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Is Comparative Philosophy Postmodern?

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Abstract

This thesis examines the claims of Jeffrey Timm and James Buchanan that the field of Comparative Philosophy is moving in a postmodern direction. I examine their conception of the postmodern and compare to both the most influential views of postmodernism and with my own understanding of postmodernism. To evaluate their claims I examine the journal *Philosophy East and West*, which I argue is representative of the field of Comparative Philosophy. I analyze the works of the editors of the journal and also do a statistical analysis of the journal to determine whether the field is becoming more postmodern. I conclude that Timm and Buchanan may be correct.

Cette thèse examine les positions de Jeffrey Timm et de James Buchanan àl'effet que le domaine de la philosophie comparée évolve dans une direction post-moderne. Leur conception du post-modernisme est analysée en rapport avec les opinions les plus importantes aujord'hui sur ce concept, notamment la position de la *Philosophy East and West*, représentative du domaine de la philosophie comparée. L'analyse de la revue comport aussi une dimension statistique dans le but de determiner l'évolution du concept de post-modernité et de comparer ce concept avec celui mis de l'avant par Timm et Buchanan.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank, first of all, my supervisor, Richard P. Hayes, whose questioning was invaluable for helping me organize my thoughts. Furthermore, his knowledge of Buddhist Studies was invaluable to my own knowledge of the material. I would also like to thank Maurice Boutin for some comments made about my early ideas for the thesis that helped me formulate the final shape of the thesis and for helping me with the French portion of the abstract. Richard Walker deserves mention for our lively discussions on postmodernism that have helped shape my own thoughts on the subject. Finally, I would like to thank family and friends for their support. Without them, I could not have finished.

Prelude

This thesis has evolved since my original conception of it. At first I was hoping to get an understanding why people were choosing to do comparative philosophy. What were the most common motivations for undertaking the enterprise of comparative philosophy? What were people's perceived aims in attempting a cross-tradition comparison? Unfortunately, this thesis topic was much too large, and I could not focus it enough to make it a viable master's thesis.

Eventually, I came to the decision, with the help of my supervisor, Richard Hayes, of just focusing on a small part of this original thesis. Some of the thesis has remained the same throughout—most noticeably my decision to use the journal *Philosophy East and West* as the representative body for the field of Comparative Philosophy. Some has changed dramatically—a decision for me to express my own critical analysis of "postmodern" and all that the term entails.

Introduction

The main purpose of this thesis is to get an understanding of the intellectual direction that the field of Comparative Philosophy is moving towards. I cannot trace all of the multiple directions and voices within Comparative Philosophy in a work of this size. Therefore, I must limit my analysis. Fortunately, I have found an area that I am not only familiar with, but also one that provides an easy point of departure for my analysis. The aim of this work is to determine whether the field of Comparative Philosophy is moving in a postmodern direction.

I say this is an easy point of departure because scholars within the field of Comparative Philosophy[1] have argued that it is moving in a postmodern direction. Before I examine this, I must address how I limit the scope of my inquiry. Comparative Philosophy had humble beginnings, but since the 1950's it has blossomed into a field with a large corpus of literature. It is unmanageable to use all of this literature for the present study. Accordingly, I have found it useful to limit my study to the journal *Philosophy East and West*.[2] Not only is this the premier journal for the field, it is also the locus of the material I have found claiming that the field is moving towards the postmodern. One issue I will address is the relevance of this body of literature. Dr. Maurice Boutin commented to me that a work only focusing on a single journal might only be of interest to those

[1] Hereafter references to 'the field' will refer specifically only to the field of Comparative Philosophy.
[2] Hereafter referred to as *PEW*.

participating in the journal. I will argue that the journal is not only representative of the field, but also informs the field to a great extent. This being the case, it is probably the best corpus of literature to use for my task. Chapter One will be dedicated to this undertaking.

Chapter Two will be an examination of the reports by James Buchanan and Jeffrey Timm that argue for the movement of the field towards postmodernism. I will summarize their claims, providing an easy reference to use for the third chapter, which will be an in-depth analysis of the veracity of these claims. Part of this will involve an analysis of the term "postmodern" and relate my own understanding with those who claim that the field is moving towards the postmodern. It is necessary to understand what is meant by 'postmodern' before I attempt to determine whether the field is moving in that direction. I will analyze their understanding by comparing it with some primary figures within postmodernism (Lyotard, Jameson, Hassan, Jencks, Bell, Baudrillard, and Derrida), as well commentators of postmodernism (Rose, Hassan, Smith, Jencks). In the end, I will determine that their understanding is, despite some flaws, mostly correct.

Once I have come to some understanding of how Buchanan and Timm understand postmodernism and provide my own understanding of postmodernism, then I can continue my analysis. I will show how the journal reflects a movement towards the postmodern. Part of this will be a statistical analysis of how often and when certain types of articles are published. This will help show more empirically

if the journal is moving in a certain direction. This undertaking will be Chapter Four of the thesis.

Finally, I will summarize my findings in Chapter Five. In this chapter I will show that Comparative Philosophy may be moving in a postmodern direction, but not any more than any other field. While certain comparative enterprises show postmodern content, the journal as a whole is not solely on a course towards the postmodern. The journal has many voices, and some are, in fact, a contra-indication of the postmodern leanings of the journal--and thus the field

One caveat that I should emphasize is that the literature that I am looking at reifies the differences between the "East" and "West" as meaningful categories pointing at cultural differences associated by geography. Rather than develop a methodology to explain what these various authors mean by "East" and "West", I will leave it up to the reader to bring their own understandings of these terms to the subject matter. To delve into the question of East and West here would be a task taking up too much space, for very little gain. While relevant for the subject matter I am discussing, a detailed examination is not necessary to complete my task. While in certain circles the strict or even loose division of East and West into separate categories is an open question, by and large, in the field of Comparative Philosophy this division is taken for granted. In fact, the discipline itself can only exist with these distinctions in place. Comparative Philosophy is the field of comparing philosophy from different cultures. For example, on the homepage of the journal PEW Roger T. Ames, the present editor, says,

"Philosophy East and West features specialized articles and essays that illuminate the distinctive characteristics of philosophical traditions in Asia and their relationship to Western thought" (http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pew/). If the field no longer made a distinction between cultures, Comparative Philosophy would cease to exist as the comparative study of Eastern and Western philosophies.

On that note, I will begin my analysis.

Chapter 1: The Journal Philosophy East and West

This thesis is an attempt to determine, in some small way, the direction of Comparative Philosophy. I center my analysis with an examination of the claims by James Buchanan and Jeffrey Timm that the journal *PEW*, and thus the field of Comparative Philosophy, is moving in a postmodern direction. Before I can explore the claims of Buchanan and Timm, I have to provide an account for connecting the journal *PEW*, the East-West Philosophers' conference, and the field of comparative philosophy as a whole. It is my contention that the journal and conferences are representative of the field and, in turn, inform the field. As such, the journal *PEW* is an excellent candidate to analyze the direction that the field is going in.

I will not be exploring in detail the history of the journal *Philosophy East and West* as this has been done quite effectively in a number of places (Timm, 1991; Buchanan, 1996; Marsella, 1988: 224-230). However, I will draw from these sources to give a general picture of how the journal has evolved. This will help for both this chapter and for an understanding of Chapter Four, where I examine the editors of the journal *PEW*.

The journal started as the brainchild of Charles A. Moore.[3] What began as a series of conferences on comparing East and West philosophy spun out into a journal, an academic society (the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy, or SACP), a monograph series and a whole department of the University of

[3] Roger T. Ames in his introduction to *The Aesthetic Turn: Reading Eliot Deutsch on Comparative Philosophy* has given credit to both Charles A. Moore and Wing-tsit Chan. Others, like Timm etc. have only talked about Charles A. Moore as the origin of this vision.

Hawaii dedicated to this endeavor. The journal and conferences (the two are intimately related for our examination) changed considerably from the journal's outset to its present instantiation.

The first Conference was in 1939 (Philosophy East-West), and there have been subsequent conferences in 1949 (An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis), 1959 (East-West Philosophy from a Practical Perspective), 1964 (The Status of the Individual in East and West), 1969 (Alienation of Man), 1989 (Culture and Modernity), and 1995 (Justice and Democracy). The journal itself was first published in April 1951 based in large part on the success of the conferences. The Society of Asian and Comparative Philosophy (which is now the sponsor of *Philosophy East and West*) was created in 1967. Both the Society and the Journal have as their subject fields Asian philosophy and Comparative Philosophy.

The history of the journal, the conferences, and the field are intertwined. The conferences began as an expression of Moore's interest in Comparing Eastern and Western philosophy. Moore and Wing-tsit Chan were also the founders of the department of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii. The University of Hawaii press publishes both the journal *PEW* and the monograph series organized by the SACP. The editors of the journal have all been faculty in the department of Philosophy at Hawaii. Connecting this interrelated collaboration at the University of Hawaii to the field of comparative philosophy is not difficult. The field, insofar as it is a separate field of scholarly inquiry, is such because of the hard work of Moore and Chan.

Julia Ching in a review article entitled, "Recent Studies of Chinese and Comparative Philosophy," mentions three periodicals, "which serve to facilitate cross-culture dialogues, including *Philosophy East and West*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, as well as the *Journal of the History of Ideas*" (Ching ,1984). Note that out of these three journals, only *PEW* names Comparative Philosophy specifically as one of its fields of inquiry. A quick review of these other two journals reveals that the *Journal of the History of Ideas* doesn't have an article in 2002 relating to any culturally comparative enterprise, while for 2001 of *International Philosophical Quarterly*, there are three out of twenty-six articles relating to Comparative Philosophy. Compare this with *PEW*, which devotes ten out of sixteen articles to Comparative Philosophy (the rest being philosophical matters within the Asian traditions).

Furthermore, a search on the Philosopher's Index for English journal articles with the phrase "comparative philosophy" in the database record provides 242 results. Of these, 111 of the articles are from *PEW*. The journal with the next closest results is the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* with twenty-five results. If we exclude from the calculations those journals with fewer than five results, we find that other than *PEW* there are only seventy-six articles returned. This means that *PEW* has 146% more journal articles having something explicitly to do with comparative philosophy than the rest of the other journals (with some focus on comparative philosophy) *combined*! However much one might be skeptical of statistics, these numbers seem a strong indication of how much the journal *PEW* dominates the field of Comparative Philosophy (see Appendix One).

One last point I would like to make about the journal is that it seems to have captured the imagination of a large number of scholars as representing the field. This can be seen by the number of scholars that participated in the Directory of Comparative Philosophers sections of the January 1990 and October 1991 issues of PEW. These directories were a voluntary process where the scholar sent in personal information to the journal (like name, institutional affiliation, position, area of research) and the "schedule" in turn, aside from being a general directory, would "provide the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy with a resource from with to draw themes and potential participants for future panels and programs" (Ames, 1988: editorial preface). The journal assumed that it could represent a high proportion of comparative philosophers, and, to support this, it received a large enough sample for two volumes worth of directory. To get such a large sample, the journal would have had to catch the imagination of the scholarly population in question enough for them to participate. My own interpretation is that this directory could only be possible with a journal that represents the field. Furthermore, the admission of using this directory for further panels and programs shows how it, in turn, would help form the field.

If *PEW* were only one journal among many I would not be able to argue that *PEW* represents the field of comparative philosophy. However, given the statistics above, and its history as a pioneer of the field, I think that I have shown sufficiently that the journal not only represents the field, but also is such a major contributor that its influence is the largest in the field.

Chapter 2: Comparative Philosophy is Post-modern

In this chapter I provide an account of the contention that the field is moving post-modern. The bulk of this account will be giving an accurate account of James Buchanan and Jeffrey Timm's understanding of post-modernism. In this way, I can assess the claims that the journal is moving in that direction. A short bibliographical examination of each author is in order.

Jeffrey Timm is a professor of Religion from Wheaton College. His publications include works on South Asian philosophy, such as, "Vallabha, Vaisnavism and the western hegemony of Indian thought (1989)", *Texts in Context : Traditional Hermeneutics in South Asia* (1992), and a large number of review articles in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (1984-86, 88, 90a and b, 92, 95).

James Buchanan was, until recently, a Gannett Professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He is now the Besl Family Chair and University Professor of Ethics, Religion, and Society at Xavier University. His publications include, "The rhetorics of appropriation/transgression: postmodernity and religious discourse, (1986)" and "In Search of the Modern Moral Identity: A Transversal Reading of Charles Taylor and the Communitarians. (1995)"

In his article, "Report on the Seventh East-West Philosophers' Conference, 'Justice and Democracy: A Philosophical Exploration," Buchanan claims that the conferences (and by extension, I argue, the journal and the field) are moving in a postmodern direction. He says, "In looking back over the history of the East-West

Philosophers' Conference and attempting to assess its overall character in the broadest terms, my own assessment is that its character has changed from what I will call its very 'modern' beginnings into what I see as a 'post-modern' project" (Buchanan, 1996: 310). This is not to say that there is some postmodern end or goal towards which the conferences are moving, but rather that the content and context of the journal is such that the collection of its multiple voices and texts exhibit a family of resemblances that can be categorized with increasing accuracy as postmodern. To understand what sort of qualities Buchanan is ascribing to the conferences, we have to understand what he means by "modern" and "postmodern."

