Chapter One

THE SOCIOLOGY OF APOSTASY

I argue that apostasy as an object of sociological inquiry is marginalised and under-theorised. Within the sociology of religion, apostasy is treated as an area of subspecialisation under the umbrella of empirical religious investigation. Research is often approached in a topical and discrete manner with minimal theoretical underpinnings. While secularisation theory may be called upon as an explanation for recent increases in rates of disaffiliation, apostasy is still perceived and examined as a social-psychological phenomenon, unable to contribute to fundamental macro knowledges of religion and society. It is thus a topic of investigation not well pursued or informed by social theory. Further, I argue that apostasy is often premised on a set of uncritically reflected modernist assumptions that leave the construct marginalised and outside current theoretical discourses of the postmodern.

I believe that this marginalisation is problematic. Apostasy, understood and examined solely as an individual's experience of religious disaffiliation, does not allow the construct to be used as a tool capable of asking and answering fundamental sociological questions. It does not allow apostasy to be a window that can shed light on processes and techniques of socialisation that shape and form the individual. It does not attempt to understand the agency of the individual in negotiating the constructed self. Nor do these bounded approaches allow for a fresh examination of religion and religiosity, as both understandings of these constructs, and the constructs themselves evolve and reflect a postmodern world.
In a suitable analytical framework, however, I argue that the construct of apostasy can act as a vital signifier of the ever-shifting relationship between the self, religiosity and societal structures. I believe that apostasy can signify the ability of, and need for, understandings of both the self and society to restructure and transform themselves in times of societal transformation. Further, I believe apostatic research conducted in a period of transition can point to the fluid nature of religion, as it evolves to reflect the developing social arena and the predominant discourses of knowledge. I believe apostasy can be instrumental in illuminating a potential epistemic shift occurring commensurate with the emergence of a postmodern world.

This chapter then, is an attempt to examine the location of apostasy research as it stands within the confines of sociological investigation. Further, it is an attempt to show how a re-imagination of the construct can affirm the examination of apostasy as significant and consequential for understanding some of the most fundamental and cardinal questions of the social analyst.

**Apostasy Literature: The State of Affairs**

A review of the literature clearly shows that the potential for apostatic research to be connected to major themes in sociology, has not been recognised or pursued. I would argue that this untapped potential is strongly correlated to dominant discursive processes which direct the topic to a particular research domain. Apostasy is often approached as a topic of sociological inquiry, under the umbrella of the sociology of religion, further filed under positivist, descriptive studies. As apostasy is relegated to this pigeonholed arena of investigation, both theoretical and epistemological assumptions come into play. Before
investigations and examination of apostasy commence, there is an unwritten set of uncritically reflected assumptions that direct both hypothesis and modes of inquiry.

A review of apostasy literature, then, finds very few studies of disaffiliation attempting to open a dialectic with sociological or philosophical theory. Similarly, connections to an emerging postmodern condition are not generally pursued. Apostasy research has limited itself to empirical investigations which have not yet attempted to challenge constructed knowledges and conventional platforms of knowing. Knowledges of apostasy are confined, with literature centring on the foregoing of faith, based on investigations grounded in post enlightenment empirical discourses. There is little tradition in qualitative research, preserving narrative knowing, or the verstehen tradition of understanding (Weber, 1978: 8). The combining of varied methodological approaches in an attempt to draw out and illuminate broader sociological issues, tends to be rarer still, and limits the intellectual depth of the field.

This highly constrained approach to apostasy research often goes unquestioned. The assumptions behind the epistemological approaches are not often deconstructed. I argue, however, that the limitations placed on apostatic research can be tied to the construction of sociology as a discipline of modernity and more specifically, the problematics argued to be prevalent in the sociology of religion.

Sociology is a discipline which is the product of particular discursive processes. The term 'sociology' suggests that it is the 'science of society' or an unbiased way of reflecting on the world. In actuality, however, it represents a particular way of examining society that is distinct from anthropological, theological, philosophical or psychological approaches. Further,
sociology is a discipline entrenched in examinations of modernity. The ‘founding fathers’ of sociology were all concerned with the emergence of industrialisation and capitalism. With regards to religion, the changes occurring in and caused by a shift from traditional or premodern societies to an emerging modern world, were a prime area of consideration. Conceptualisations of religion are thus based on premodern forms, while theorisations on both religious functionality and religious change are constrained to predictions that reach into the site of high modernity. The founding fathers were thus writing within and about a specific period of historical transition. The knowledges emerging from this tradition, however, often go unrecognised and unaddressed as the products of a specific historical setting. These understandings of religion, central to the discipline of sociology, need to be seen as modernist theories that may not be applicable to the contemporary ‘postmodern’ situation. Apostatic research, reliant upon these understandings, automatically falls prey to the biases inherent in this modern discipline.

