clearly affected by the anti-structural elements which took place at the moment of enunciation.

Putting it in a diachronic context may help to integrate the argument that virtual reality can be useful in establishing environments which are able to accommodate rites of passage. It is only by adding the diachronic element that both virtual reality and neo-tribes can be considered as acting effectively within the de-universalised society. It gives them a certain solidity despite their potentially ephemeral natures. Again, though, the perception of individuals is a vital element in assessing this:

The experience of subjective and intersubjective flow in ritual performance, whatever its sociobiological or personological concomitants may be, often convinces performers that the ritual situation *is* indeed informed with powers both transcendent and immanent (Turner, 1980; cited in Tomas, 1991: 31).

That virtual reality possesses the potential to play host to liminality contained within a rite of passage is perhaps not the principal question. Rather whether the sacred and the profane can coexist within such an environment. According to Tomas this is possible. In comparing Gibsonian cyberspace with Euclidean space he develops a series of comparable characteristics of which he concludes:

Cyberspace's dominant Euclidean form confirms Serres's observations on the Euclidean articulation of work and space in general Western cultures. It raises, moreover, the critical question of the governing 'logic' and social, cultural, and economic control of this new sensorial and mnemonic space (Tomas, 1991: 36).

Yet he also suggests that there are parallels which can be drawn

...between the post-industrial cyberspatial transubstantiation of the human body and related social and symbolic transformations of the human body in traditional *rites de passage* rituals (Tomas, 1991: 36).

From this Tomas puts forward a number of examples of how (Gibsonian) cyberspace and virtual reality may be utilised in rites of passage. First, he suggests that entering and exiting cyberspace are extremely 'truncated' versions of the separation and aggregation rites which signal the beginning and end of the liminal phase. Second, going into cyberspace involves passage from 'normal' space and time to "a digital...space and time which is both transorganic and cyberphysically collective" (Tomas, 1995: 40). Third, human identity is problematised on both an individual and collective level in the sense that cyberspace has become both post-human and 'post-present' (Tomas, 1995: 40). While it may be possible to substantiate these claims, it should be borne in mind that Tomas's assertions are influenced by Gibson's view of cyberspace in which the computer is somehow a gestalt collective of the individuals who frequent it and which is given metaphysical and mythological status:

'The mythform is usually encountered in one of two modes. One mode assumes that the cyberspace matrix is inhabited, or perhaps visited, by entities whose characteristics correspond with the primary mythform of a "hidden people". The other involves assumptions of omniscience, omnipotence, and incomprehensibility on the part of the matrix itself.'
'That the matrix is God?'
'In a manner of speaking, although it would be more accurate...to say that the matrix *has* a God...'
'Cyberspace exists, insofar as it can be said to exist, by virtue of human agency.'
(Gibson, [1988] 1994: 138)

Such expressions are, however, limited to the matrix itself; a factor which I feel encourages Tomas in his comparisons with liminality, and further leads him to suggest that cyberspace should be viewed as a sort of parallel culture:

> ...as an inherently original and inventive metasocial operator *and* potential creative cybernetic godhead (Tomas, 1991: 41).

Seen in the context of McCaffery's suggestion that postmodernism is something which, more than anything else, gets its unique status from technological change (McCaffery, 1991: 3), then Grant could be right that, for Gibson, technology has a greater potential for transcendence than we do (Grant, 1990: 47; Hills, 1996: 89-90). Indeed, it seems that a sizeable proportion of the scientific community working in the field of cybernetic theory - with reference to Gibson's work - seriously consider:

> ...the ability of virtual technologies to fill a vacuum in meaning left by the explanation, and hence denigration, of the old Christian God (Hills, 1996: 91)

It seems somewhat ironic that what was originally a dystopic vision for Gibson, has been turned around by those working on projects which seek to make his vision a reality; but a utopian reality. Benedikt touches on this in his discussion of architecture as one of the backgrounds to cyberspace. He suggests that throughout history, there has been a constant and worldwide trend to create a 'Heavenly City'; that is to realise visionary projects which would ultimately justify "our symbolic and collective expulsion from Eden" (Benedikt, 1991: 15). But while Eden is imaginary, this utopian vision of the Heavenly City is doubly imaginary, first because - conventionally - it is not actual; and second even if it did become actual, because it *is* information, it could only exist as virtual reality (Benedikt, 1991: 15-6).

Cyborgs: at the interface of human and machine.

I have already argued that in any interface between human and machine - such as virtual reality - the experience of the human, although projected into artificially created spaces, remains within the body. As Benedikt suggests, they act as a sort of mirror of our own spaces and places (Benedikt, 1991: 123), in a similar way to the relationship between the heterotopia and the utopia. If this is the case with cultural reference points such as these; then it may also be the case for identities constructed in cyberspace. In other words, the identities constructed, although different from the ones of particular individuals, will have as their reference points identities which exist on the bodily side of the interface. But would this be different for cyborgs which are themselves part-machine? Any difference would be in respect of a question of consciousness, and its location. Would being a cyborg alter this locus?

Initially, I shall discuss the actual nature of cyborgs, what distinguishes them from individuals, and what are the boundaries which we must take into account? According to Robert Rawdon Wilson consciousness can be altered by the addition of any prosthetics, even a pair of glasses. This, he suggests, is the thin end of the wedge in which our bodies need supplements to attempt to slow down the process of dissolution and failure (R.R. Wilson, 1995: 239). This example is arguably on the same continuum as science fictional cyborgs; the *Six Million Dollar Man* and *The Bionic Woman* who "splendidly capture the eye-bulging, mouth-gaping yearning for cyborgian evolution" (R.R. Wilson, 1995: 243), and the Borg in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which shows the darker side of human possession by machine.

Perhaps one of the best explorations of the nature of the cyborg was in the *Robocop* series of films (R.R. Wilson, 1995: 251ff) which in many ways had a similar basic story line to the *Six Million Dollar Man/Bionic Woman* series where the body of the 'hero' is technologically enhanced as the result of a near fatal accident suffered in the line of duty. In *Robocop*, Murphy, a policeman, is reconstructed, around his original body, with armour and weapons; and where his senses are fed artificially:

> The screen flickers to life as technicians reconstruct [the dead cop's] body, piecing it together with steel...and microchips, giving the viewer a brief perspective of the cyborg coming to life (Nash and Ross, 1988: 250; R.R. Wilson, 1995: 252).

The nature of consciousness is dealt with particularly well in the first film of the series where Murphy/Robocop is believed to have been given a 'cybernetic' consciousness. As the film progresses, however, his former consciousness comes increasingly to the fore. This creates a problem of identity. Is he Robocop? Is he Murphy? Or is he both or neither? At the film's dénouement he is referred to by his superior as Murphy, a recognition of the superiority of human consciousness over synthetic consciousness leading Wilson to comment that:

> Among the many cyborg films, none captures so well what would have to be the cyborg's divided consciousness, the sense of being an improved artefact and of having once been a human person. *Robocop* may be viewed as an allegory of the prosthetic consciousness (R.R. Wilson, 1995: 253).