It is a common claim that modernity[4] is concerned with a discourse towards some ultimate goal using certain foundational universals as the building blocks for this enterprise. Buchanan's views are no exception: "Modernity's claim was with the possibility of constituting philosophy as the foundation of a unified discourse. Such a unified discourse was to be grounded on such universal foundations as rationality, metaphysics, epistemologies, and criteria" (310). For Buchanan, modernity was to be grounded upon a rationality that was a universal structure applicable to all. Descartes, Kant, and Habermas, according to Buchanan, have "claimed the existence of and attempted to develop a criteria that are a priori to, or the necessary conditions for" this universal rationality (310). Modernity is always concerned with some claim to universality, whether that is "a

[4] Buchanan equates 'modernity' with 'modern.' I will do so for this chapter as well. The next chapter will complicate this equation.

priori principles, antecedently specified criteria, [or] predetermined methodologies" (310).

Postmodernity is in direct reaction to this claim to universal applicability. Buchanan shows two ways that postmodernity approaches modern concerns. The first regards the impact of cross-cultural contact on these universals. Buchanan begins, "Once the claim of universality is made, another culture's philosophical traditions can only be examined in terms of that criterion" (310). Only the types of thought, the rationalities, expressed most forcefully by the universal a priori are deemed acceptable. Other understandings are assimilated, ignored or vilified. "If [these other traditions] do not fit or cannot be forced to fit, then they must be rejected as being 'religious' or some nonrational discourse" (310). The point here is that in the hierarchy of modernity, the nonrational is lesser than, and occasionally an anathema to rationality. The criterion for this judgement, being a universal condition of rationality so defined, must then apply to all cultures throughout time. Buchanan continues, "Such criteriological foundations and methods are claimed to be fundamental to any culture, historical period, and so forth" (310). Of course, the limits of this rationality are defined by the tradition that is applying this hierarchical set of criteria.

The second postmodern attitude towards the modern involves explaining how modernity fails to apply its own understanding to itself. Buchanan argues that there is a discrepancy between the *de jure* and *de facto* in the project of modernity. Buchanan doesn't make clear exactly what this discrepancy is, but I will try to tease out what he means. Modernity claims to universality, but in truth

is parochial. Modernity bulwarks its claims to universality through what Buchanan calls "strategies of containment" (311).[5] Modernity rests on universals that tend to be specific to a particular cultural bias, rather than a priori to knowledge. To alleviate cognitive dissonance, modernity must contain, in some manner, the "other"-- that which does not accord with its understandings of rationality. According to Buchanan, the three principle "Others" for containment are: nature, women and the cross-cultural other. The process that contained them reduced them to a "same--metaphysically, scientifically, rationally, and even technologically and socially" (311). The details Buchanan leaves to the reader. However, he does claim that the goal of postmodernity is to liberate the "other" from the dominating processes of modernity. Postmodernity seeks to give a voice to the other in its difference--that is, on its own terms. In a summary explanation, he says:

> Postmodernity is about giving up the metaphysical security that guarantees sameness and allowing the radicality of diversity and difference--possibly even irreconcilable, incommensurate difference--to play itself out. Postmodernity is willing to risk presuppositions, foundations, and criteria in the name of difference. The modern-postmodern question par excellence may be 'How much are we willing to risk to allow the Other to achieve its own voice?' (311)

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[5] More specifically he says that, "modernity consisted [sic] of 'strategies of containment' and domination" (311). Modernity has not left us yet. The general approach of modernity still has influence today. Furthermore, Buchanan mentions Habermas as a proponent of the modernist position (whether wilfully or not). Habermas is still writing today. This seems to me to show at least one case in which the past tense status of modernity is questionable.

Buchanan sees this movement from the modern to the postmodern reflected in the conferences, with a caveat: "In saying this I am recognizing that while these conferences have striven above all others to be fundamentally cross-cultural and comparative, they remain a Western discourse in theme and language if not in spirit" (311). The subject matter of the sixth and seventh conferences supports this: the themes of these conferences, as indicated by the titles, "Justice and Democracy" and "Modernity and Culture," have a history that, at the very least, is inextricably linked to various European and North American discourses. I will explore, in Chapter 3, whether this mitigates Buchanan's claim for the postmodernity of the conferences.

The other author I explore, Jeffrey Timm, really does not give any explanation for why he regards the conference as moving towards the postmodern. I will have to examine the article to tease out reasoning for this hypothesis. Timm only rarely uses the term postmodern in his article, but many of the themes of the modern-postmodern debate are expressed within it.

First, I will start with the one place where Timm explicitly mentions postmodernity and attempt to articulate an understanding of what Timm means by the term. The only place that Timm mentions the term is in the context of a change in Charles Moore's attitude toward the purpose of the conferences that he directed. Timm argues that, "[Moore's] twenty-five years as conference director led him deeper and deeper into what I would characterize as a postmodern search for a meta-philosophical stance capable of embracing philosophical pluralism which at the same time avoids both fraudulent reductionism and debilitating

relativism" (Timm, 1991: 461). Moore's original position was that the purpose of the conferences was to find some metaphysical commonality with which all the various cultures would be compared and evaluated. He was attempting a synthesis of East and West. Timm explains, "In the preface to that early volume [namely, the published papers of the first conference], ... Moore explained his vision of a conference concerned with the significance that the philosophy of the East holds for the philosophy of the West and his grander vision of a world philosophy synthesizing the ideas and ideals of East and West. Even as this grander vision received an increasingly critical reception in subsequent conferences, the basic procedure for the philosophical journey mapped out by Moore in 1939 has remained a reliable guide" (457-8). Timm doesn't articulate who this should be a guide for, but as I understand it he means as a guide for understanding the outlook of Moore towards the conferences. Timm further explains that this synthetic attitude of Moore not only received greater critical reception by others, but also much less overt concern by Moore himself (459-60). Rather, under the increasing critical attitude of his peers and perhaps the overly daunting task of facilitating this synthesis, Moore's perspective changed: "This recognition of diversity—the value of difference in the absence of a final identity of perspective—reflected Moore's gradual shift away from his original vision of a synthetic, integrative world philosophy" (461).

If I understand it, Timm's understanding of postmodern here is two-fold. One, it is the recognition of diversity—difference and alterity—and two, the absence or rejection of the tendency towards assimilating the other into the self.

Other parts of the article don't explicitly mention postmodernism, but reflect the themes that postmodernism addresses. For example, Timm says, "Before we could begin to compare East and West, we had to distance ourselves from all false or inadequate understandings. ... What appears less obvious today is the certainty of any final achievement of 'authentic understanding'" (458). This highlights the postmodern theme of the absence of any final or universal measure to judge between competing voices. Timm reiterates this theme in discussing Deutsch's tenure as the director of the conferences. Timm says: "Deutsch began [in his opening remarks of the sixth conference] by emphasizing the danger of cultural imperialism lurking in any arbitrary definition of the measure and style of intelligibility. Avoiding simple assimilation of the other to oneself requires a knowing recognition of the presuppositions of both self and other" (463). The claim that "any arbitrary definition of the measure and style of intelligibility" is a danger to be avoided points to the tendency for modernity to take a certain way of thinking as the a priori or the universally applicable/intelligible manner for thought. Thus, a universal value is created and all others are judged by this standard. However, as an "arbitrary" definition, that is, a parochial one, the definition is only a false universal. A further theme brought out in this analysis of Deutsch is the understanding that modernity attempts to assimilate the other to the self in order to understand it. A postmodern attitude rejects this assimilating tendency.

The final theme that I see Timm equating with postmodernity is a pluralistic attitude. Not only are they equated in Timm's assertion that Moore was

moving more into a postmodern stance, but he also characterizes Deutsch in the same way. He says, "the celebration of difference envisioned by Deutsch occasions a sharpening of critical insight, which leads neither to cultural reductionism nor to aimless relativism, but instead to a lively pluralism" (463). In simpler language, Timm is saying that the celebration of difference leads to pluralism. This theme of equating the postmodern and pluralism comes again later, when Timm paraphrases Richard Bernstein's understanding of postmodernism from Bernstein's paper in the conference: "Hegel's solution to the problem [of the one and many] can be presented as a culmination of the Western tendency to valorize the pole of identity, which has more recently given way to an opposing tendency in the "post-modern" emphasis on *pluralism* and the multiplicity of paradigms" (464, emphasis mine). Note that Bernstein doesn't use the term pluralism anywhere in the first part of his paper where he discusses Hegel (Bernstein, 1991: 85-7). This equation of pluralism and postmodernity is Timm's understanding.

So, for Timm, characteristics of modernity are that it attempts to assimilate the other into the self, and that it attempts to formulate a universal definition of intelligibility. Postmodernity rejects these modern tendencies. Postmodernity is not only the recognition of diversity, but also an acceptance of pluralism.

Chapter 3: What is postmodernity?

This Chapter undertakes a dialogical encounter with the understanding of postmodern given in Chapter Two by Buchanan and Timm. First, before this encounter is engaged, I need to discuss the subtle differences between the terms 'postmodern', 'postmodernity', and 'postmodernism' (and their modern cognates). Second, I will give a brief history and general account of postmodern and modern, drawing from some summary sources. Next, I will examine the understanding of the two authors, Buchanan and Timm, and show how their accounts are or are not in accord with the literature. In Chapter Four I will take this analysis to assess the claim that *PEW* is moving in a postmodern direction. I would like to point out, before I begin, that one of my reasons for writing this piece of work is to instantiate an example of critical analysis to the common practice of labeling some object as postmodern. I find that too often people use popular terms without understanding whether these terms should apply. Charles Jencks comments similarly, "There is also a tendency among philosophers to discuss all Post-Positivist thinkers together as Post-Modern whether or not they have anything more in common than the rejection of Modern Logical Positivism. Thus there are two quite different meanings to the term and a general confusion which is not confined to the public" (Jencks, 1987: 9). With especially trendy terms, like 'postmodernism,' the tendency towards overuse and categorical confusion gets heightened such that the term eventually loses any meaning as a descriptor. For a term to hold categorical weight, it must, in some way, be able to

express meaning in difference. If a term encompasses too much or too little, it becomes useless as a descriptive category. Put another way, if the set of objects qualified by the term postmodern becomes too large, the qualifying term ceases to have meaning. More simply, if we overuse a term, it becomes useless. As Lawrence Cahoone says, "Theoretical labels... have a purpose as long as they are thought's servant, rather than its master. Postmodernism deserves careful, sober scrutiny, devoid of trendy enthusiasm, indignant condemnation, or reactionary fear" (Cahoone, 1996: 2) I will add that trendy enthusiasm is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as it is not accompanied by unreflective or stereotypical thought. In my analysis, I hope to show how the term postmodern (and all its associated terms) can retain descriptive adequacy through critical analysis of how it is used. This will come out in my critical analysis of how Timm and Buchanan understand the postmodern.

A Difference of Terms

My first task in this chapter is to explain the difference between postmodern/ity/ism and modern/ity/ism. Note, first, that for the term "modern" there are two different meanings. One is the "modern" that historians and cultural commentators attempt to understand. This modern is a period of time with certain characteristics associated with it. Contrast this meaning of modern with the other meaning of modern as 'contemporary,' regardless of what characteristics the

contemporary holds. This latter meaning I will not use at all in this thesis.[6] I will use the former.

Mary Klages notes the following distinctions between the terms postmodern/ity/ism and modern/ity/ism:

> [The socio-historical] approach defines postmodernism as the name of an entire social formation, or set of social/historical attitudes; more precisely, this approach contrasts "postmodernity" with "modernity," rather than "postmodernism" with "modernism." What's the difference? "Modernism" generally refers to the broad aesthetic movements of the twentieth century; "modernity" refers to a set of philosophical, political, and ethical ideas which provide the basis for the aesthetic aspect of modernism. "Modernity" is older than "modernism;" the label "modern," first articulated in nineteenth-century sociology, was meant to distinguish the present era from the previous one, which was labeled "antiquity." Scholars are always debating when exactly the "modern" period began, and how to distinguish between what is modern and what is not modern; it seems like the modern period starts earlier and earlier every time historians look at it. But generally, the "modern" era is associated with the European Enlightenment, which begins roughly in the middle of the eighteenth century. (Other historians trace elements of enlightenment thought back to the Renaissance or

[6] Note that some, like Bernard Smith, attempt to formulate an understanding of modernity and modernism using this meaning of modern.