Apostasy, as a topic of inquiry filed under the sociology of religion, also falls prey to the criticisms of that field. Various theorists argue that the sociology of religion has been relegated to a marginalised arena in the mainstream of sociology (Turner, 1991; Beckford, 1989; McGuire, 1981). Turner (1991) for example, states that the sociology of religion has become isolated from other branches of sociology by its lack of engagement with social theory. He suggests that three major weaknesses have correspondingly developed within the discipline.

Turner’s first critique is that religion, ‘...has not played a role or constituted a part of any major theoretical debate in modern sociology’ (1991:3). He goes on to say that religion is a
'theoretical sideshow' (1991:3), as compared to areas of study such as Marxism, structuralism, and critical theory. I suggest that the significant theoretical orientations of which Turner speaks can in fact be seen as causal to the marginalisation of religion within discourses of sociology. Some of the most instrumental thinkers of modernity, i.e.) Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, all added to the demise of religion as a central sociological construct. God was dead or at least impotent, and more intellectual endeavours were to be undertaken by the serious social theorist.

Apostatic research is biased accordingly. Apostasy is not generally pursued at the level of instrumental or critical theory, the topic is marginalised in relation to both mainstream sociology and the sociology of religion. In fact, if the sociology of religion is as Turner describes a 'theoretical sideshow', then apostasy could be seen as but an act in that show. Apostasy becomes a 'topic' of investigation, embedded in what Turner refers to as a 'conventional frame of knowledge' (1991:3), without connection to greater sociological issues.

Turner’s second critique is that the,

...sociology of religion remains content with detailed descriptions of the nature and content of religious belief and subjective experience, whereas explanations of the origins, functions, and effects of religious practices and institutions are neglected (1991:4)

Again this criticism finds applicability for the case of apostasy. Descriptive accounts of apostasy have dominated the literature, while accounts that prioritise understandings of power, knowledge and ideology have not been pursued. The fragmentation of knowledges, so
prevalent in modernity, sees theory evacuated from descriptive studies. What is left is a segmented discipline, with topics such as apostasy pursued from only one epistemological perspective.

Turner's final critique is the sociology of religion’s,

...narrow empirical focus on Western forms of religion. In practice, the sociology of religion is very largely the sociology of Christianity (1991:5).

While non-Christian faiths are often pursued in fields of study such as theology and anthropology, Turner argues that the sociological focus is constrained to dominant Christianity. This scenario also fits well with understandings of apostasy. The bulk of disaffiliation literature examines religious defection in Westernised countries, particularly the US. Investigations are either at the level of disaffiliation from cults or disaffiliation from mainstream Christianity. Cult defection is approached as a return from an aberrant religious lifestyle, while apostasy from Christianity is approached as dysfunctional. In both cases, Christianity is seen as normative.

Perhaps this Christian focus should not be surprising when one considers that Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, the 'founding fathers' of sociology, undertook investigations of religion centred on the crisis of modernity (Marx, 1980, 1977; Weber, 1991, 1981; Durkheim, 1973, 1965). Christianity, as it interacted with capitalism, was the main focus of religious/societal investigation. The resulting conceptions of religion are not only central to the sociology of religion, but are in fact the cornerstone of the discipline itself.
I believe that this focus on Christianity is not necessarily problematic, particularly if Christianity is being examined as a 'tool' for greater understanding, and is not seen as the sole and universal marker of religiosity. The examination of Christianity only becomes problematic when it is seen as universal. Western biases occur when there is a conflation of religion and Christianity.

Turning to the ‘narrow empirical focus’ of which Turner speaks, we also find applicability to apostatic research. The sociology of religion is laden with compartmentalised studies of religion and religiosity. The end result is a highly descriptive body of empirical research with somewhat limited theoretical underpinnings. Works on new religious movement (Wilson, 1990; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985; Barker, 1987); cults and sects (Robbins, 1988, Swatos, 1981); Catholicism, (Faherty, 1991; Schoenherr, 1990; Sediler and Meyer, 1989); demographic participation (Roof and McKinney, 1987; Alwin, 1986) and; fundamentalism (Poloma, 1989; Ammerman, 1987) are central to this descriptive and empirically based literature. And while secularisation has been presented as an exception to the demise of religious theoretical undertaking, it too has been taken up by the empirical school. Giorgi’s (1992), Bouma and Dixon’s (1986), and McCallum’s (1986) work serve as examples of secularisation research based on the influence of positivism. Apostasy research follows this positivist empirical pattern with a majority of works focusing on empirically derived determinants of religious defection, with little emphasis on qualitative and theoretical investigation.