The existence of the cyborg asks important questions about the boundaries between humans and machines, and suggests that these boundaries are being reconfigured. It suggests that the division between technology and nature is dissolving (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995: 3), and while the wearer of glasses, Pamela Anderson, Robocop and a Borg-possessed Picard can, in one sense, be placed at various points on the same continuum, it is only where these boundaries become very fuzzy that any significant shift in consciousness can be gleaned. For Murphy/Robocop the shifting boundary is represented in the internal battle between

the two. For Picard, however, abducted and amalgamated into the Borg's collective consciousness, it seems that the boundary was - but for the intervention of outside forces - irrevocably crossed. Picard became part of the consciousness of the Borg, which was represented by a vast collective network of non-independent beings. In other words, Picard lost all sense of individuality, he was the Borg.

For Donna Haraway these questions of identity are essential in discussing the nature of the cyborg. For her it is a "creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction". She goes on to suggest that boundaries between science fiction and social reality are optical illusions (Haraway, 1991: 149):

> The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centres structuring any possibility of historical transformation (Haraway, 1991: 150).

The true importance of this for Haraway lies in its implications for the role of gender, the dissolution of which, she suggests, has been represented by three crucial and successive boundary breakdowns. These are respectively between humans and animals; between humans, animals, and machines; and finally between the physical and the non-physical (Haraway, 1991: 151-3). The breaking down of boundaries between human and machine - the physical and the non-physical - are not only represented 'vertically' in the way described, but also 'horizontally' between identities, signifying their ephemeralisation. Hence, Haraway equates the cyborg with the fractured identities of the postmodern, which are temporary, multifarious, and subject to constant change. In other words, cultural hybrids which are continually subject to processes which effect their own sense of being, together with the way they perceived by others - who are also subject to these complex and constant processes of construction and deconstruction. For Haraway cyborgs are not merely a mixture of human and machine, but also occur as a part of the postmodern society, brought about considerably by technological advance, where individual identities are less and less conditioned by the nature and permanence of their bodies. She regards the cyborg as a creation of the post-gender world, its incarnation is outside salvation history

> ...which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end (Haraway, 1991: 150).

It is interesting that the nature of the self in this context shares one particular and vital characteristic with that found in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s Borg; that they are both groundless in that they are comprised of a network of identities from which no firm, coherent, and lasting single identity can be gleaned.

Anne Beezer looks at the question of postmodernity and gender within the literature of adventure travel. She suggests that an opposition is constructed between 'home' and 'away' where "the individual bloated by consumerist excess but driven to relinquish the excessive self that inhabits home, uses adventurous travel to explore other selves as well as other landscapes" (Beezer, 1994: 128). This brings together the role of the tourist, as the archetypal postmodern person, and the nature of lifestyle choices in contemporary Western society, and uses consumerist imperatives to encourage a reconstruction of identity through adventure travel. This, suggests Ann Kaplan, can be seen as a commercial co-opting of postmodernism, but contains sufficient similarities with academic writing to raise doubts about the value of postmodern concepts of the self, specifically for her in feminist criticism (Kaplan, 1988; Beezer, 1994: 128). The descriptions within these brochures, according to Beezer, are ostensibly male in their orientation (Beezer, 1994: 128). If these are to be believed, for the woman to participate in such a holiday requires a form of role-play on her behalf, reconstructing her identity to that of a more masculine one. If there are similarities between these brochures and academic literature, then these may be seen in Dana Polan's argument that "postmodern hierarchies of difference versus reference are mapped into hierarchies of an adventurous male privilege" (Polan, 1988: 128). Beezer suggests that the notion of home as a fixed place is another connection which can be made between this commercial literature and academic literature (Beezer, 1994: 128). As Doreen Massey argues:

> [T]he 'identity of place' is much more open and provisional than most discussions allow (and)...what is specific about a place, its identity, is always formed by the juxtaposition and co-presence there of particular sets of social interrelationships, and by the effects which that juxtaposition and co-presence produces (Massey, 1992; cited in Beezer, 1994: 128).

If this is the case, argues Beezer, then it could be that such adventures, including those of the self, can be experienced at home as this is also a place of difference (Beezer, 1994: 128-9). Moreover, it could be argued that such postmodern forms of identity bear a striking resemblance to that of some Buddhist forms of identity. There are, within contemporary Western Buddhism, questions of gender which say much about its place within postmodern society.

Although Buddhist philosophy ultimately denies the self, according to Gross the gender distinction within Buddhism has been marked since the time of the Buddha.[5]

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[5] Gross argues that in the past, Buddhism has not been particularly mysogynistic, rather androcentric and patriarchal. She suggests that while in Buddhist history there have been times when being female has not been a barrier to enlightenment. The prevailing view, however, has been that a female rebirth is somehow inferior (Gross, 1993: 22ff), gender being seen as another hindrance towards achieving nirvāṇa (p.52). For Gross, however, most arguments against women achieving Buddhahood are somewhat tenuous (p.62).

By utilising the imperatives of Buddhist philosophy, Gross suggests that the patriarchy which she sees as inherent in Buddhism is as impermanent as the set of social conditions which form it (Gross, 1993: 120-1)[6]. In particular, she looks at the nature of egolessness in Buddhism, where the self - including gender - is a 'synthetic' construction (Gross, 1993: 163ff). Gender labels lack any substantial reality and are, according to Mahāyānist texts, essentially empty (Gross, 1993: 176). Ultimately emptiness undercuts any gender bias which can sometimes be seen in Mahayana Buddhist texts. A minority of bodhisattvas (beings who have foregone the entry into Buddhahood in order to lead others to *nirvāṇa*) adopt either androgynous or fluctuating gender roles (Paul, 1985: 170). That this is possible in Buddhist philosophy points to the fact that the construction of physical characteristics and dualistic oppositions should be ultimately overcome. For Gross this goes further than with other religious systems[7] because the deconstruction of any form of identity is at the centre of Buddhist philosophy, and a pre-requisite for the attainment of *nirvāṇa*.