> earlier, and one could argue that Enlightenment thinking begins with the eighteenth century. I usually date "modern" from 1750, if only because I got my Ph.D. from a program at Stanford called "Modern Thought and Literature," and that program focused on works written after 1750). (Klages 1998)

So, postmodernity/modernity is the broader cultural and underlying philosophical attitude, while postmodernism/modernism is the more specific, instantiated implementation of these attitudes in architecture, literature and art especially. This seems to lend itself to the understanding that "postmodernity" is the implicit general attitude of an era while "postmodernism" would be the explicit theoretical project arising from that more general attitude.

Mikhail Epstein has a similar conception of the distinction between modernity and modernism, postmodernity and postmodernism. He says,

> 1. Modernity (or, in Russian terminology, Novoe vremia, New Times) denotes a relatively long period of world history, beginning with the end of the Middle Ages and lasting approximately half a millennium, that is, beginning with the Renaissance and continuing until the middle of the 20th century.
>
> 2. Modernism is a relatively short cultural period, coming at the end of the era of Modernity and lasting approximately half a

century (from the end of the 19th century, or from World War I till the 1950s and 1960s, depending on the version one follows).

> Just as the "modern" can be subdivided into two periods, a long one of Modernity and a shorter one of Modernism, so too may an analogous division be appropriate for the "postmodern." (Epstein 1997)

Epstein's understanding is quite similar to Klages'. They both make the distinction that "postmodernity" is the broader cultural paradigm, and "postmodernism" is a particularly smaller cultural event, relating to particular aesthetic disciplines. These have generally been considered first and then most popularly architecture, literature and art. This holds true for the cognate terms "modernity" and "modernism." Ihab Hassan's understanding of these terms is similar. The distinction, for Hassan, begins: "I mean postmodernism to refer to the cultural sphere, especially literature, philosophy, and the various arts, including architecture, while postmodernity refers to the geopolitical scheme, less order than disorder, which has emerged in the last decades" (Hassan, 2001). For Hassan, postmodernity is only a few decades old and is characterized by geopolitical interaction. He continues,

> Think of postmodernity as a world process, by no means identical everywhere yet global nonetheless. Or think of it as a vast umbrella under which stand various phenomena: postmodernism in

> the arts, poststructuralism in philosophy, feminism in social discourse, postcolonial and cultural studies in academe, but also multi-national capitalism, cybertechnologies, international terrorism, assorted separatist, ethnic, nationalist, and religious movements--all standing under, but not causally subsumed by, postmodernity. (Hassan, 2001).

Here the same kind of understanding as Klages and Epstein is proffered, where postmodernity is the more general cultural event and postmodernism is a particular movement (in this case to the arts) that is subsumed under or arises from postmodernity.

For the rest of this work, I shall be using these two terms in the manner that these three authors do. Modernity and Postmodernity will refer to general cultural movements, while postmodernism will refer variously to particular theoretical instantiations within the arts, and other fields of knowledge. Furthermore, the term "postmodern" will refer to either or both of these, depending on the context.

A Brief History of Postmodern/Modern

The next part of this chapter will give a summary account of postmodernity and postmodernism, modernism and modernity. Because there are so many different understandings of what "postmodern" is I cannot recount a

singular history of it. However, what I can do is give some of the more popular understandings of "postmodern" and create not a singular narrative, but a multiple narrative history. First, of course, I should begin with an account of the modern, given that the postmodern cannot escape its self-definition in relation to the modern.[7] After I give a short history of the general timelines for our terms, I will delve into some consensus about what these terms mean. Because of the general disagreement regarding what these terms (especially "postmodern") mean I will have to critically assess the field and put forward my own understanding. This understanding is what will be used to analyze Buchanan and Timm. Note that I do not wish to spend too much time on these timelines, but hope to put them forth to facilitate a general understanding of the periods that these terms are thought to encompass.

As noted earlier, there are two conceptions of the modern: modernity and modernism. Modernity is the more general cultural attitude that gave rise to a particular art, architecture and literary style. Modernity has been variously said to begin as early as the renaissance to as late as the nineteenth century. Arnold J. Toynbee, one of the first to use the term postmodern, discusses the modern as the rise of the middle class in Western civilization. He dates the beginning of the modern period around the fifteen and sixteenth century with the rise of a "bourgeoisie" middle class (Toynbee, 1954 vol. VIII: 338; Rose, 1991: 9-11).

Bernard Smith prefers to place the rise of modernity along the same time-line as Toynbee. He argues that those who place the beginning of modernity later

[7] This is expressed, for example in the title of Ihab Hassan's early work, "POSTmodernISM: A Paracritical Bibliography." The inescapable connection between modern and postmodern is highlighted here.

are only doing so based on specialist discourses--for example, philosophers who argue that the modern begins with Descartes in the seventeenth century or those who equate modernity with industrialism, which wasn't fully realized until the eighteen century (Smith, 1998: 15-16). Smith prefers a time period where "multiple disjunctions appear to intersect more or less simultaneously, where the specialist discourses, whether economic, social, political, philosophical, appear to converge and tell a similar tale" (16). He places this convergence in Europe with the Renaissance and the Reformation: the fifteenth and sixteenth century.

Many equate modernity with the beginnings of the enlightenment. Most of the philosophers who claim some allegiance to the postmodern like to take the enlightenment as their starting point for modernity. We have seen above how Mary Klages has arbitrarily associated the beginnings of modernity with 1750, a time chosen for the beginning of her philosophical education in Stanford. Klages may be more correct in her arbitrary determination. It seems that each commentator has his or her own ideas of where modernity begins. Accordingly, the beginnings of modernity are more appropriately affixed to the interpretive framework of the author currently writing (or speaking) about modernity than any modernity "out there." It seems to me that all of these terms (modernity, modernism, postmodernity, postmodernism) are used in such a manner to help present day folk understand what is going on throughout history. As such, these terms are constantly shifting to meet the needs of those who are using them for their own interpretive means. Although I may not agree with an arbitrariness[8] that

[8] It is plain that Klege's website is not an attempt at rigorous scholarship, but rather just some general comments for use by her students (and those, like myself, who stumble upon her web

doesn't even try to connect the term to some historical event I admire that Klages gives a priority to role of the subjective in her judgment. I think that an understanding of the subjective nature of these cultural determiners should be kept in mind for the rest of my brief history. With that caveat, we will look at one last thinker's examination of modernity.

Fredric Jameson, in *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, gives a Marxist accounting of postmodernism. For Jameson, the postmodern is a term given to the culture that he prefers to call "Late Capitalism." Following Ernest Mandel, Jameson gives an account of three stages of capitalism and associates these with terms used to understand Western Culture. He calls the three stages of capitalism the Market Capitalist stage; the Monopoly, or Imperial Capitalist Stage; and the multinational capitalism stage. These three correspond to Realism, Modernism and Postmodernism respectively. He uses Mandel's dates for each stage relating to the modes of capitalist production, namely the "machine production of steam-driven motors since 1848; machine production of electric and combustion motors since the 90's of the 19th century; machine production of electronic and nuclear-powered apparatuses since the 40's of the twentieth century" (Cahoone, 1996: 564). Thus, modernism begins in the 1890's. It seems to me that Jameson has conflated the distinction between modernism and modernity that I make here. He says, "I cannot stress too greatly the radical distinction between the view for which the postmodern is one (optional) style amongst many others available and one which seeks to grasp it as the cultural

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page). In this light, do not take my comment as any extended criticism; rather, take it as a warning against loose or over-arbitrary determinations.

dominant logic of late capitalism" (567). The former distinction would correspond to postmodernism and the latter with postmodernity. Betraying his comments above, Jameson does not make any temporal distinction between the two; rather, he makes the difference between them one of attitude towards the postmodern. Because of this, we can place Jameson's understanding of both modernity and modernism from the 1890's on.

Last, I would like to note that there are some thinkers, like Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, who regard modernity as the end of a long project of Western history started by the Greeks. In this case, modernity, the last and final culmination of this "metaphysical" or "logocentric" attitude ends and heaves its last tremendous breath with Hegel. Modernity's end, philosophy's end, and the end of writing begin with their works. Their work is post-metaphysical, post-logocentric and thus post-modernity. The beginning of modernity is a small issue in the wake of its end. While these figures do not use or espouse the term postmodernity, others call them postmodern thinkers. So, if one is to take this epistemic standpoint, the end of modernity is somewhere between Hegel and either around 1930 with Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* or in the 1960s with the publishing of *De la Grammatologie*, *L'écriture et la difference*, and *La Voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* by Derrida. One might go further back and date this beginning with Nietzsche's works in the 1880's.[9]

[9] Note, though that Heidegger considers Nietzsche a metaphysical thinker. See for example, Heidegger's *Nietzsche* vol. 3 and 4 with the subtitle: *The Will to Power as Knowledge and Metaphysics.*

Modernism, as a particular style of architecture, art or literature (distinct but related to, in my understanding here, modernity), has a less disputed time-line than modernity—associated with the turn of the twentieth century. The journal Modernism/Modernity on its introductory web page gives a time period for its subject matter as: 1860 to the present (Hallberg et. al., 2002). Some seem to associate the end of modernism with the Art Deco movement, somewhere around the 1940's (Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2002). Klages associates "high modernism" with the works of Woolf, Joyce, Eliot, Pound, Stevens, Proust, Mallarme, Kafka, and Rilke from around 1910 to 1930 (Klages, 1998). This would coincide with the Bauhaus movement in architecture—a major modernist movement. Charles Jencks has roughly the same time period for modernism, but give the name late-modernism to that architecture after 1940 resembling the modernism before it. When modernism begins and ends is by no means as debated as the dates for modernity.

Postmodernity, too, is not as debated a term in regards to when it occurred. Most of the debate about postmodernism is with conceptual issues, not historical. Postmodernity holds more closely diachronically to its cognate: postmodernism. Postmodernity is a less self-conscious designator than postmodernism. Particular artists, writers and architects can very well call themselves postmodern and align themselves with postmodernism the movement but the same cannot be said for the term "postmodernity". Postmodernity reflects a socio-historical epoch. Postmodernity, therefore, is designated in hindsight. People look back and reflect on when postmodernity started, while figures like Hassan, Lyotard and Jencks

began movements of postmodernism in literature, philosophy and architecture. The dating for postmodernity is subject to how one thinks about modernity. Most agree that modernity is still with us, coterminous with postmodernity. The "post" in postmodernity means that follows modernity conceptually, but that does not mean that modernity is no longer with us. We cannot use the death of modernity to signal the beginning of postmodernity as if in some linear succession of epochs (although, as we have seen earlier with Derrida and Heidegger, this epoch has ended. I would like to add that while these authors feel they have signaled a break with the earlier epoch, they still, in their works, show how their contemporaries continue to hold the ideals of the older epoch). Rather, we have to examine what postmodernity heralds conceptually and look back historically for clues to its beginnings and consequent blossoming. Figures like Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, the three masters of suspicion as Buchanan and others note (Buchanan, 1996: 311; Epstein, 1997), herald a new way of looking at knowledge and the self. At the very least postmodernity is a post-Hegelian development. Generally, postmodernity doesn't come into full prominence until the conflation of a number of things. The first is multinational capitalism, as Jameson notes. The second is the rise of thinkers after Heidegger, especially the French radicals around the time of the May 1968 revolts in Paris (including Baudrillard, Derrida, Foucault and so on).

Jameson ties the date of postmodernity with the rise of multinational capitalism. We have seen him date this period from 1940s to the present. Hassan, in his *POSTmodernISM*, labels the crucial text of the beginning of postmodernity

as *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce. Hassan questions his own declaration:" If we can arbitrarily state that literary modernism includes certain works between Jarry's *Ubu Roi* (1896) and Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), where will we arbitrarily say that Postmodernism begins? A year earlier than the *Wake*? With Sartre's La *Nausée*?" (Cahoone: 387) This places the beginnings of postmodernity sometime in the late 1930s. Note that Hassan's analysis is heavily indebted to his understanding of literature. Philosophers may have different dates. Those of the deconstructionist bent would place the beginnings of postmodernity in the works of perhaps one of three thinkers. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth places these beginnings with the lectures of Ferdinand De Saussure (1916) (Routledge: Postmodernism). For others, like Heidegger, Nietzsche's "death of God" heralds the end of something, including modernity. Heidegger himself thinks that his own work is the first to go beyond the type of thinking (which he calls "metaphysical") that ended with modernity. Derrida feels that Heidegger is the last of that epoch.