This empirical focus also has its roots historically embedded within the creation of the sociology as a modern field of inquiry. McGuire (1981) argues that the development of
Enlightenment rationality and paradigms of scientific thought were a driving force behind sociological research. Emphasis was placed on the 'objective' and quantifiable 'facts' of social life, not readily connected to grand philosophical and sociological issues. I believe this has created one of the biggest problems within sociology; the compartmentalisation of knowledge.

As the scientisation of sociology developed, it did so in a direction away from traditional theory and theorists. Thus, while a faction of sociologists concentrated on theoretical orientations generally far afield from religion; others, such as Catholic sociologists and researchers who were interested in specific components of religion, did so with very little theoretical engagement.

I thereby argue that approaches to apostatic research are directed by a discipline which is the product of particular discursive processes, and is characterised by fragmentation. Accordingly, and as the literature review will show, apostasy research is easily located, narrowly defined, theoretically barren and clearly embedded within the discourses of modern empiricism.

**Apostasy Literature: Exploring Religious Disaffiliation**

Apostasy is generally researched in one of two ways. In the first instance examinations of apostasy focus on disaffiliation from specific, minority, fundamentalist groups and religious cults. Such groups become interesting objects of research, particularly in a field where fragmentation and specialisation are well established. Working within such specific groups allows for smaller samples and more in-depth analysis than is generally offered by large scale surveys of mainstream religions. These studies thereby avoid much of the criticisms associated with overly empirical methodologies. Mackie's (1975), 'Defection from Hutterite Colonies',

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Brinkerhoff and Burke's (1980), 'Disaffiliation: Some Notes on “Falling from the Faith”', Bahr's (1989) 'Strangers once more; Patterns of disaffiliation form Mormonism', and Murray's (1995) 'Determinants of Membership Levels and Duration in a Shaker Commune', all serve as examples of apostasy examinations from fundamentalist cults, rather than from mainstream religious institutions.

I argue, however, that this approach is limited because of difficulty in generalising findings to mainstream religions. Socialisation into fundamentalist groups, for example, is generally quite stringent, as are membership requirements. These groups are therefore distinct from mainstream religions that generally demand little from their congregation and often have subtle socialisation processes. Further, ‘defection’ from cults is premised in a very different way than ‘apostasy’ from mainstream religions. In the first case defection is seen as a return to ‘normalcy’. Apostasy from mainstream religions, however, is often modernistically premised as dysfunctional religious abandonment. These unrecognised assumptions make comparison of the two cases highly incompatible. They do little to shed light on disaffiliation from the mainstream religions who are losing the largest proportions of their congregation to the 'no religious preference' category.1 While these accounts may be applicable to other specific organisations, they can not be readily integrated into more general accounts of religious disaffiliation.

The other more common approach for apostatic research, is through the analysis of large scale, general population surveys. Much of the literature on non-affiliation and apostasy uses broad

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1 In the US, Protestant and Jewish religions report the greatest loss to the ‘no religious preference’ category (Roof and McKinney, 1987), while in Australia, the loss is reported across the Christian population in general (Bouma, 1995).
quantitative surveys, most commonly the General Social Survey conducted by the US National Opinion Research Center, as a main source of disaffiliation data. I argue that the use of such surveys is highly problematic. For example, this approach suggests that the examination of religious ‘nones’ simply becomes the examination of those who respond ‘no religious preference’ on a particular survey. There is no attempt to differentiate amongst the belief structures of these ‘nones’. Rather, they are assumed to have a set of beliefs based on the ‘X’ placed in the ‘no religious preference’ box of a survey. This methodology makes it impossible to define the ‘none’, let alone delve into the thoughts and beliefs structures of those people meeting this methodologically weak criterion.

This approach can be evidenced in one of the earliest sociological works on religious disaffiliation. In Vernon’s 1968 article published in The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, ‘The Religious “Nones”: a Neglected Category’, the need for the exploration and scientific analysis of those individuals claiming ‘no religious preference’ in surveys and questionnaires in the United States is discussed. Vernon claimed that with a clear increase in ‘nones’, the study of this category was not only valid, but in fact crucial to our understandings of religious affiliation.