Gross points to the fact that gender roles within contemporary Western society have become less distinct.[8] It seems that this becomes more evident the more we look towards a postmodern society. In cyberspace, and through the construction of cyborgs[9] gender is becoming less of an issue as people are able to construct identities for themselves which, although usually gender-specific, does not limit them to their own physical gender or to their sexuality. Such technology brings individuals close to a scenario which they can be an-other taking them both out of the constraints of their bodies, and away from the prescribed roles which those bodies bring. Yet despite all of this, the locus of their experience remains within the body, and they can only undergo these experiences through the utilisation of quasi-memory and quasi-knowledge. As with Derrida's gesture of *sous rature* there remains a trace of meaning within the conventional, in Derrida's case within the language of the text. While it appears that all the experience takes place elsewhere. For those engaged in

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[6] Gross highlights the similarities which she sees between Buddhism and feminism. She argues that most women who are involved in both say that Buddhism *is* feminism - both offering the same vision. She suggests that this may be true in four ways:
1. Both consider that conventional views and dogmas are worthless if not supported by experience.
2. Both require the will and the courage to go against the conventional point of view.
3. Both explore how mental constructs operate to block or enhance liberation.
4. Both see liberation as the point of human existence (pp.130-2).

[7] Paul shows how this may not be seen as the case, arguing that bodhisattvas which are androgynous or frequently change their gender are often only used in Buddhist texts as literary devices in a similar way to non-Buddhist texts (Paul, 1985: 171).

[8] Gross suggests that this has had an effect in Buddhist (most notably Western Buddhist) environments where women are being taken more seriously and conventional gender arrangements are being overcome (Gross, 1993: 218).

[9] Which would include those people who have undergone 'gender re-assignment' operations if we took Wilson's (1995) definition.

cyberspatial activities, and the body may seem to be empty of such experiences, it is impossible to completely 'let go' while there is an anchorage in the realm of conventional perception.

It is possible to discern a series of heterotopias which exhibit forms of identity which are constructed on relatively ephemeral types of knowledge. In the case of Buddhism individuals have the potential to overcome physical and mental constraints in order to attain *nirvāņa*. In societies in which postmodern cultural forms are prevalent, individuals are able to transgress these boundaries to become an-other. In contemporary Western thought there are those who argue for the groundless nature of meaning. In all cases, however, the transition between the speculation and the actuality cannot be quantified. There remains a gap between the two, one which can perhaps only be bridged in the context of liminality - as between the sacred and the profane.

The FWBO and Western Buddhism.

In this section I shall examine how this gap may be crossed with reference to Western Buddhism. I shall concentrate on the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO) to discuss how a complex hybrid neo-tribe operates within the contemporary Western milieu, simultaneously exhibiting characteristics which are both religious and postmodern. The FWBO is one of the groups which Mellor (1991a) discusses in the context of the transition and translation of Buddhist culture into Western society. He underlines their self-consciously Western nature, arguing that they are rather selective in their choice of Buddhist doctrines (Mellor, 1991a: 77). However, as he suggests:

> The FWBO, for example, might *believe* that a Buddhist 'essence' can be distilled
> from eastern cultures and traditions in which it has been located in the recent past,
> but we cannot accept this idea uncritically (Mellor, 1991a: 76).

Mellor argues that the FWBO is both modernist and Protestant, particularly in its emphasis on the importance of the individual, the evolution of which it regards as the *raison d'être* of history (Subhuti, 1983: 45). This emphasis has a marked effect on the FWBO's view of collectivities, such as marriage and the family, which are approached with suspicion (Mellor, 1991a: 82). Mellor also suggests that the FWBO's view of tradition reflects Western Enlightenment thinking, where Buddhism's 'essence' is regarded as sufficient for its translation into a different culture. This is evident in an interview which the founder of the FWBO, Sangharakshita, gave to Mellor in 1987:

> I distinguish between Tradition with a capital 'T' and tradition with a small 't'. By
> tradition with a small 't' I mean those observances, customs, practices, which have
> become traditional in Buddhist countries but are quite peripheral in relation to the
> fundamental principles of Buddhist teachings (Mellor, 1991a: 84).

To a large extent Sangharakshita sees the FWBO as operating within the modern milieu, with Protestant attitudes to the self, and Enlightenment attitudes to tradition. Nevertheless, although the FWBO shows hostility to the notion of the group or the collective (Mellor, 1991a: 85), the organisation does have at its base a series of communities in which its Order member's live - a collectivity of individuals. Such collectivities may be regarded as neo-tribes inasmuch that they are essentially seen as vehicles for individual self-definition (Bauman, 1993a: 249). They are, however, far less ephemeral than neo-tribes, since there is a certain sense of continuity in both the individual communities, and the organisation as a whole. In other words, there is a diachronic dimension which needs to be taken into consideration - one to which neo-tribes are not subject.

FWBO members are nearly all first generation Buddhists. They have all made lifestyle choices in becoming such, encountering a moment of decision which is an interstitial point between being a member of the group and not being a member of the group. It is here in particular that the FWBO - from the point of view of the individual - holds many more of the qualities of a neo-tribe. It displays the reflexive search for identity of the individual concerned, and a marks synchronically ephemeral moment in the individual's own diachronic development. From this perspective the FWBO can be seen to contain elements of tradition and Durkheimian collective effervescence which can be seen in Maffelsoli's notions of postmodern collectivity. Here the dual process of shift and tension which Maffesoli (1996: 6) sees between the modern social and postmodern 'eruptions of sociality' (Bauman, 1993b: 141) can also be seen in roles which individuals carry out within the collective. This is considered by the FWBO in the context of the dichotomy between conventional and ultimate truth. They regard this as the 'essence' of Buddhist philosophy, part of an 'evolution' of individuality which leads eventually to nirvāṇa. In between these two states, however, the FWBO postulates the potential existence of a 'New Society' which can be recreated in the conventional realm to provide the perfect situation for individuals to attain enlightenment (Subhuti, 1983: 6). This is a collective of individuals which includes many of the features of the neo-tribe, and, contains the non-rational element which Maffesoli suggests is present - an empathic period of history where religiosity is seen as an essential ingredient (Maffesoli: 1996: 3).

For the FWBO this New Society possesses the elements of Buddhism which are vital for salvation without any of the cultural accretions which it regards as extraneous. Although unattainable in the current milieu, the aspirations of the movement towards the New Society are vital to the development of individuals. To achieve this the various communities of the FWBO exist as 'societies-in-miniature' operating within the

wider society, helping members to evolve spiritually as individuals (Subhuti, 1983: 129), and displaying elements which are similar to those suggested by Maffesoli:

> Those who are individuals will not...relate to each other as members of a group. They will form a *spiritual community*, in which each individual freely interacts with others in friendship and mutual concern (Subhuti, 1983: 131).

The communities of the FWBO, if they follow this model, would be ephemeral in nature since their *raison d'être* is for their members to realise their full individuality. In order to achieve this, each community attempts to operate as a microcosm of the New Society, operating 'right livelihood' businesses to secure ethically correct employment, so living in a manner thought to create the best conditions for spiritual progress. These communities are complex hybrids of Buddhist and Western ideas which have come together and found a niche in Western, de-universalised, society.