Distinguishing postmodernism from postmodernity, we can trace much more closely the history of its evolution. John Watkins Chapman first used the concept of postmodernism in the 1870's "in the sense that we now speak of Post-Impressionism" (Hassan, 2001). Another early instance of the use of the term is by Rudolf Pannwitz, who used it "to describe the 'nihilism' of twentieth-century Western culture, a theme he took from Friedrich Nietzsche" (Cahoone: 3).[10] Frederico De Onis, the Spanish writer, was the next to use it, in 1934 to describe

[10] Margeret Rose (1991) notes that these two early instance had little weight. So too with Rudolf Pannwitz in 1917. The term attains a meaning as something similar to how we use the term today with the works of De Onis and Toynbee. Jencks does not even mention Wolfgang Welsch (where the reference to Chapman's work can be found), Chapman or Pannwitz in *What is Postmodernism?*, though he surely knew of them. I mention it here for interest's sake.

"a reaction from within modernism" (Jencks, 1987: 8) or a reaction against the "difficulty and experimentalism of modernist poetry" (Hassan: 2001). With Toynbee in *A Study of History*, the term was used to describe a new historical cycle starting in 1875 (Jencks, 1987: 8; Rose, 1991: 9). He also used the term modern to describe the middle class of Western Civilization, while the post-modern described the rise of the industrial working class (Rose: 9-10).[11]

Irvin Howe and Harold Levine took up the term in a negative fashion to repudiate those attitudes they saw as destroying or causing a decline in modern high culture or civilization (Jencks: 8; Hassan 2001; Rose: 172).

The term gained acceptance within the literary critic community in the 60's due to the writing of Iben Hassan and Leslie Fiedler (Jencks: 8; Hassan 2001). After this, it gains acceptance within the academic community and literary community, gaining prominence as a pop-culture reference in the 80's. Presently, postmodernism is still alive, although I know of many who are attempting to now go beyond even the postmodern: for example, Hassan in "Postmodernism to Postmodernity: the Local/Global Context" (2001), and Marc C. Taylor in *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (2001).

[11] In Toynbee's works, Rose notes that the term "post-modern" is only used in the 1954 version of the works, and the 1946 abridgement, not in the original manuscript, nor the first 6 volumes published in 1939. It seems that D. C. Sommerville's abridgement adds it in with a nod from Toynbee.

Postmodern Content

In this next section of the chapter I will be giving a general account of what the term postmodern means. Like the history of the various terms associated with "postmodern" or "modern," the content of these terms and what they mean differs depending on whom one asks. I will give some of the better-known accounts of postmodern but unlike the last section I will summarize and give my own account of the meaning of this term. In this summary examination, I will focus more on those thinkers in the field of philosophy, like Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, and Jean-François Lyotard rather than more art historical, literary or architecturally focused thinkers like Ihab Hassan, and Charles Jencks. I do this because the subject matter I am concerned with in this thesis is Comparative Philosophy. The kinds of understandings of postmodernism in this field are far more likely to be related to the philosophical than the architectural, however much their concerns may overlap and intertwine.

One of the most famous accounts of postmodern is that by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. This work is a special look at science and knowledge commissioned by the Conseil des Universitiés of the government of Québec. In it, Lyotard, using the Wittgensteinian notion of language games, argues that the modern is characterized by what he calls metanarratives, or grand narratives. These are a kind of rule of language that bring together all other different sets of language games under one justificatory set of language rules or games. We can see here, in his emphasis on knowledge as primarily associated with language, Lyotard's debt to structuralism and post-structuralism. Another way to think about

metanarratives is to first imagine that any kind of *logos* has a set of justificatory criteria that is taken to be primary. These are the "narrative" rules that the *logos* operates with. Narratives are tools by which people legislate or legitimate norms. A metanarrative unites various similar narratives under one *logos*. All the narratives are beholden to the dictates of this grand narrative. Lyotard's concern in *The Postmodern Condition* is to show how these metanarratives are now not only false—that is, they no longer hold legitimating weight—but also that their supposed existence causes a type of tyrannical thinking. He says, "In contemporary society and culture—post-industrial society, post-modern culture—the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses" (Lyotard, 1984: 37). In regards to the ethical import of rejecting metanarratives, Lyotard claims that "a recognition of the heteromorphous nature of language games...implies a renunciation of terror" (Lyotard: 66). He says further, "we should be happy that the tendency toward the temporary contract [in post-modernism] is ambiguous: it is not totally subordinated to the goal of the system, yet the system tolerates it" (Lyotard: 66). To help us unpack this ethical dimension of the postmodern, Lyotard gives more specific definitions of postmodern and modern. "Simplifying to the extreme," he says, postmodern is "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard: xxiv; Rose: 55). About the modern he says, "I will use the *modern* to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse... making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative" (Lyotard xxiii ;Rose: 55; emphasis Lyotard's). Thus, for Lyotard, the

modern is the legitimation of knowledge through grand narratives, while postmodern is the rejection of those grand narratives.

The ethical import of this rejection is a replacement of the tyranny of the totalizing nature of metanarratives with a more heterogeneous interplay of language games. More specifically, when a metanarrative is put forward, some other narratives are delegitimated. Says Lyotard: "justice as a value is neither outmoded nor suspect... a recognition of the heterogeneous nature of language games [i.e. a postmodern sensibility] is a first step in that direction" (Lyotard: 66).

Another examination of the postmodern we have seen already is Jameson's. To reiterate, Jameson's account of postmodern is based on the Marxist thinker Ernest Mandal, but indebted, too, I think from Daniel Bell's *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forcasting* (1973). Jameson's characterization of the postmodern is based on different capitalist forces of production. In this regard, postmodern is, as we have seen, aligned with multinational capitalism. It may be worthy to note here that Bell's understanding is that the Post-Industrial society is one of intellectual resources. He says, in the introduction to his 1976 edition of The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society:

> The concept "post-industrial" is counterposed to that of "pre-industrial" and "industrial." A pre-industrial sector is primarily extractive, its economy based on agriculture, mining, fishing, timber, and other resources such as natural gas or oil. An industrial sector is primarily fabricating, using energy and machine technology, for the manufacture of goods. A post-industrial sector is one of processing in which

telecommunications and computer are strategic for the exchange of information and knowledge. (Bell ala Cahoone: 426-7)

This highlights the same attitude towards contemporary (esp. Western) culture, normally thought of as postmodern, that Jameson holds: a new social order is determined by production. Other postmodern thinkers highlight this focus on how society changes due to, or alongside some economic change in that society. Another such thinker is Jean Baudrillard.

Baudrillard's understanding of postmodern is, I think two-fold. On one hand, he talks about different economic forces at play that influence society. On the other hand, he gives an ontological account of postmodern society. These two accounts are related, but I see different forces working to shape each. However, due to time constraints, instead of explaining what I think these forces are I will just give a basic exposition of his thought, which has been integral to a general understanding of postmodern.

Baudrillard's more economic model understands a shift in exchange. In the beginning of what he calls the "classical" economics of value, exchange is regulated by the law of equivalence: the exchangeability of any commodity for any another as long as they retain the same use-value. An item's worth is dependant on how it is used. As Baudrillard says, "a given coin must be exchangeable against a real good of some value, while on the other hand it must be possible to relate it to all the other terms in a monetary system" (Baudrillard, 1993: 6). Thus, anything with an equivalent use-value can be exchanged. This is the first stage. The second stage is a "revolution" that replaces the strict law of

exchanging "real" value to "real" value with signs being exchanged instead. In the second stage the connection between the coin (using Baudrillard's example from above) and a real good and the coin and the system is broken. The coin is no longer connected to the real good in an absolute manner. Rather, it is connected more to the system of exchange itself. Cultural symbols and signs run this system determining the political worth of these signs. He says, "Referential value is annihilated, giving the structural play of value the upper hand" (Baudrillard, 1993: 6). We can see how Baudrillard is a post-structuralist here. He calls this stage the "political economy of the sign." It is not that the products in this stage don't relate to some real, it is rather that they are given value by their political function in society, rather than their use function. Some high-priced items may very well be inexpensive to produce. This stage also signifies a change in what is produced. Unique products are no longer produced—rather, each product is a copy of some mass-produced original. However, these items still retain a relation of signifier/signified to their original. The exchange value (and thus the meaning) of these reproductions is retained due to their political value. Note that the first stage does not end with the second: they are coterminous with each other, and with the third stage of simulation (8). To give one last attempt to explain the difference between the classical and political stages, it can help to think about what each stage exchanges. The first exchanges commodities; the second exchanges signs. The final stage is that of simulacra. Under the weight of late capitalism, the political economy of the sign looses its referent to any real good at all. The sign is no longer connected to its original value and only gets its value in

relation to the other signs. Its "real" is the political economy itself. There is no longer production, only reproduction. A reproduction, however, refers back to some original. With the third stage, this original is no longer. We cannot talk of reproduction any longer, only of simulation. Baudrillard's *Symbolic Exchange and Death* is the site for this socio-economic understanding of simulations. The site for Baudrillard's more ontological examination of simulation is *Simulacres et Simulation*, which has been translated into English as *Simulations* (1983) and *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994).

One of the first examples given by Baudrillard in Simulations is that of a simulated illness. It is not just feigned illness, but that the person who simulates (in the sense of Baudrillard's "simulation") illness produces the symptoms of the "feigned" illness within themselves. How, then, can we tell if the person is "truly" ill? What does it mean for the illness to be "real?" Baudrillard gives the archetypical postmodern reply: "thus, feigning or dissimulating leaves the reality principle intact: the difference is always clear, it is only masked; whereas simulation threatens the difference between 'true' and 'false," between 'real' and 'imaginary'" (Baudrillard, 1983: 5). The level of simulacra that is simulation--Baudrillard's post-structural, post-modern explanatory framework—is then applied to contemporary society.[12] All of our cultural signs are of an order of simulation. The very make-up of this postmodern society is described (and

[12] As an aside, note Baudrillard's eerie presage of the symbolic meaning of the World Trade Centre Towers on pp. 135-8.

borrowed by the Wachowski Brothers for *The Matrix*[13]) as "the desert of the real itself" (Baudrillard, 1983: 2).

Jacques Derrida is another figure associated with postmodernism in philosophy. However, more specifically, his work is post-structuralist. While there may be a concern about how well postmodernism and post-structuralism coincide in more specialized studies, here we need not be as concerned. Derrida's work is an interesting examination of writing, speech and thought.

Derrida intends to question the structuralist assumptions inherent in language, and thus in thought. He contends that while language is set up in dualisms, the history of Western thought has always privileged one of the binaries in a dualism and subordinated the other. One of the most important dualisms is the presence/absence dualism. According to Derrida, we have always privileged presence over absence. Another is Writing and speech, where speech has been given primacy. This attitude of hierarchizing one side of a dualism over the other he calls logocentrism. One last binary I wish to bring up is that between the signifier and the signified. Using this binary I hope to give a short account of what Derrida means by différance, and how this relates to postmodernism.

The logocentric attitude towards the signifier/signified binary is that the signifier is always subordinate to that which it signifies: the signified. Without the original, the presence, the signified, we could not have the signifier, the absence,

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[13] They very self-consciously based their movie on Baudrillard's writings, at least in part. The hollow book that Neo puts his disks and money in is Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulations*. Neo's mentor, Morpheus, quotes, "the desert of the real" to Neo in Neo's first conscious experience outside of the matrix.

the reproduction. However, Derrida argues, insofar as we talk about the signified in language, we cannot really come to a signified. The signified is never reached. The meaning of every word depends on its relations to other words. It cannot exist without reference to them in an interconnected system of meanings. This means that each signified is in fact a signifier of some other term. In fact, there is no ultimate signified to which all the signifiers can point. Signification is displaced.

What this shows is not that Derrida wants to prop up the formerly debased element of the pair in dualisms, but rather to question the possibility of a strict delimitation between the pairs. As Andrew Cutrofello explains, "Derrida's aim is not to 'reverse' these hierarchical oppositions – as it would be if he were interested in privileging writing over speech – but to deconstruct the very logic of such exclusionary founding gestures" (Routledge: Derrida, Jacques). This logic Derrida tries to capture with the term différance. Derrida's term différance has a score of meanings attached to it. First, it points to the difference of each of the terms to the other in a binary. This meaning, placed simultaneously with the second element of the term, which shows the deferring of meaning that takes place, for example, when an original signified is sought for either term. They inexorably are co-definitional, inseparable in their meaning, and unable to stand alone. As Peter Fenves says, "the operation of the principle of identity always rests on an unacknowledged play of differences" (Routledge: Alterity and identity, postmodern theories of). Third, it points at that "in-between" that makes the binary possible in the first place. This is also called the "trace." This trace has

been the site of many comparisons: for example, Heidegger's Being or Nagārjuna's *śūnyatā*.

Derrida's project is fundamentally tied up with justice. The logocentric attitude tends, in its privileging of presence, to deny the other (that is the *absence* of self) the same status accorded to the presence of self.