Vernon attempts to uncover whether an increase in ‘nones’ is more likely to reflect a weakening in the intergenerational transmission of beliefs, or the tendency for individuals to give up their religious affiliation over time. By using the above criterion for ‘none’, however, it becomes impossible to distinguish between the absence of religious labels and the absence of religious beliefs. With this flawed methodology it is impossible to speculate on the significance of a rise in ‘nones’ and its connection to religious affiliation.
Isolating the apostate is similarly problematic. For those researchers using general social surveys, individuals who claim a religious affiliation, but at a later date switch to ‘no religious preference’ are labelled apostates. The use of this criterion makes it impossible to determine whether apostates are individuals who have given up the church and no longer maintain their religious beliefs, or whether they are individuals who essentially maintain religious beliefs, but forgo faith in their religious institution and no longer derive identity from that institution. This criterion also misses those individuals who have lost their religious beliefs but may still participate in the religious community. In short, no differentiation is made between those who have given up religious labels and those who have given up religious belief.

These are distinct constructs and ambiguity in the literature arises when no distinction amongst them is made. The apostate selection criterion causing this ambiguity, however, is both accepted and entrenched in the empirical modes of research that dominate the literature. Study after study uses this criterion as their sole means of isolating the apostate. I argue that the findings and conclusions of research reliant upon this criterion must be approached with caution.

A handful of researchers exploring mainstream religious disaffiliation do conduct their own surveys. Samples, however, are generally drawn from specific populations of college students. I believe this methodology is also problematic. For one, apostasy has been found to be a phenomenon of adolescence and young adulthood, yet introductory college students are generally under the age of twenty. If both controls and apostates are drawn from this population, some of the difference in samples might be that controls have simply not yet become apostates. In other words, the use of such a young group may cause sample censoring
problems. Further, commonalities that might exist amongst students enrolled, not only in the same university, but in the same particular course might act to confound results.

Regardless of source, apostatic survey data is generally pursued at the level of empirical analysis. While empiricism as a ‘tool’ of analysis can be instrumental to apostatic research, the unreflective nature of the approach opens the literature to much criticism regarding both the supposed ‘objectivity’ of the methodology and the lack of depth and intricacy that can be drawn out of the analysis. Nuanced analysis of the material which delves into the meaning of apostasy for respondents themselves, is not pursued. Rather, analysis progresses at the level of empirical hypothesis testing.

I argue that we are left with a body of research which has characteristic ways of approaching apostasy, and uncritically reflected assumptions about the significance of the phenomenon. Such studies however, are worthy of review and examination, for both the insights they offer, and the questions they raise. These studies provide the crucial first snapshots of both the apostate and the processes of apostasy, creating a platform for critical reflection and further interrogation.

A large body of apostatic research centres on investigations set out to define the apostate. These studies explore the characteristics which see the apostate as distinct from the ‘religious’. A few researchers then go on to explore the heterogeneity that may exist amongst apostates. Early demographic studies include Zelan's (1968) article, ‘Religious Apostasy, Higher Education and Occupational Choice’; Greely's (1972) book, *The Denominational Society: A*
Sociological Approach to the Study of Religion in America; and Mueller and Johnson's (1975) article, 'Socioeconomic Status and Religious Participation.'

These works all use survey data with an apostate criterion of changing from a religious denomination to 'no religious preference' over time. The authors attempt to find correlates to apostasy in terms of gender, age, socio-economic status, educational background, and political orientation. Findings are fairly consistent across studies and show that apostates are generally highly educated individuals from middle class backgrounds. They are also relatively young and usually from the Western regions of the United States.

More recent demographic studies both confirm and expand upon these findings. A sampling of three such works shows how the complexity of the apostate is being drawn out. For example Roof, in his 1978 article, 'Alienation and Apostasy,' attempts to identify the young American apostate. Roof uses aggregated data on 7,500 eighteen to thirty-five year olds, collected in the General Social Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center between the years 1972 and 1976. He uses the apostate criterion previously discussed to find that apostates are twice as likely to be men than women. They are also more likely to hail from the US West and North-East and are least likely to be from the South and North Central US States. In fact, in excess of 30% of liberal Protestants of the West become apostates. Apostates are also well educated; higher educational attainment is correlated with a greater likelihood of apostasy. Finally, Roof finds that those with higher status, middle-class backgrounds tend to become apostates more than those from the working class. The greater the father's occupational status, education and income, the greater the likelihood of apostasy. Apostates are thus shown to be demographically distinct.
These findings are further expanded upon by Hadaway and Roof (1979) in their article, ‘Those Who Stay Religious “Nones” and Those Who Don’t: a Research Note’. The authors merge the data from the 1973 through 1977 General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center to secure a sample of 70 committed or stable ‘nones’. In addition to confirming the demographic traits which Roof found a year earlier, Hadaway and Roof look at some intrinsic characteristics of ‘nones’. Hadaway and Roof find that as compared to a control group, committed ‘nones’ are more liberal in their political and moral values, as measured by their views on communism and premarital sex; and are also more ‘worldly’ in their lifestyles, as measured by the tendency to go to bars and x-rated movies. They also find that committed ‘nones’ are generally less satisfied with the geographical region in which they live and tend to be less satisfied with their friends. Thus in addition to distinct demographic characteristics, the literature has begun to incorporate investigations of the social, political and psychological make-up of apostates which make them distinct. A shortcoming in these studies, however, is that they do not engage an in-depth analysis of the differences among apostates themselves. Rather, they tend to concentrate on the higher SES and more liberal orientations of the group as a whole.