Setting this in the context of Buddhist philosophy Dharmachari Subhuti, a senior WBO member, discusses *paticca samuppāda* in a cyclical sense, arguing that the construction of the world as we see it is through a mechanical conditionality which extends to our own, Pavlovian, reaction to it. This, he suggests, is indicative of our lack of self-awareness which can be seen in terms of a 'reactive mind', which he contrasts to the 'creative mind' which acts in a process of increasing awareness (Subhuti, 1985: 19). In this way Subhuti connects the thought processes of the self with the impermanent nature of conventional reality, suggesting that it is through a lack of self awareness that the phenomenal world remains 'real' for individuals. Consequently, Subhuti is allying the process of reflexivity with that of spiritual progress, a connection I sought to make in chapter one. In contextualising this in terms of dependent co-origination, Subhuti suggests that the circular interaction of the twelve *nidānas* can be seen in a spiralling motion drawing individuals away from the process of self-construction. When this occurs the mind is in 'creative' mode, meaning that individuals become increasingly aware of the ultimate nature of reality, leading eventually to liberation:

> Buddhism, then, holds up this vision of the universe as a process with two tendencies: the reactive and the creative. It shows us that human beings may ascend a Path of development which stretches from the Wheel to the point of Buddhahood, at which the Spiral unfolds free from all cyclical tendencies whatsoever (Subhuti, 1985: 21).

This path, which Subhuti sees as a spiral away from the mundane towards the supramundane, is a representation which has a number connotations in what I have been discussing. In particular, it questions the relative natures of the sacred and the profane. For instance, to what extent can the sacred be seen to exist in the conventional world for the FWBO, given that ritual and practice are largely eschewed?

And, if the sacred and the non-rational are present in this complex cultural hybrid space, then how is this indicative of the nature of Western society as a whole?

The responses to these questions, I would suggest, lie in the nature of the higher evolution which comes as a result of 'experiencing' the process of this spiral. This is set in the context of human evolution, and leads Subhuti to ask whether or not human beings are the final product of evolution. He sees this not just in terms of physical and biological evolution, but also in cultural evolution (Subhuti, 1985: 26). He suggests that humans are at a watershed in the evolutionary process in which the body and mind have evolved to a point of awareness which comes straight out of Enlightenment thinking:

> As self-awareness matures, the individual - for such there now is - makes a fundamental split in his experience, between himself and what is other (Subhuti, 1985: 27).

For Subhuti, humans have come to the end of their physical and biological evolution, and must now embark of a higher, spiritual evolution, through the teachings of the Buddha, and as interpreted by the FWBO. The first part of this process is for individuals to fully realise their individuality, the distinction between self and other and between subject and object. Once these have been fully realised, they must then be overcome moving to a level of perception which transcends such dualities (Subhuti, 1985: 29-30). As this process continues, individuals become aware of the impermanence of their own selves and with the conventional, phenomenal world. 'They' begin to enter realms that become increasingly ephemeral. Here there is not only a deconstruction of the self in relation to the other, and the subject from the object; there is also a deconstruction of the societies and cultures which were regarded as 'home' by individuals. Subhuti then describes the final 'destination' of the spiral:

> Finally the Spiral merges into the Mandala, a vast symmetrical ordered circle. At the centre is the dazzling white figure of Vairochana, the Illuminator, who sits cross-legged on a white lotus-throne supported by two majestic lions. He is dressed in rich silks and jewels and turns in his hand a golden wheel with eight spokes which shine like the sun. Four other Buddhas are seated around him at the cardinal points, likewise richly adorned. The blue figure in the east is Akshohya, the Imperturbable...In the South sits the yellow Buddha, Ratnasambhava, the Jewel-Born...In the West, Amitabha, Infinite Light...Amoghasiddhi, Unobstructed Success, occupies the Northern quarter (Subhuti, 1985: 43).

What is remarkable about this is the way in which Subhuti has developed the processes of this spiral away from the Western thought of the Enlightenment to specifically Buddhist iconography in realms which, in terms of our own perceptions of reality, can be described as virtual worlds. These are worlds which have no grounding, where identity and conventional perception are non-existent. The

Buddhist has come through a rite of passage which has become increasingly more ephemeral - to a situation in which the sacred is fully evident.

The ideas of the FWBO can be seen in a Western context. They acknowledge the reflexiveness of modern individuals, and view contemporary society - as represented by the Enlightenment project - as being the culmination of the physical and biological evolution of humankind, and the foundation of a higher evolution. For the FWBO it is the coming together of Western and Buddhist philosophy which provides the catalyst for this. In exemplifying the role of a de-universalised religious movement in society, the FWBO also reflects its 'Janus-faced' nature. Mellor (1991a: 77) argues that the FWBO, along with certain other Buddhist movements in England, has a much in common with liberal Protestantism, placing it within a 'pan-religious' tradition (Smart, 1971: 672). On the other hand, however, the FWBO does aspire to a Buddhist *nirvana*, spiralling towards a pantheon of compassionate Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Within the conventional world FWBO members may live a reflexive and rational existence which is concomitant with a liberal Protestant lifestyle, but their ultimate aspirations are non-rational.

For Mellor the dichotomy of conventional and ultimate truth in Buddhism increases the FWBO's suspicion of ritual since it is reinforced by the ultimate rejection of form (Mellor, 1991a: 79). It is clear the FWBO is far less concerned with ritual than many other Western Buddhist groups. This is partly because the 'work ethic' engendered by the 'right livelihood' businesses augments ritual as a focus of daily practice. It is a combination of these things which forms the basis for the New Society and the spiritual evolution which it inspires. The New Society is firmly within the conventional world, yet for Subhuti (1983) it provides the wherewithal for individual enlightenment. For the FWBO the New Society does not exist as a liminal space where the sacred and profane can meet. Rather it provides the necessary environment in which this can occur. The New Society espouses certain rational and liberal Protestant values and is able to do so because it remains within the conventional realm. There is, nevertheless, a connection with the non-rational supramundane element which Subhuti associates with sacred elements from Buddhist tradition. The liminal phase of this takes part in the virtual worlds of the spiral of dependent co-origination which can only be approached by a spiritual evolution which emerges from the New Society

The purpose of this comparison is to examine the relationship between the sacred and the profane, and the ultimate and the conventional. In occupying a de-universalised religious space, the FWBO is not just adhering to rational Protestant narratives. It also espouses a non-rational, spiritual dimension which adds to the ephemeral nature of the space. On a conventional level the FWBO draws on a wide variety of cultural phenomena with which it places itself within a certain social niche.

Many of the non-rational elements are also within the conventional realm, since anything which is ascribed form - however empty - is outside *nirvāna*. For Buddhists then *nirvāna* cannot be sacred since it is empty. Nevertheless, from the perspective of individuals within the conventional realm, *nirvāna* does hold a degree of sacredness since it is associated both with Buddhahood and the intermediate level of awareness or emptiness respectively found in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The Heterotopian Body.