Having looked at these thinkers, there is one more point that should be raised. The modern criticized by the above thinkers, especially in philosophy, is equated with the Enlightenment Project, the *Aufklärung*. For example, Lyotard argues that "postmodernity imposes [a severe reexamination] on the thought of the Enlightenment, on the idea of a unitary end of history and of a subject" (Lyotard, 1984: 73) Summarizing all of these thinkers positions would be a monumental task. I do not propose to do so here. Rather, I will examine Buchanan and Timm's work referring back to these thinkers as I need. Hopefully a picture of the content of postmodernism has opened up for the reader based on my short summaries.

A Critical Examination of the Postmodernism of Buchanan and Timm

This section is divided into two parts, the first being those areas in which I agree with Buchanan and Timm, the latter being my critical or ambivalent assessment of their understanding of postmodern.

Timm's account of postmodernism, if we recall, is the rejection of the modern tendency to assimilate self and other, as well as the tendency for

formulating a universal definition of intelligibility. On these two points especially, I have to agree with Timm's account. We see noted philosopher Mark C. Taylor agree with the former in his critical analysis of Hegel. Taylor says about a modern Hegel, "In his search for a reconciling middle ground, Hegel, in keeping with the tendency of Western thought, privileges identity and unity. Hegelian philosophy can be understood as a systematic attempt to secure the *identity* of identity and nonidentity and the *union* of union and nonunion" (Taylor, 1987: xxiii; emphasis Taylor's). So here, given Taylor's understanding of Hegel, the archetypical modern, the self, that is identity, is privileged over alterity, other, nonidentity. But Hegel is more forceful than just privileging identity. Again, Taylor comments that for Hegel, "Each negation is, in the final analysis, negated. The negation of negation domesticates any difference that is not an identity and every other that is not the same" (32). The modern tendency is to assimilation.

The latter point Timm makes about the modern tendency to formulate a universal definition of intelligibility seems quite cognate with Lyotard's understanding of metanarratives. Metanarratives are an attempt to bind a series or collection of narratives to its own legitimating narrative. This metanarrative, in other words, formulates some universal criteria by which all other narratives are judged. Timm seems spot on here with Lyotard's postmodern understanding. The postmodern, for both Timm and Lyotard, rejects this modern quest for ultimates. As we have seen with Lyotard, earlier, this rejection is on ethical grounds. This is the same for Derrida as well. As Andrew Cutrofello comments, "from his earliest writings Derrida has been concerned with the relationship between justice and

violence" (Routledge: Derrida, Jacques). The violence in question, for both Lyotard and Derrida is the totalitarianism of modern discourse.

Buchanan too, has a number of points that I think are good characterizations of the postmodern. In my estimation, Buchanan has a better grasp of the postmodern attitude than Timm. Buchanan's understanding of modernity's strategies of containment is something that I think is quite insightful. We have seen how this coincides with Timm's conception of the modern. I agree with both of them on this point. Much of postmodern literature is written to counteract these processes, and this is the primary motivating factor of postmodern ethics to my mind.

Buchanan's concept of the three main "others" of modernity (nature, woman and the cross-cultural other) seems to hold some value. Taylor remarks in different places in *Altarity* that, "within the totality of Hegel's system, nature and history appear as the externalization [i.e. byproduct of] of spirit" (31) and that "throughout much of the western tradition, the voice of the other has been the voice of women" (xxxii). And, to round it out, anyone who has ever read Hegel's works on philosophy of non-European cultures cannot but see how marginalized they are in his writings (for example, Hegel's *Philosophy of History*).

In general, I agree with Buchanan's understanding of the postmodern. However, I do have a few quibbles. It seems that at some simplistic level, Buchanan is arguing that the field is postmodern because within it there is a cacophony of disparate voices with different aims and goals. This would accord

with an understanding of postmodernism as a field of multiple perspectives and disparate narratives. Yet, when we look at what is called the modern, or in other words the Enlightenment Project, we also find quite a number of disparate voices. So is the modern postmodern? Not quite. Underlying these disparate views and authors is a common attitude about epistemic verification. If we look back to Lyotard, we see that a metanarrative is the common justificatory rule that unites various narratives. While modernity did have various (and occasionally competing or critical) voices those undertaking the project still maintained a common understanding about certain things. For example, Rationality was always privileged. In the postmodern era, Rationality is discarded for various rationalities, or even irrationalities. This, I think, will be a key distinction for determining whether PEW and the field are becoming more postmodern. Different narratives do not a postmodern make. Rather, it is the disjunction of these narratives from any universal or meta-level set of criteria. Does Buchanan's claim earlier, that "these conferences... remain a Western discourse in theme and language if not in spirit," (Buchanan, 1996: 311) show a metanarrative guiding the different narratives within it? Yes and no. They do show a bias, and the history of the journal shows its roots in a discourse towards a metanarrative (in the manner of Charles Moore). On the other hand, if they remain a Western discourse then how much freedom of play and alterity is allowed? To be fair, I think that the journal and conferences do an excellent job trying to make all of the various voices heard. Yet, I think my criticism still holds. Just because a certain area has differing voices does not mean that it is necessarily postmodern. I think it

unfortunate when the term gets thrown around when it is not necessary to do so. Its force gets diluted in overuse.

I see Timm formulating a similar conception of postmodern with his ideal of pluralism. Surely it is for him an ideal: he says in numerous places in the article about the sixth conference that embracing pluralism will solve the problems of reductionism and relativism (461, 463). The question remains for me. Is pluralism an adequate measure of postmodernity? I do not think so.

Hassan, in the *Postmodern Turn*, has a chapter on pluralism: Pluralism in Postmodern Perspective. Within it he does give the impression that postmodernism "founds" pluralism. Pluralism is the outcome of postmodernism (Hassan, 1987: 167). However, there is more to it. Hassan argues two conclusions from his reading of postmodern: "(a) critical pluralism is deeply implicated in the cultural field of postmodernism; and (b) a limited critical pluralism is in some measure a reaction against the radical relativism, the ironic indetermanences, of the postmodern condition; it is an attempt to contain them" (Hassan: 173). While (a) supports pluralism as postmodern, (b) argues that pluralism is a totalizing force that limits as well. Hassan says later, "Critical pluralism finds itself implicated in our postmodern condition, in its relativisms and indetermanences, which it attempts to restrain. But cognitive, political, and affective restraints remain only partial" (179). It seems to me, although I admit a difficulty in following Hassan, that he is intimating a closer connection to relativism in the postmodern that pluralism which holds a more ambivalent relationship to pluralism: it both supports and restrains it. What I think Hassan is pointing at is

the struggle that many have, especially at the East-West Philosophers' conferences, between relativism and pluralism where relativism is seen as a bogeyman because there can be no conversation between the different voices. Relativism is the radical incommensurability of views, expressed in the colloquial phrase "it's all relative," meaning there can be no judgment or discussion between viewpoints because of no connective narrative (in the Lyotardian sense) bridges. Pluralism, on the other hand, is given as an ideal because it can allow for the judgment of views while still retain a sense of difference. Hassan's point here, as I understand it, is that the postmodern will always shake up the attempts at pluralism. The attempt to attain pluralism is both facilitated by the loss of metanarratives, but also hindered by opening up of a more radical relativism by this loss. Postmodernism oscillates so that critical pluralism—the quest for the plural ideal—is always a question.

If we relate this understanding to Timm especially we see that he does not understand this disjointed nature of the goal. The search for a pluralism between reductionism and relativism becomes totalizing itself. While Timm's self understanding of postmodernism fails, his expression of it comes out in his very own totalizing attitude towards the relativism engendered by difference. His attitude expresses the modern leftover that remains in the postmodern.

Furthermore, what I see as invariably connected with the postmodern is the disjunction of Self as a homogeneous body—whether that self be construed as a nation, city, group or individual. In my view, postmodernism means a radical cleavage of Self such that at every level of identity there is different and even

competing "selves." I readily admit that my understanding of Buddhism influences this reading. In regards to pluralism, I feel that pluralism may or may not reflect this cleavage of self at all levels. Pluralism can still retain different voices, but if each of these voices is a homogeneous body, then I do not think it necessarily postmodern. Postmodernism is a struggle with identity at *every* level: not just among peers but also within. Understand that this "within" is an illusion once it is cleaved, but heuristically we can still talk about a self at that level. Timm and Buchanan's understanding of postmodern do not reflect this radical disjunction of self. They seem to me to engender only a partial pluralism: a pluralism of discrete whole selves.

Timm argues that Charles Moore was ever led deeper into a "*postmodern* search for a meta-philosophical stance capable of embracing philosophical pluralism which at the same time avoids both fraudulent reductionism and debilitating relativism" (Timm, 1991: 461; emphasis mine).[14] That this search is postmodern is belied by the very claim for a meta-philosophical stance. Lyotard's metanarratives are ignored. Timm's understanding of that Moore's goal was for a *postmodern* meta-philosophical stance (while accurate) reflects more of Timm's understanding than Moore's. For Timm to call a search for a meta-philosophical postmodern is to really not understand what postmodernism is.

In light of my criticism, I feel that I should take account of the author's understanding. Without a doubt, Buchanan shows more understanding about the subject matter than Timm. It is true that Timm rarely says an explicit word about

[14] Timm uses this trope of "pluralism...reductionism...and... relativism" often enough to leads me to believe that his claim that Moore was searching for a meta-philosophical stance, while probably accurate, is also a goal for Timm too.

postmodern in the article, his implicit understanding is too flawed. He writes about the search for a grand synthesis being passé (472), but at the same time commends a postmodern search for meta-philosophy (461). Pluralism cannot be a sufficient cause to label a subject matter postmodern and meta-philosophical stances show an opposite understanding.

While Buchanan talks about pluralism as well, his own more explicit understanding of postmodern shows some experience with the field. The real problematic point I have with Buchanan (who takes this torch from Timm) is their concept of postmodern where "the conversation ... sometimes becomes an unwieldy cacophony of views failing to connect" (Timm: 472; Quoted by Buchanan: 316).

In the end, I think that an understanding of the postmodern needs to be based on more than this. I will use my own understanding of postmodern as a disjunction of the self on all levels for understanding postmodern in my statistical analysis of Chapter Four. While some of the two authors' views are correct, and even quite insightful, I find my own understanding to be most useful for an analysis of the authors. Where Buchanan has used Gadamer, I use Derrida.

Chapter 4: The Postmodern Journal

There seem to be two questions that I can answer. Is the field moving from a modern to a postmodern perspective? This seems likely. Is the field postmodern? This seems unlikely.

The first part of this chapter will be towards determining the trend within comparative philosophy in both the field and the journal towards a shift from a modernist, universalizing goal towards a more displaced and postmodern understanding. Roger T. Ames explains it succinctly as a move from attempting to build a systematic philosophy of universal synthesis towards "the celebration of philosophical and cultural differences as a safeguard against the homogenizing forces of technologies and economic structures that have come to define modern living" (Ames, 2000: xi). Here again we see the ethical import of a move away from the "modernist" position.

The original hope of Charles Moore had been a synthesis of East and West Philosophy. James Buchanan shows this clearly,

> The early conferences were convened specifically to search for some form of synthesis. In the years between 1939 and 1959, Charles Moore believed that such a synthesis was not only possible but of vital importance in order to foster international understanding between the East and the West. ... Moore and others believed that the East and West could be brought together in a grand synthesis that would foster a world

philosophy that in turn would be foundational to international understanding. (Buchanan, 1996: 312)

Note that the Second conference was entitled: "An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis."[15] This surely highlights what we have been calling a "modern" perspective.

The journal shifted under the realization of the difficulty, then the impossibility, of this task of synthesis into a more dialogical pluralism. A stated goal of Moore was a "search for total perspective in philosophy" (Moore, 1968: 5). But, by 1964 this goal was no longer for a metaphysical synthesis of East and West, but rather that all philosophical traditions should contribute to knowledge. He says, "Asia has a great philosophical wisdom to offer to the total perspective of philosophy, but, tragically, it has been widely ignored by the West. It has been our purpose to work in the direction of overcoming this unphilosophical lack of total perspective" (5). Even by the Second conference, Moore's original goal of synthesis was coming under rigorous question. Jeffrey Timm comments, "Moore went on to explain that while some members may have desired an eventual homogeneous world philosophy, it quickly became clear that such a goal was not altogether possible, not even desirable" (Timm, 1991: 459). But, Moore was still, in some ways, holding onto his original understanding of a universal world philosophy. To continue Timm's analysis: "Even so, Moore's notion of synthesis, which seemed to `dominate the spirit of the [second] conference,' preferred the

[15] The book to come out of this conference being: Moore, Charles. *Essays in East-West Philosophy: An Attempt at a World Philosophical Synthesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1951)

formulation of a world philosophy as an `orchestrated unity' accommodating philosophical traditions as aspects of comprehensive total truth" (Timm, 1991: 459). This understanding carried over into his last conference in 1964.

Buchanan contends not only that the journal moved from a traditionally "modern" understanding to a more "postmodern" one, but also that this reflects the shift to post-modernity within contemporary Western thought. In regards to the journal's early emphasis, I would have to agree with Buchanan that it is quite "modern." Moore's position, even diluted by the time of the last conference, is still an attempt towards a universal or totalizing type of knowledge. For example, in the concluding remarks of the Fourth conference Moore remarks on the conference, using a typically modernist appeal to universals: "We have demonstrated that genuine philosophers from significantly different backgrounds and traditions can talk together openly and frankly and intelligibly in the name of philosophy and through the *medium of universal reason*" (Moore, 1968: 553; emphasis mine). Compare this understanding with Mark C. Taylor's conception of the philosophy of Hegel that we saw earlier in Chapter Three. To repeat, Taylor says, "By revealing the Logos of everything to be the logical structure of identity-in-difference, [Hegel's] speculative philosophy is supposed to reconcile opposites without destroying difference" (Taylor, 1987: xxiii). Like Hegel, Moore wants to keep difference, but always privileging some final universal Logos. "In his search for reconciling middle ground, Hegel, in keeping with the tendency of Western thought, privileges identity and unity" (Taylor, 1987: xxiii). So too does Charles Moore. The journal's early days also reflect this attitude. A series within the

journal reflected an attitude towards homogeneity: it was entitled "On philosophical synthesis." This series continued from the first issue to the thirteenth issue (1963), spanning seventeen articles.

Although Moore's attitude is modernist, it is not static. His first impulses towards synthesis were mitigated by the practical realities of coming to understand such a variegated subject matter, as well as direct challenges from those who disagreed with his vision. Timm notes, "By the time of the Third East-West Philosophers' Conference, Moore's insistence on a synthetic vision appears to have been significantly moderated" (Timm, 1991: 459).

To my mind, a shift occurs in the Third (1959) and Fourth (1964) Conferences towards what Timm and Buchanan call a more postmodern approach. In the Fourth conference, Moore emphasizes how important difference is. "The key to much of our work—if not most of it—has been the realization of the complexity, diversity, and historical changes in points of view in all traditions" (Moore, 1968: 548). This belies Moore's earlier emphasis on universals and totalization. Although we find both unity and difference as ideals in Moore's work, by the time of the Fourth Conference difference becomes something much more significantly expressed; or rather, the unifying aspects of his thought become downplayed. Buchanan argues that it is in the third conference that we see a shift from a "modernist aspiration of finding a unifying structure that would lead to synthesis and instead became more hermeneutically orientated" in the manner of Hans-Georg Gadamer.[16] Buchanan's characterization of this shift as

[16] Buchanan, Report 314. Buchanan also makes the argument that Gadamer is a post-modern type of thinker, along the lines of the radical shift from "Cartesian asperations" concluded with Husserl.

hermeneutic and his assertion that a Gadamerian hermeneutic approach is postmodern underlies his conclusion that the conferences are moving in a postmodern direction. Nonetheless, a full blossoming of move away from modernism is not seen until Moore resigns his editorialship. Three years before he resigns, he organizes his last conference. This same year is the last year that an article in the series "On philosophical synthesis" is published. However, this tension remains to the present—however little sway it currently possesses.

Timm's thoughts reflect my own on this point. Timm, in examining Kalupahana's sixth conference paper about the language of the Buddha, asks this question: "Do such discoveries [of cross-cultural and transhistorical similarities] support in any way a grand philosophical synthesis as per Moore's original vision, or otherwise provide evidence for trans-cultural 'universals'?" (470) Timm gives his evaluation: "Although, this latter notion [of trans-cultural universals] remained attractive to some participants, in my estimation it was never articulated in a forceful or compelling manner during the Sixth Conference" (470). So, if Timm is correct, this attitude reflected in the conference is that there are a few who still held on to the modernist goal, but in general it held little weight. However, for this question to arise, it must remain—while severely mitigated—an issue of tension with the conferences. While trans-cultural universals had some critics in the early days of the conferences, by the Sixth conference there seems to be only a few who find it attractive.

I think it would be easy to contend that Gadamerian type thought is more post-modern than modern--even if one disagrees with Buchanan on how postmodern Gadamer is.

Eliot Deutsch and Roger T. Ames took editorialship of the journal from 1967 to 1987, and 1987 to present, respectively. I don't intend for my analysis of these editors to be exhaustive or even thorough. What I hope to convey is a more general sense of the thought of these editors, and use this in conjunction with the statistical data in the second section of this chapter to provide a image of the journal's evolution from Moore to the present.

It seems that under Deutsch the journal continued this trend towards difference or post-modernism. Roger Ames states, "on his watch [Eliot Deutsch] has transformed the search for unifying sameness [of Moore] into a celebration of difference" (Ames, 2000: ix). Of course, the celebration of difference is characterized as a postmodern trait.

According to Ames, Deutsch's own work takes aesthetics as the starting point of his philosophical enterprise, as opposed to epistemology or ontology (Ames, 2000: xiii). However, an analysis of Deutsch's work by Arthur C. Danto paints a picture of Deutsch's aesthetics as (self-avowedly) essentialistic: "it is striking that Deutsch wishes to maintain that however deep the impulses of art may be inflected in these differences [of culture], there is a residual and crucial sense in which art is everywhere and always the same" (Danto, 2000: 8). This crucial sense seems to be just that type of thinking that I have been calling modern—towards grand narratives, essentials and universals. Keep in mind here Ames' claims that aesthetics is Deutsch's "starting point" for his philosophy. What we have then is a thinker whose starting point has been categorized as essentialistic—i.e. modern.

To lend more weight to this analysis of Deutsch, Thomas P. Kasulis discusses some of his encounters with Deutsch while his student. Kasulis' descriptions seem to give Deutsch's ontological theories a particularly modernist bent particularly by claiming, "Deutsch was convinced that truth had something to do with rightness" (Kasulis, 2000: 45). Furthermore, Kasulis notes, in looking for a definition of truth Deutsch wanted to define it "in a general manner such that it would be equally applicable to a variety of philosophical concerns including aesthetics and religion."

Finally, my last critical analysis of Deutsch's work is a statement in his book, *Religion and Spirituality*. Here, Deutsch describes the style of writing that is throughout the book as a collection of reflections outside of the normal prose of philosophical inquiry, "including aphorisms, dialogues, prose-poems, tales, letters, meditations, and even plays as well as more straightforward analyses" (Deutsch, 1995: x). He uses these different styles to present "varied perspectives" and "possibilities for multi-interpretations" that, as he puts it, "inform the text." This is a postmodern look writing, that doesn't give primacy to one style over another and emphasizes the "play" of writing.[17] He then goes on to say, "Call this, then if you like, a `post-modern' discourse—but only if this writer's voice is allowed as well to have something essentially to do with the meaning that is inscribed" (Deutsch, 1995: x). Whatever claim to a discourse of alterity or postmodernity Deutsch is paying homage to he belies in the last sentence. The

[17] Note, however that some of these characteristics are also characteristics of modernism, the 20th century movement. Modernism rejected the standards of tradition, and attempted to break through it with non-traditional styles. Postmodernism, in this light, according to Jencks, is the pastiche of the modern and the traditional in a double-coding. However, the play of signifiers (without any signified referent) is a characteristic of a deconstructionist or post-structuralist takes on writing.

very fact that Deutsch wants his own voice to inscribe meaning for the reader goes against unmediated textuality that is a mainstay of post-modern (esp. deconstructionist) literary criticism. The postmodern understanding, generally, is that authorial intent is not necessary, not ultimate, and some times not even wanted (depending on which `post-modernist' one reads). Regardless of authorial intent, all a reader has is the `text'--any attempt to get at authorial intent is potentially doomed to failure, but also fundamentally misrepresents the position of the reader. I may very well be stating this case against Deutsch too strong. He does qualify his statement by saying that his authorial intent should be taken into account "as well" as the reader's interpretative position. This point is well taken given that most interpretive positions will attempt to at least engage the "apparent" meaning that the author is trying to convey. The problem that a postmodern literary criticism addresses, however, is exactly this point. All meaning is "apparent" to the reader based on how the reader engages the text. How does the reader know what the author's intention is other than text? By saying that the author can somehow inscribe meaning into a text implies a distinction between text and meaning. To my mind this misses a crucial epistemic position of postmodern criticism that there is no separation between the two.

But this is not to say that I think that Deutsch is modern thinker like Moore. Rather, Deutsch's position is ambiguous and somewhere in the middle, between Moore and Ames in a modern/postmodern spectrum.

Roger T. Ames' works show an attitude quite consistent with a postmodern attitude. This understanding is further warranted by some of Ames'

own claims in the journal itself. For example, in his *Introduction to a Special Issue on Environmental Ethics* he discusses his own article (in co-operation with PEW) in the journal *Environmental Ethics* where he argues, "the problems of environmental ethics are so basic that the exploration of an alternative metaphysics or attendant ethical theory is not a sufficiently radical solution. ... the assumptions entailed in a definition of systematic philosophy that gives us a tradition of metaphysics might themselves be the source of the current crisis" (Ames, 112). This understanding attacks the same tradition of metaphysics that has been criticized by post-modern thinkers. The distrust of classical metaphysics (and thus modernity as I have been describing it in this work) puts Ames more on the post-modern side than the modern. The other articles in the issue, edited by Ames, argue in a similar manner that traditional Western philosophy is problematic—in this case for environmental ethics. Ames can be seen here as a proponent (as editor and writer) of a more postmodern attitude in the journal. Ames' other works reflect this attitude.

While I admit that this analysis is not very detailed or thorough, I think that the small sample of works I have used reflects my understanding of these editors. The editors of PEW seem to reflect a trend in moving from a modern perspective towards a postmodern one. In the next section, I will provide a more empirical study of the journal in order to show how my own conjecture about the editors is reflected in actual makeup of the journal (reflected by the kind of articles published).

Statistical Analysis of the Journal

While I give some evidence for thinking that the journal is moving towards postmodernism in examining the editor's works, that examination involves a more conjectural approach. I bulwark this previous analysis with a statistical analysis of how article titles reflect the trend towards difference and heterogeneity that represents postmodernism. The assumption in this study is that a move towards more particular understandings of a subject show an attitude that is more postmodern—that is, involved in details, complications and situated particulars rather than general or universalizing understandings of the subject matter in question. Furthermore, my own understanding of postmodernism as a radical disjunction of self at all levels will be reflected in more specialized works of an increasingly particular nature.

The subject matter that I use for this empirical study is one that I have some familiarity with: Buddhism. What the study entails is the compilation of all articles in the journal relating to Buddhism (with some exceptions noted below). The use of Buddhism as subject matter is noteworthy because, as we have seen earlier, it has been one of the three principal "Others" of modernity: the cross-cultural other—even more so because it has been the most widespread philosophical view in Asia.

These articles will then be hierarchically arranged according to how detailed their title is. An increasingly "particular" oriented hierarchy (particulars being, undoubtedly, a more postmodern trait) would look something like:

Buddhism → Mahayana Buddhism → Indian Buddhism → Madhyamaka → Nagarjuna → The Nagarjuna of a particular text→ Nagarjuna a and b of this particular text. What this hierarchy shows is an attitude that increasingly lends itself to the disjunction of self. We see a move from Buddhism as a homogeneous religion to an understanding that Indian Buddhism is different than others. Then we come to understand that Indian Buddhism itself is not homogeneous and that even a particular thinker's texts can be heterogeneous and finally that within any particular text the voice is not necessarily homogeneous. Add to this the academic understanding (especially for Buddhism) that there may in fact be interpolations in a text, and the picture that emerges is complicated indeed. A further consideration is that the content of a particular article may not be reflected adequately by the title itself. This granted, article titles are, by convention, supposed to indicate an adequate representation of the contents to individuals and database programs. As a field gets more postmodern it becomes more sensitive to particulars such that a title would convey more succinctly the particular within. A more modern approach, while it may be specialized within, still understands some universal quality similar to all "Buddhisms" for example. Also notice that the article may very well be specialized, but have only a very general name in the title. This is fine for my analysis, because this also represents the mode of thought that is going into naming. In this light, an (hypothetical) article entitled "The two Nagarjuna's of the Vigrahavyavartani" will reflect a more postmodern attitude than one with the (again, hypothetical) title "Buddhism".

Another factor that has to be taken into account is that the journal has two areas of study: Asian and Comparative Philosophy. Comparative Philosophy is more generalized that Asian Philosophy by nature, being that specialists in it have two times (at least) more subject matter to get a handle of. However, many (in fact, I would argue most) Comparative philosophers are specialists within an Asian philosophical field (the exception being those who are specialists in Western Philosophy). I also wonder if the readers of Comparative Philosophy may need less specialized works due to its huge scope. On the other hand, it is possible that many readers only examine articles that relate to their own field of specialized study. Comparative works need not be "dummied" down for this reason.