As with the other two examples of experience in virtual worlds - be they within cyberspace or through the prostheses of the cyborg - Buddhists can encounter the non-rational by transgressing the boundaries of the body. Put into the context of the utopia and the heterotopia, this is where the dichotomy between what is being experienced physically within the body, and intellectually by the mind, the latter of which may be projected elsewhere onto some other form of identity. At a basic level this represents the mind/body dualism found in Cartesian philosophy. But, as I have shown, this theory has been augmented since its inception, particularly through the *homo duplex* which sought to reverse Descartes's disengagement of external cosmic and moral forces from the rational individual (Mestrovic, 1993: 253). The *homo duplex* was regarded pessimistically by many (e.g. Schopenhauer, [1818] 1958, [1818] 1969; Durkheim, [1914] 1973) who saw a tension between the two poles, regarding the lower pole (the will) as stronger than the high pole (the idea). This has been compared with the pessimism said to be found in Buddhist philosophy (Abelsen, 1993). Buddhists remain within the conventional realm of everyday perception because they are unable to overcome their own ignorance and amorality. In this sense there is a certain affinity between the dualism of conventional and ultimate truth in Buddhism and the *homo duplex*. This is a dualism which can be considered in relation to my cited examples of cyberspace, the cyborg and the FWBO. The aim of the latter is, as with most other Buddhist schools, to overcome the hindrances of the phenomenal world and attain salvation through its deconstruction. While those who engage in activities in cyberspace, or become cyborgs[10] do so outside, or partially outside, their natural bodies. The nature of Buddhist identity and perception provides a good indicator of how the *homo duplex* can be seen in all these cases. In other words, the deconstruction of the phenomenal world in Buddhism can be seen in relation to the spiritual and moral progress of individuals, who remain within the conventional realm while they are unable to overcome the hindrances which prevent them from attaining salvation. This is where the intermediate level of awareness

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[10] Not in Wilson's (1995) basic sense of regarding glasses wearers as cyborgs, in the more complex speculative science fiction of Robocop and the Borg.

(Theravāda) or emptiness (Mahāyāna) can be judged in relation to postmodern theories such a those of Derrida's *sous rature* (1976), where a trace of meaning still remains.

In each of the three examples that I have cited in this chapter, although the body is in someway transgressed, the locus of experience remains within it. In all cases it is the conventional, heterotopian body which is the locus of all experience. That is the locus of the individual's perception which, I believe, is of paramount consideration. This is the realm of the profane, the lower pole of the *homo duplex*, which forms a dichotomy with the ultimate, utopian, realm which is essentially beyond perception. For Foucault the heterotopia reflects the utopia, and would be different if the utopia were not there, but is unattainable from the heterotopian perspective. This is where the value of the intermediate state becomes evident. It provides a perceptible milieu which individuals, through the utilisation of quasi-knowledge and quasi-memory, can place themselves. They experience an alternate reality which is ephemeral, but contains at least a trace of heterotopian reality. It is within this intermediate realm that the postmodern is located. Advocating an environment which is ephemeral, asceticised, and eclectic; postmodern thinkers suggest an alternative reality which can in many ways be experienced from within the heterotopian body, but which can only be fully valid if the experience were constant.

By looking at the limits of postmodern experience which are currently available in the interface between the body and the machine, it would appear that such constancy is not sustainable. This does not, however, invalidate the postmodern experience since it represents a significant factor in contemporary epistemological explorations. This can be appreciated by placing it within the context of the sacred and profane. According to Mestrovic (1993: 121), Durkheim equates these respectively with the higher and lower poles of the *homo duplex*:

> In him ['man'] are two beings: an individual being that has its basis in the body and whose sphere of action is strictly limited by this fact, and a social being that represents within us the highest reality in the intellectual and moral realm that is knowable through observation: I mean society (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 15-16).

Durkheim goes on to comment that, as part of society individuals naturally transcend themselves in both their thoughts and their actions (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 16). If Mestrovic is right to equate the sacred and the profane with the *homo duplex* in this way then it may be possible to establish a relationship with the postmodern. This would place both the sacred and the postmodern in the higher conventional realm. At this intellectual and moral level, represented by the upper pole of the homo duplex, they are able to create the possibility of utopias. But, because the locus of experience remains within the heterotopian body, these can never be fully realised.

This is the pessimistic position which Schopenhauer, Durkheim and Mestrovic take; and which is inherent in Buddhist philosophy when viewed from a conventional position.

If this is the case, then it may be possible to place the interstitial space between the sacred and the profane - the liminal - in the context of the postmodern. Like the sacred (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 322), the postmodern may be seen as contagious, reconstructing heterotopian society through its contact with it. For Durkheim, this contagiousness can be seen with reference to collective effervescence, where the intense collective activity of the ritual 'transports' individuals to a reality which they consider outside their own milieu (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 220). This is an extremely creative activity which can instigate the creation or re-invigoration of new religious and social forms. As Mellor and Shilling suggest, by seeing religion as having given birth to all that is essential in society, for Durkheim religion cannot disappear entirely from modern society (Durkheim, [1912] 1995: 421; Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 15). For Mellor and Shilling this can vary over time, as can be seen through their three re-formations of the body (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 15-18). While the sacred was removed from all immediate reality (Levine, 1971: 139) by Protestant reformers, the baroque saw a resurgence of the 'shadow kingdom' of effervescence and the sacred as sensually experienced phenomenon:

> This means that the experience of transcendence again becomes immanent within bodies, sociality and nature. Thus, contemporary Western societies are characterised by a pluralism to some extent (and only to some extent) analogous to that of the medieval era (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 17)

Modernity has had its sacred and profane associations. These associations have now come together in the postmodern. The postmodern displays many characteristics which can be seen as sacred. It is contagious within heterotopian society, it promotes the formation of collectivities - neo-tribes - which engage in activities concomitant with collective effervescence. Furthermore, the relationship between the postmodern and the heterotopian body may be seen as similar to that between the sacred and the profane. Both the sacred and the postmodern act as ideals towards which individuals can aspire. In both cases, however, these are ideals which can never be fully achieved while the body remains the locus of experience. Consequently, while the development of the postmodern self has reached a point where, more than ever before, individuals can experience an alternative reality. This alternative reality is not detached from the mundane reality of profane, heterotopian existence. The utopia is still beyond our grasp, and although between them the religious and the postmodern bring it closer than ever before there is still a self which acts as the base of our knowing.

As in Buddhism, then, individuals cannot fully experience release from their 'selves' without first intrinsically perceiving that there is 'no-self'. The emergence of the postmodern in Western society, brings together the two levels of conventional truth in modernity, the Enlightenment/Protestant and the baroque/counter-Reformation. Together they create a hierarchy in which the non-rational/sacred can once again be related to the rational/profane in such a way which allows individuals to engage in complex and plural searches for meaning. These are searches which do not necessarily appear to have any fundamental grounding in conventional 'reality', but create architectures of knowledge which contain at least a trace of conventional grounding. This points to a society which is able to accommodate de-universalised religious cultures where the sacred and the profane, and the postmodern and the heterotopian are able to interact to create complex plural hybrids which exist in niches, each containing their own synchronic and diachronic connections. These are constructed through the use of quasi-memory and quasi-knowledge, giving the appearance to individuals of the existence of utopias, which in reality are ephemeral manifestations and reflections of the de-universalised heterotopian spaces which they occupy in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

> Religion is such a complex and subtle phenomenon that we are unlikely to be able to find clear-cut and unambiguous evidence for or against the relative usefulness...of the relationship between religion and modernity (Beckford, 1992b: 15).

Beckford's comments reflect a sensitivity concerning the relationship between religion and modern Western societies which is relatively new. By and large, modern societies have understood themselves to be increasingly without religion. This is reflected in the increasingly marginalised position of religion within academic disciplines such as sociology and philosophy and, in turn, their isolation from developments in religious studies. The discipline of religious studies itself has sometimes colluded in this process of marginalisation and isolation by a manifest reluctance to engage with the intellectual dynamism of similarly eclectic disciplines such as cultural studies, as well as with current developments in sociology and philosophy. This is now beginning to change, and the purpose of this thesis has been to contribute to this transformation by drawing upon debates surrounding the notion of 'postmodernity', and to argue that forms of religious tradition not only persist in contemporary Western societies, but can exhibit a dynamic and challenging engagement with the cultural conditions which shape them.

For a number of scholars (e.g. Neusner, 1988; Schopen, 1991), the cleaving of religious studies from other academic disciplines reflects Protestant influences such as the removal of the sacred from day to day life (Taylor, 1989: 217). This laid the foundation for thinkers such as Descartes to highlight notions of individuality by separating the self from the cosmic moral order. Here reason was considered to be the only source of freedom and morality which gave direct access to a 'higher truth' (Seidler, 1994: 53). As Mellor and Shilling suggest, for Protestant thinkers, the Word of God became the primary locus of religious belief, as is represented by a hostility towards ritualism (Mellor and Shilling, 1997: 43). For Schopen (1991) it is Protestant opinions such as these which have dominated the study of religions for so long. And may be seen to have been a significant contribution towards the methodological impasse between religious studies and other academic disciplines.

The Study of Buddhism in the West.

In chapter one I suggested that one of the most important factors in the development of Buddhism in the West was the translation and exegesis of Buddhist texts. This was a vital process if Buddhism was to be understood by the Westerner. As Schopen suggests, however, scholars seem to have concentrated too much on textual evidence to the detriment of other disciplines, a position which he finds to be

'decidedly peculiar'. He sees 'no obvious scholarly justification' (Schopen, 1991: 1) for this position considering the amount of textual data available to them. In particular, a plethora of archaeological and epigraphical material gave scholars a broader idea of how Buddhists actually lived during the time that the texts were written, but seem to have been largely ignored (Schopen, 1991: 1-2). To illustrate this Schopen compares the work of a pioneering Buddhist scholar, Eugene Burnouf, with that of a contemporary one, J.W. de Jong, emphasising the similarity of their positions:

> De Jong himself has made a number of statements which clearly indicate that the position he ascribes to Burnouf in the first half of the nineteenth century is very much his own position in the second half of the twentieth (Schopen, 1991: 4).

De Jong confirms this in his 'A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America' arguing that "Indian Buddhism cannot be studied in isolation from its context" (de Jong, 1984: 81). By context, de Jong means not only Buddhist scripture but the Vedic, Brahmanical and Jain literature which was contemporaneous to Indian Buddhism. Implicit in this is a certain attitude towards tradition which is affirmed through the subjugation of archaeological and epigraphical evidence.[1] For Schopen this leads to a situation where 'textuality overrides actuality' (Schopen, 1991: 11), where 'real' or 'correct' religion lies only in formal doctrine (Schopen, 1991: 15). This, he suggests, is not limited to Buddhist studies, indeed historians of religion as eminent as Mircea Eliade[2] also seem to have adopted this approach:

> Eliade separates what Christians actually did and do...from 'historical forms of Christianity'. What European Christian peasants do or believe is excluded from the history of their own religion and is assigned to something called 'ahistorical Christianity' (Schopen, 1991: 18).

Schopen argues that such approaches are rooted in Protestant assumptions (Schopen, 1991: 20). For Neusner these charges can be made of Western intellectual tradition in general. He argues that since the Reformation and Enlightenment, religion has been portrayed in essentially personal terms:

> Together they worked to represent religion as private (Protestant) and trivial (secular), a matter of deep conscience (Protestant) or personal caprice and beyond rational and critical enquiry (secular). (Neusner, 1988: 22).

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[1] Schopen discusses a variety of ways in which this is evident, an example of which concentrates on whether monks could own personal property (Schopen, 1991: 6). As he comments, this has a significant bearing on how the Sangha is viewed, especially considering its position as a world-renouncing religion. Schopen points to considerable evidence that monks did own property, but bemoans the fact that when such evidence was uncovered, scholars initially acknowledged its existence, before invoking the Buddhist canon in some way to argue that this was not really the case (Schopen, 1991: 7-8).

[2] To support his assertions Schopen cites Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (1959).

Neusner claims that the same forces are at work in the departments of religion in Universities across America. He states plainly that this is wrong as it ignores the reality of religion in everyday life. As with Schopen, Neusner's views explicitly suggest that the study of religion over the years has been dominated by Protestant analysis. He highlights a process where religion is trivialised by the rising tide of secularism which has had an increasing effect on twentieth century thought. Implicit in these ideas lies the problem which has dogged the discipline of religious studies since its inception, the position which a scholar must take with regard to neutrality and commitment. This is a problem which has persisted because of the way in which religion is studied. On one side are the theologians, and on the other those scholars who situate themselves within the discipline of religious studies. This has done little to further the study of religion and has led to further trivialisation along the lines that Neusner has suggested.

Looking at this historically, I would argue that many of the problems which religious studies suffers from today lie in its liberal Protestant roots (e.g. Wiebe, 1978, 1984; Davis, 1984; Alton, 1986). In particular is the notion of remaining both impartial and empathic - that scholars should 'bracket out' their own beliefs while empathising with those being studied (e.g. King, 1972; Smart, 1973). This is neither possible, nor desirable, since it creates a completely false situation for those scholars who are no longer in a position to provide their *own* analysis, and would certainly prove unsatisfactory in the de-universalised milieu where religion is neither universal nor universally present. This suggests that the way forward in religious studies is to look outside the Protestant and liberal frameworks of the past, of which these approaches are part.