I have left a few fields out of my statistics. The first is the category of articles that use the term "Buddha" in the title without any reference to a time or historical period. How I should rank this category in relation to other categories for its level of particularization is a problem. I could rank this category along with that of "individual thinkers." However, this doesn't reflect the fact that in some cases "the Buddha" is used as a catch-all term used much to the same effect as "Buddhism". This ambiguity cannot be reflected adequately in my analysis, so I have decided to leave this category out of my analysis. Another similar problem is with the sub set of articles where the title doesn't refer to anything more than some Buddhist doctrine or ideal. I have had the same difficulty in determining where this category should be placed. Some of the charts in Appendix Two retain this category, but my analysis does not reflect this category.

While my search may not be exactly exhaustive, it is none-the-less representative. For any title with more than one general category, the more specific will be used. That being the case, the numbers I provide can give a clue to how the journal had evolved. Much like any statistical analysis, a picture will emerge.

In the end, I compiled 217 articles spanning from the first to the fiftieth year of the journal. I have split the timeline into a series of five years for easier compilation. The categories I use for determining the increasing complication or particularization of the journal are in the following order from less to more complex:

- Buddhism (includes "Buddhist")
- Mahayana or Theravada
- Regional or Temporal Division (Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Sri Lankan, Tibetan or other geographical designations; and Early Buddhism)
- Buddhist Schools (Yogacara/Cittamatra/Vijnanavada, Madhyamaka/ika, Buddha-nature/Tathagatagarbha, Ch'an/Zen, Hwa-Yen, and various other schools: Sarvastivada, Vaibhasaka)
- Ideals (sunyata, Catuskoti, nirvana, dukkha)
- Sub-schools (Svatantrika, Prasangika, Nirvana school of Tathagatagarbha, Prajna schools, Neo-Tien Tai)

- Individual Thinkers (like: Nagarjuna, Dogen, Vasubandhu, Candrakirti, Fa-Tsang, Dharmakirti and others)
- Texts (like: Pali Canon, Mulamadhyamakakarika, Buddhacarita, Tibetan Book of the Dead, and others)

Note that there were no articles of more complexity than a particular text within my area of study. All of the articles used are in the appendix as well as a collection of graphs that reflect some interesting trends unrelated to this present thesis. This data I categorized, compiled and put into the following chart:

	1 – 5	*6 – 10*	*11 – 15*	*16 – 20*	*21 – 25*	*26 – 30*	*31 – 35*	*36 – 40*	*41 – 45*	*46 – 50*
Buddhism	5		4	9	8	9	6	6	4	4
Mahayana/Theravada			3	1	7	2	1	1		1
Regional/Temporal	2	2	1	2	5	3	3	2		
Buddhist Schools	11	3	4	10	7	11	11	5	7	2
Ideals		1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	
Sub-schools							2			1
Individual Thinkers		2	2		5	5	13	6	6	7
Texts				1	3	4	2	2		1
Total:	18	8	16	25	37	36	39	23	19	16

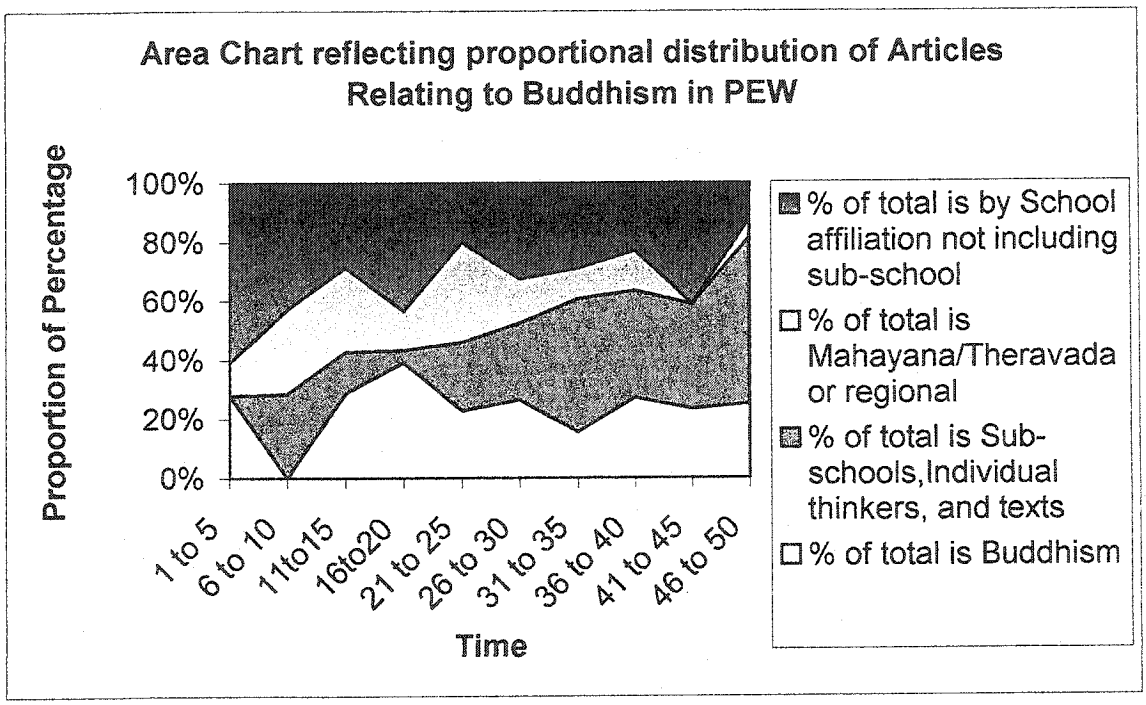
This chart reflects some trends within the journal. Interestingly it reflects periods of interest in Buddhism first rising and then declining with a high period from issues 21 to 35 (1971-1985). I would like to note that before this time many articles about Buddhism were fashioned either alongside other Asian traditions or alone, but with titles like "Asian," "Eastern," or "Oriental." It would have been too much of an undertaking to examine each of these articles for Buddhist content to add an even more general category than "Buddhism."

While this chart can reflect some interesting conclusions itself, I found that a more helpful representation of the data was by taking the proportion of each category in relation to all of the articles for the time period. So, I created another chart reflecting the percentage of the articles in relation to all of the articles used in my study (for each time period). The chart I arrived with is as follows:

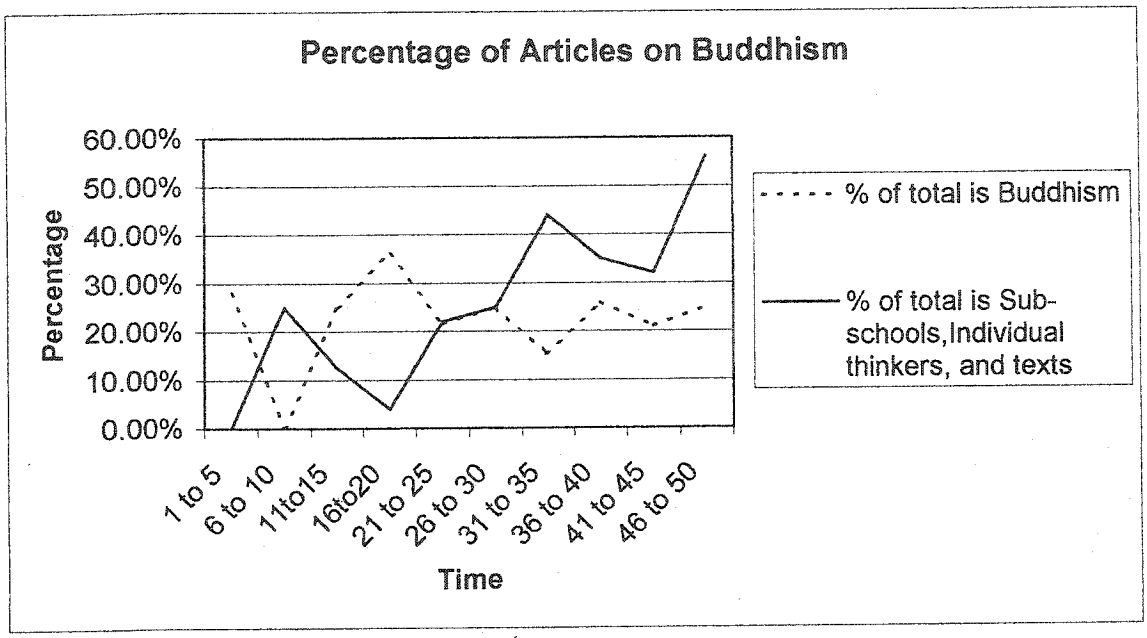
	1 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 35	36 – 40	41 – 45	46 – 50
% of total is Buddhism	28%	0%	25%	36%	22%	25%	15%	26%	21%	25%
% of total is Sub-schools, Individual thinkers, and texts	0%	25%	12.50%	4%	22%	25%	44%	35%	32%	56%
% of total is Mahayana/Theravada or regional	11%	25%	25%	12%	32%	14%	10%	13%	0%	6%
% of total is by School affiliation not including sub-school	61%	37.50%	25%	40%	19%	31%	28%	22%	37%	12.50%

This chart elucidates more information about how each of these categories is reflected in the articles. Note that I have joined some of the categories in this chart to facilitate a more clear understanding of the trends in the journal. In this case, the Mahayana and Theravada category is joined with the category that reflects regional or temporal distinctions. The School category is left alone; and the individual thinker category is joined with the individual text category and the sub-school category. This last conjunction is due to the fact that I feel the sub-school category reflects a high level of particularization when compared with the more general Schools category. I feel that it is much closer in particularity to the individual thinkers category than the Schools category. The two most important categories in seeing the trend from less to more particular within the journal are

the first two in this chart: the category "Buddhism" and the category "Individual texts and thinkers." Note that these are the least and most complex categories respectively. What these numbers show is an increasing percentage of articles relating to more particular subject matter. This conclusion might best be expressed through an area chart.



As this chart shows all of the categories have undergone a general reduction in their representative proportion except for the category reflecting the articles most particular in nature: Sub-schools, Individual thinkers and texts. As I mentioned earlier, the most important categories for reflecting this change are the most and least particular. In isolating these two, we can see most clearly the change towards the particulars. See the following chart.



Even with the anomalous time period from issues 6-10, we can see the general trend in the sub-school/individual thinker/text category from being a low proportional category to being a high one. The category of Buddhism reflects a mean representation that has declined slightly (not accounting for issues 6-10). The other categories reflected in the second chart have seen a general decrease in representation.

This data leads me to conclude that PEW has moved from a more general understanding of Buddhism to a more particular one. If we accept that a postmodern attitude reflects an attitude that is more conducive to particulars and complications than generals and universals, I think this data can reflect the movement of the journal towards the postmodern. If this movement towards particulars wasn't reflected in the data I think it would be a point against the claim that the journal is moving more postmodern.

So, given this statistical analysis and my own analysis of the journal's editors, I think I have shown data that can support an affirmative answer to the first question I raised in this chapter: Is PEW moving in a postmodern direction?

However, this data can support another conclusion. The data shows a movement of the titles of Buddhist articles from the more general to the more particular. This may only point to the discipline of Comparative Philosophy becoming more mature. Once a field of enquiry has explored a certain amount of its subject matter, it makes sense that it will have exhausted the most general understandings of its object. At this point the field of inquiry would move towards more details to fill out its knowledge. I think a case can be made that the data I give above reflects a natural tendency of disciplines towards more detailed understandings of their subject matter.

Even if this is the case, perhaps this reflects a possible reason why the postmodern attitude has become more and more prominent. If many fields of inquiry are moving towards more detailed accounts of their subject matter, they may end up complicating those initial, more general understandings. This process is complimentary to those family resemblances we call postmodernism. Regardless, it seems that my own data can support various conclusions. Either the journal is becoming more postmodern, more mature, both more mature and more postmodern, or some complimentary movement towards both maturity and postmodernity. This complicates how my data can support the assertions of Timm and Buchanan that the journal is moving in a postmodern direction.

Nonetheless, the data is not fruitless for my task. If the data showed no marked change in the relationships of the particular and general titles of the articles in *PEW* this would show more conclusively that the journal was not moving postmodern. This means that Timm and Buchanan have not been proven wrong.

I do not think that this journal is postmodern per se. This is reflected in the nearly constant percentage of instances of the articles with the term "Buddhism" as the determiner in the title. This term has only seen a slight decrease in the titles of the history of the journal. A "postmodern" journal, if such a thing could exist, would reflect a problematization of this overly general term. It would always ask for whom the article speaks. What Buddhism does the author mean by "Buddhism", or even by "Mahayana" or "Yogacara" Buddhism? These questions would be reflected in a postmodern journal, at the very least.[18] As my data above shows, the frequency of the most general terms in the titles of the articles belies any conclusion that the journal is postmodern. So, to reiterate: While the journal may be moving towards more postmodern sensibilities it is not postmodern. Where Buchanan says, "from [the conferences] modern Western origins they have evolved into what I would now characterize as a postmodern, more fundamentally cross-cultural affair" (312). While I would like to agree with Buchanan, he contradicts himself on this point by saying, "they remain a Western discourse in theme and language if not in spirit" (311). Buchanan wants to argue that the spirit of the journal has changes from modern to postmodern, from fundamentally

[18] What other qualities a "postmodern" journal has need not be entered into here.

Western to fundamentally cross-cultural. Unfortunately, his own account is that the majority of the conference papers "either dealt with the issues directly from a Western perspective or made references to the Western discussion" (317). The conference was neither postmodern nor fundamentally cross-cultural. The same can be said for the sixth and even the fifth conference, where "the presence of Rollo May, who, many felt, both Westernized and psychologized the issue unduly" brings this tension to light (Buchanan, 1996: 315). This historical grounding and contemporary connection to a Western discourse need not be wrong. Every Self, in this case the self of the conferences and the journal, must be situated. But I think it is clear that the participants of the journal hope to achieve a situation where this is not the case. While they have not yet reached a postmodern journal, they are getting closer. Buchanan's understanding is wishful thinking.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In Chapter One I showed how PEW reflected and informed the field of Comparative Philosophy. Chapter Two was an examination of James Buchanan and Timm. There I explained how they thought the conferences were moving postmodern and gave a general summary of their understandings of postmodern. In Chapter Three I explored postmodern literature and commentators and how the thought of Timm and Buchanan reflected my own understanding of this literature. I agreed with them on some points, but disagreed on others. Chapter Four involved a) my understanding of the editor's modern/postmodern leanings having looked at some of their works, and b) a statistical examination of journal's articles on Buddhism to determine how much these articles reflect a movement towards particulars.

As I said in Chapter Three, I feel the most fruitful way of looking at postmodernism is essentially anti-essentialist: a cleaving of the self on all levels. While Buchanan and Timm may have used the term postmodern lightly, they may have been correct. At least one possible interpretation of the journal, using my own understanding of postmodernism, seems to show a movement in a postmodern direction, as evidenced in Chapter Four. This is not to say that the journal is postmodern, or even close to it. Having examined this journal's work closely for a few years, I think it needs a more self-conscious understanding of its purpose if those involved with it want it to be a more postmodern journal. The conference reviews of Timm and Buchanan make me think that this may be a desired trajectory. Either way, Buchanan's warning that the last two conferences

have remained a mostly Western discourse should ring warning bells for those who do Comparative Philosophy. If Comparative Philosophy wishes to be an international discourse it must do comparison for more than edifying Western concerns. This problem may not be something originating in the journal. As we have seen increasingly since World War II, the European and North American cultural forces are being exported with much more force than any other culture. It would make sense that the journal faces the same problem as every cross-cultural dialogue involving the West. Keeping this in mind, I think it valuable to retain the insights of postmodern thinkers, who theorize for ethical purposes. As Buchanan says, and here I agree with him in asking this question, "how much are we willing to risk to allow the Other to achieve its own voice" (Buchanan, 1996: 311)? I think the correct postmodern response is: everything. I think that the journal needs to risk even more than it currently does to achieve its goal of becoming postmodern.

What does my analysis mean for the field of comparative philosophy? Well, first, it means that the field needs to do some more work to become more fundamentally cross-cultural. The second conclusion I want to draw takes its impetus from my discussion in Chapter Three on pluralism.

I question that the journal can become more than plural: postmodern. Like any other discourse, the postmodern discourse privileges. In this case it privileges the anti-foundational, the anti-essential. If the journal does privilege a postmodern stance, as I understand it, it must advocate an understanding that will be in conflict with some of its subject matter. A postmodern approach is about

cleavage, disjunction and pastiche at all levels. To certain philosophical viewpoints this kind of understanding is an anathema. Having a pluralistic viewpoint may not so radically challenge an essentialist philosophical stance, where that stance can retain a self-understanding of its own essentialism. A postmodern stance is more radical, tearing all foundations and creating double-codings that compete with each other in the same fabric of Self. Any essentialistic understanding is fundamentally challenged by the postmodern. I question whether the journal should advocate such a radical stance at an institutional level. While it may be fine for authors within the journal to express a postmodern view of a subject or not for the journal to advocate itself as a postmodern journal may cause future problems if implemented fully. This raises the question, for me at least, that a truly postmodern journal may actually have elements of both the modern and postmodern, the essential and anti-essential like Charles Jencks understands postmodernism. Regardless, my second concern for the field is this: It needs to examine what its aims and goals are and should be. There may end up being many understandings, aims and discourses being practiced in Comparative Philosophy, but a self-conscious examination would profit the conference with a better understanding of its trajectory. Should it be postmodern? I believe that this question needs to be explored before it is advocated.

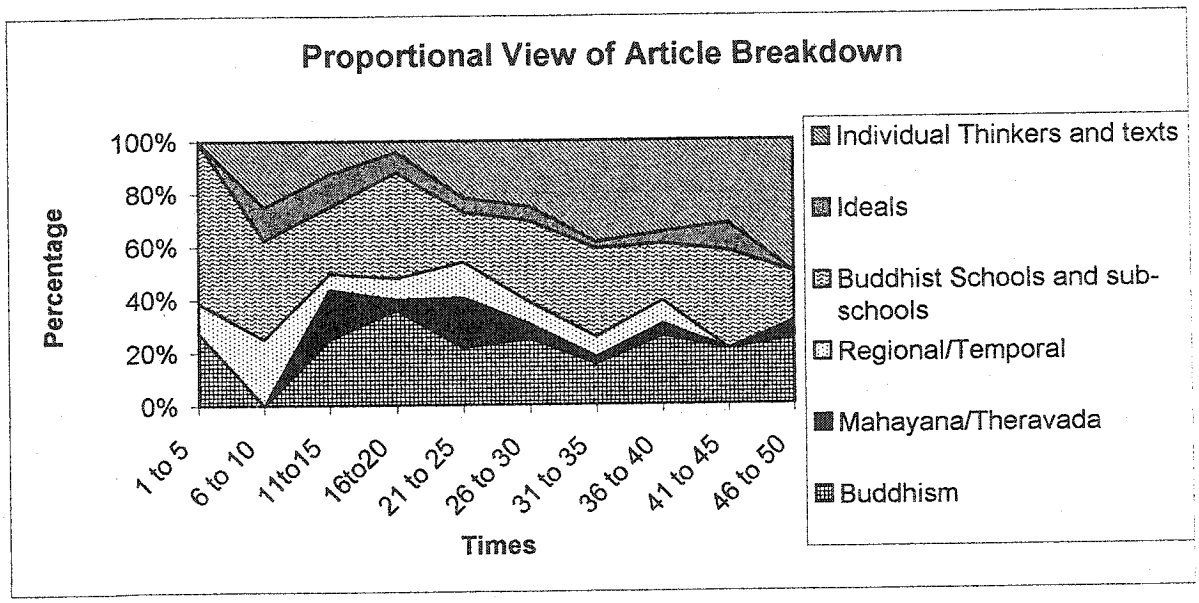
Appendix 1: Statistics of Field

A number of statistical analyses follow. The first is a breakdown of all of the journals that returned in a search of the Philosopher's Index using McGill University's Ovid connection. The search was for the phrase "comparative philosophy" anywhere within the database record. The "Other" column indicates journal articles from journals with less than five articles returned.

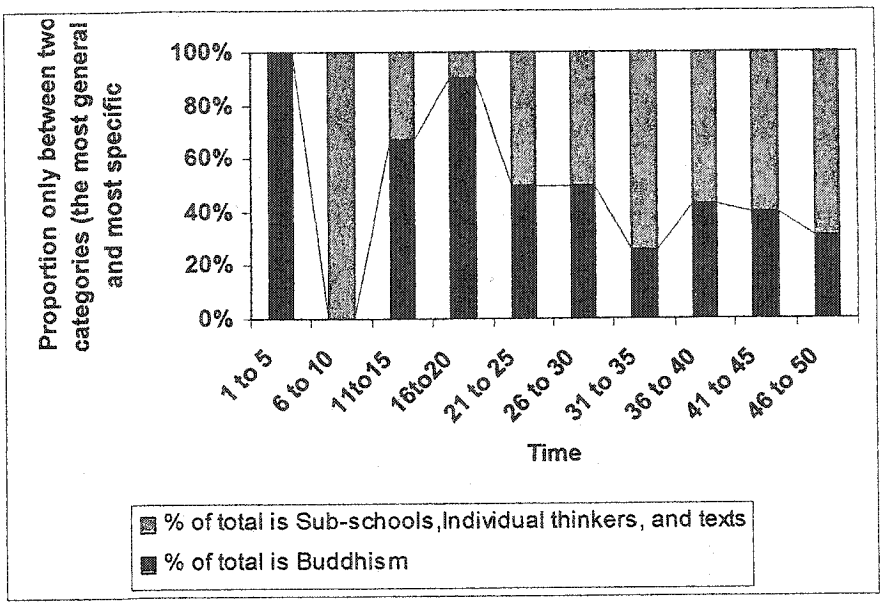
Journal	# of returns	% of total returns
Philosophy East and West	111	45%
Other	55	22%
Journal of Chinese Philosophy	25	10%
Indian Philosophical Quarterly	16	7%
International Philosophical Quarterly	13	5%
Journal of the Indian Research Council	8	3%
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research	8	3%
Chinese Studies in Philosophy	6	2%
Total:	242	98% (2% lost due to rounding of decimals)

Appendix 2: Statistics of Journal

The section on the statistics of the journal produced some interesting results. I provide in this appendix some further conclusions about the journal that were not immediately relevant to the thesis. I also want to provide a place for some of the graphs that were not used in the body of the thesis. Finally, I will list all of the articles used in my analysis of the journal. First the graphs:

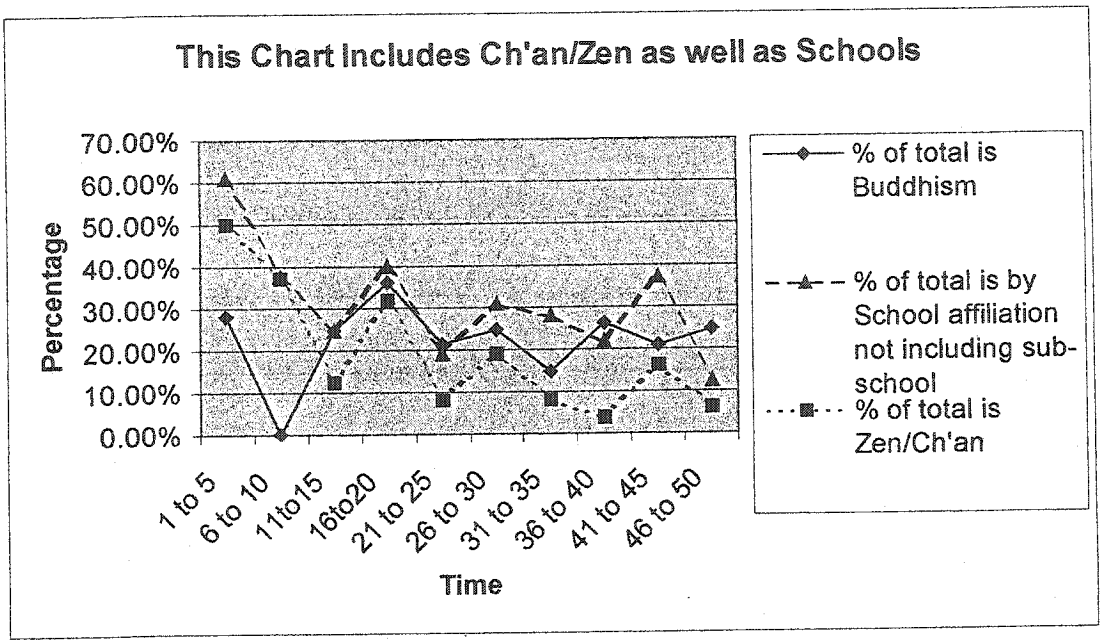


Note that this chart is similar to the one in the body of the thesis, except that it is based on the data from the chart where the different sub-categories are not combined into a smaller number of categories. The section of the graph about Individual thinkers still noticeably reflects my conclusions in Chapter Four.



This graph distribution graph that highlights the movement of the most general and most particular categories *in relation to each other.* Again, this graph supports the conclusion of Chapter Four.

What I think the next chart shows about the data is interesting. Much of the first 25 years of the journal had Zen/Ch'an as the most popular Buddhist subject matter to discuss. In some cases for a five year period there were more articles on Zen/Ch'an than on Buddhism in general. This reflects, I think, a Western understanding of Buddhism in the history of Buddhism in North America. Zen Buddhism was the most popularly identifiable Buddhist group for a number of years.



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