This is also a problem in the sociological study of religion where, as Luckmann suggests, there is a danger of accepting that church and religion are identical, and in so doing failing "to concern itself with the most important, essentially religious, aspects of the location of the individual in society" (Luckmann, 1967: 26-7). He concedes that the problem of individual existence in society is actually a religious problem (Luckmann, 1967: 12), although he acknowledges that it was not regarded as being by such as Durkheim and Weber who were particularly concerned with the ontological status of social facts (Luckmann, 1967: 13).

Although the sociology of religion can be seen as a branch of religious studies, and in some ways is subject to many of the same problems, it does present some very specific difficulties, not least because it occupies "something of an interstitial position between sociology as a basically secular discipline and religious studies as both a defence of religion and a critique of 'modern' secularism" (Robbins and Robertson, 1991: 321). This, say Robbins and Robertson, has led to a position where

sociologists find themselves in a similar position to other scholars of religion in that they wish to be neither reductionist, nor scientific - an approach which tends to distance them from religious studies and mainstream sociology respectively. It seems that sociologists of religion have a more intimate relationship with belief systems (Robbins and Robertson, 1991: 321-2) leaving them open to similar accusations which are made against other scholars of religion. For example, that they have adopted liberal Protestant ideas which cloud objectivity through the need to empathise with the beliefs and believers that they are studying. Explaining this, Bryan Turner examines what he sees as the major weaknesses of the sociology of religion.[3] He argues that these weaknesses have meant that sociological approaches to religion have "not played a role in or constituted any part of any major theoretical debate in modern sociology" (Turner, 1983: 3). Instead they have become detached from the dominant theories which have shaped the social sciences and philosophy over the past twenty five years.

Turner suggests that this is largely due to an over-emphasis on the subjectivity of the social actor which "draws attention to the cognitive dimension of religious activity, so that rituals and practices take second place" (Turner, 1983: 4). To counter this, he believes that the study of religion and secularisation can "be set in the context of debates about ideology, modes of production, power and knowledge" (Turner, 1983: 4). In other words, like religious studies, the sociology of religion should reach outside of the narrow remit which it has allowed itself and, like society itself, admit a broader spectrum of cultural phenomena, moving away from "its narrow empirical focus on western forms of religion" (Turner, 1983: 5).

The Dynamics of Modernity.

This is a position which I have sought to achieve in this thesis. The domination of secularisation, and latterly de-traditionalisation theses in Western thought, together with an emphasis on the individual and on textual sources have failed to reflect the dynamics which have been inherent in modernity since its inception. It is these

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[3] Bryan Turner has highlighted three major problems with this hermeneutic or phenomenological approach to religion. The first, he suggests, is "by concentrating on the meaning of social actions, they tend to ignore the way in which social structure shapes or limits actions" (Turner, 1983: 17). Leading on from this he concurs with Ernest Gellner (1970) stating that:

> By treating situational beliefs from the actor's perspective as by definition authoritative, anthropology and sociology run the risk of excessive contextual charity (Turner, 1983: 17).

Finally, he believes that this leads to a fundamental methodological problem where actors fail to agree amongst themselves. This is a particular problem where religions are considered in terms of holistic ideas such as Berger's sacred canopy (Berger, 1990).

dynamics, which I have sought to explain in this thesis, that help to explain the nature and role of religion in contemporary Western society.

These dynamics are based on a series of dichotomies which have been under-explored. In fact it seems that we must go back to the previous *fin de siècle* to find theories which accommodate these dichotomies. It is important to concede that these theories are, to a considerable extent, rooted in Reformation and Enlightenment ideas. But they do not regard the sacred and the non-rational as insignificant. Instead, there is a sense that they must be regarded as being at the centre of modern society, a process which a number of contemporary scholars (e.g. Mestrovic, 1991, 1993; Ferguson, 1992; Touraine, 1995; Maffesoli, 1996; Mellor and Shilling, 1997) now recognise. The aim of this thesis has been to contextualise these approaches in order to examine the nature and role of religion in contemporary Western society. These dynamics have proved to be catalysts for change throughout modernity, and have been instrumental in the establishment of postmodern thought. Just as both sides of modernity's ambivalence are rooted in religion, so the postmodern itself can be placed in a religious context.

In choosing to discuss this through an analysis of the evolution of the self in modernity, I have drawn on a number of developments found *fin de siècle* thought, most notably that of the *homo duplex*. According to both Mestrovic (1991, 1993) and Touraine (1995) this stems from both Schopenhauer and Durkheim's examinations of the dynamic which occurs between will and representation in the context of the self. Here, Touraine believes that Durkheim's "conception of *anomie* refers to a conflict between the limitations imposed by social rules, and the unbounded desire that is to be found in human beings" (Touraine, 1995: 128). For Mestrovic the *homo duplex* is in tension, with the lower 'pole', the will, holding the ascendancy over the higher 'pole', the representation or the idea. He sees this as a basis for regarding the work of Schopenhauer and Durkheim as pessimistic (Mestrovic, 1993), seeing the tensions of the *homo duplex* in the context of a profane will and sacred idea.

Setting the sacred and the profane in tension in this way, and seeing them as central to both the self and society, forms the basis for understanding the nature of an ambivalent, 'Janus-faced' modernity (Mellor and Shilling, 1997), which emerges from the parallel developments of the Reformation and Enlightenment; and the baroque and Catholic Counter-Reformation (Turner, 1991). This can be seen in the developing nature of the self which can, to some extent, be compared with the three phases of modernity suggested by a number of scholars (e.g. Baudrillard, 1983: Berman, 1983).

I argue that perhaps the most important example of modern self-hood in this context is that of the *flâneur*. Regarded as being *the* archetypal personality of his time

(Berman, 1983; Ferguson, 1994), he is seen as being the embodiment of capitalism (Mazlish, 1994). The *flâneur* is also important from a methodological viewpoint, since scholars have concentrated on his position as a commodity, highlighting his symbiotic relationship with the new emerging consumer society of nineteenth century Paris. I would argue that the *flâneur* is a representative of modernity in a wider sense than this. He seeks meaning in a milieu of capitalism and secular modernity, an increasingly changing world of commodity and fashion. Yet this is not just a rational quest for knowledge as can be seen in the *flâneur's* 'renunciation' of society. This gave him the position of spectator which reflects Baudelaire's claim that a schism between the material and spiritual had occurred. As with subsequent artists such as Mondrian and Kandinsky, Baudelaire sought spiritual meaning within the products of modernity, in his case the city. This position suggests that we can see the *flâneur* as representing the tension found in the *homo duplex*, being caught between the material and spiritual in this way. He is subject to sources both sacred and profane, the interaction of which form a dynamic which drives his search for meaning.

This analysis of the *flâneur* provides a good basis from which to discuss the interaction of the self and society in modernity. In addition to representing a 'Janus-faced' modernity, he also possesses many characteristics which have subsequently been regarded as postmodern. This is no coincidence since it is my contention that the origins of a great deal of postmodern thought can be found in the dynamics of a 'Janus-faced' ambivalent modernity. The tension evident between the rationality of the *flâneur's* milieu and the non-rationality of his thoughts suggests how a relationship between modernity and the postmodern may be developed. As someone who occupies the liminal, interstitial space between the rational and non-rational in this way, the *flâneur* is arguably the first individual to witness the de-universalisation of the spiritual. A good way of contextualising this is in terms of the heterotopia and the utopia (Foucault, 1986; Soja, 1995). For the *flâneur* the heterotopia may be represented by the particular cultural milieu which he frequents, the utopia being the ideal which he seeks to construct as the fruits of his search for meaning. The *flâneur* chose to remain within his own immediate society, whereas 'postmodern' individuals are able to expose themselves to aspects of culture which originate from outside their own locale. A typical example of such a postmodern person is that of the tourist (Bauman, 1992, 1993a, 1994, 1995) who wanders from unconnected place to unconnected place (Bauman, 1992: 166), effectively creating a retrospective biography from these wanderings. This can be seen in the theme parks such as Disneyworld which are regarded by many as being archetypal postmodern cities (Eco, 1987; Baudrillard, 1988; Soja, 1989).

The postmodern itself represents something of a utopia for those who espouse it (Jameson, 1991), and from this point of view it can have a marked effect on individuals and society. Nevertheless, such is its ephemeral nature that for individuals to fully attain a postmodern experience would require a renunciation of society into 'Disneyworlds' of hyperreality. Recent technological advance seems to have made this more possible than before. The current and plausible speculative uses of cyberspace, virtual reality and cyborg bodies seem to take individuals outside of society, and, more importantly outside the body. Although it seems inconceivable, at this time, that the locus of experience can exist anywhere but inside the body. Here the lower 'pole' of the *homo duplex* remains dominant, precluding the wholesale renunciation into postmodern Disneyworlds. This is reflected in postmodern theory, a good example being Derrida's notion of *sous rature*. Here Derrida's 'utopian' goal of fully self-referentiating language cannot be achieved since there always remains a trace of external meaning.

By recognising that the dynamics of modernity remain evident in postmodern thought, I argue that it is possible to translate the tensions of the *homo duplex* onto a dual level of reality represented by the heterotopia and the utopia, which may in turn be related to the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane. This, I suggest, can be achieved through an examination of the affinities evident between the levels of reality inherent in the relationship between modernity and postmodernity, and those found in Buddhist philosophy.

The Utopias of Nirvāṇa and the Postmodern.

The complex culturally hybrid spaces found in 'de-universalised' Western societies provide for the existence of tradition, including religious tradition, in a way which for many contemporary thinkers (Giddens, 1990, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1994) is inconceivable. I have underlined this possibility by looking at cultural hybridity on a more basic level in colonial and post-colonial South East Asia. Here the meeting of secularising 'Protestant' colonial powers with indigenous Buddhist beliefs created a hybrid space which led to new forms of Buddhist modernism in a process in which the tensions found within modernity itself are evident. The products of this cultural interaction, a Buddhism which contained many of the outward signs of modern, Western religion, paradoxically gave those who practised it a greater sense of proximity to *nirvana* than their predecessors, or those who remained outside the hybrid space (Carrithers, 1979; Bond, 1988; Gombrich and Obeyesekere, 1988). In other words, 'Protestant' Buddhists *perceive* that the 'utopia' of *nirvāṇa* becomes a greater possibility when compared with those who follow practices which are more cultic in nature, or who seek salvation through more 'meritorious' actions which are

associated with *karma* rather than *nirvāṇa*. This, to some extent, is what has occurred with the development of the postmodern - making this ephemeral 'utopia' appear more proximate to individuals. This has been achieved through a degree of reconciliation between differing levels of reality, within a context which allows for comparisons to be made with and between the sacred and the profane.

In both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist thought, it seems that it is possible to discern multiple levels of reality which, especially in Theravada thought, are generally schematised into the conventional and the ultimate. However, there have been a number of attempts to reconcile them. This is evident in the thought of Nagarjuna who speculated that the self's perception of reality can be viewed in three stages (Streng, 1967). For Bastow (1988, 1994), this is also evident in Theravada thought, which can also be said to contain a stage in which the follower of the Buddhist path moves from the perception of structure to that of non-structure (Bastow, 1988: 165), a position similar to Nagarjuna's 'second stage' where the nature of emptiness is recognised. These are positions which are attained immediately prior to liberation, where 'individuals' recognise the insubstantial nature of the conventional phenomenal world, but retain a trace of knowledge which still grounds them in that realm.

I would argue that it is possible to look at three similar levels of reality in contemporary Western society. As with Buddhist, analysis one can initially suggest that conventional and ultimate reality may be respectively compared with the heterotopia and the utopia. However, as with Buddhism, there is a considerable gap to bridge between the two. This may to some extent be filled with the postmodern, as a condition which is culturally groundless, a liminal space which individuals may experience, but always retains at the very least a trace of the heterotopias which they daily inhabit. In the context of the sacred and the profane, and the *homo duplex* it is possible to suggest that individuals remain within the realm of everyday profane heterotopias, represented in terms of the self by the will. The sacred idea is represented in its purest form by the utopia, a state which is completely 'other' - beyond the comprehension of individuals who cleave to the will. In this sense the postmodern establishes a series of milieux which may enable us *theoretically* to gain knowledge about the utopia or the sacred, but, as with the individual exploring cyberspace, the locus of the experience remains within the body, just as the participant in a ritual remains at least partially in the realm of the profane.

This being the case, it is not possible to undergo a fully postmodern experience except through constant and exclusive exposure to postmodern phenomena, just as Buddhists cannot ultimately attain *nirvāṇa* unless they are constantly and exclusively involved in right action and right practice, where the nature of the will acts as hindrance to the soteriological goal. Nevertheless as a product of the dynamism of a

'Janus-faced' ambivalent modernity, and the accompanying dynamic processes of self-hood found in the *homo duplex*[4], the postmodern is a position which both encompasses and reflects the nature of the religion in contemporary society, not as something which acts as an universal sacred canopy but which exists in localised niches which are ultimately neither synchronically nor diachronically exclusive.

This enables us to overcome many of the previous assumptions made about the relationship between religion and modernity, and places, into context, the nature of the sacred in a de-universalised society which can encompass both secular and religious narratives - being a product of the tensions found between the two. Consequently, through this study it may be possible to regard religion as a significant factor in understanding contemporary self-hood; as something which is both at the root of its development, and central to its continued evolution.

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[4] Although it should be remembered that Buddhism, unlike Schopenhauer does ultimately assume that *nirvāṇa* can be achieved through a taming of the will

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