The challenge to examine heterogeneity is taken up by Hadaway in his 1989 article ‘Identifying American Apostates: A Cluster Analysis’. In this work Hadaway not only seeks to find the distinguishing characteristics of apostates, but also looks at the distinct groups of apostates that may exist in American society. There is finally recognition of the possibility of heterogeneity in this group. Data from the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center aggregated for the years 1972 to 1985 with the apostate criterion previously discussed, are used in their study.
Hadaway offers an apostate typology, identifying five clusters of apostates. First is the `Successful Swinging Single'; individuals who are characterised by their tendency to experience early financial success. They are probably closest to the stereotype of an apostate; young, cosmopolitan single, and liberal in terms of social values. Second are the `Sidetracked Singles'; individuals who are also young singles but are distinguished by their grim orientation to life. In fact only 1.3% report being very happy while 70% thought that the lot of the average man was getting worse. Third are what Hadaway calls the `Young Settled Liberals'; in contrast to the sidetracked singles, these individuals are usually married and are characterised by their great sense of well-being and happiness. They seem to have developed secular lifestyles that they find very satisfying. Fourth are the `Young Libertarians'; individuals who are distinct from other apostate clusters in their desire to have large families and in their strong beliefs in the afterlife. Hadaway suggests that these individuals may be rejecting a religious label more than religious belief. Finally, Hadaway identifies a fifth, and very different group of apostates, the `Irreligious Traditionalist'. This group seems to have most of the social characteristics typically associated with religious affiliation. They are older, married and are both politically and morally conservative. They do not seem to fit into existing notions of apostates.

Hadaway then, creates a typology capable of categorising apostates by demographic, social and social/psychological characteristics. The creation of such a typology is exciting because it clarifies and adds to the literature by recognition of the heterogeneity of apostates. It also raises a set of very interesting questions about the nature of apostasy and those who apostatise. Is there an instrumental change on the level of society, which is causing religious disaffiliation to manifest itself with increasing frequency in a variety of ways, across a wide range of
individuals? Is an increase in apostasy tied to rises in any particular apostate types; are some categories stable, while others account for the increase, or are there varying causes of apostasy, reflected by varying apostate types?

Hadaway’s investigations, however, do not address these types of questions. While Hadaway’s typology solves the problem of heterogeneity by subcategorisation, his investigations do not attempt to make sense of these classifications. His analysis remains a descriptive portrait of the American apostate.

In order to answer such questions, one must turn from ‘apostate’ literature to ‘apostasy’ literature. Here the focus is on the process of apostasy, and explanations for its occurrence. Such explanations run from the micro psychological to those that are more sociologically based. Integration of these realms of elucidation, however, is frustratingly absent. In fact, I argue that answers to the questions posed are completely defined by the questions being asked. The approaches of modern empiricism ensure that findings are confined by hypothesis. Thus if hypothesis centres on questions of psychological characteristics, findings are generally looked upon as only supporting or contradicting these presuppositions. They rarely open alternate dialogue. The questions being asked by researchers are biased by epistemological approaches to knowledge, and defined ways of looking at society, religion and the individual. Knowledges arising from these approaches are accordingly biased.

For example, most of the psychological explanations of apostasy serve to individualise the process, and focus on the personality traits and emotions of the apostate. Mauss (1969) in his article, ‘Dimensions of Religious Defection,’ discusses an emotional component in the
foregoing of religious commitments and beliefs. Using survey data collected from sixty Mormon 'dropouts', Mauss claims that negative feelings towards the church may develop when one is young. A possible explanation is that these feelings may be the result of a dissatisfying family environment in a particularly religious home. If individuals blame an unhappy childhood on religious influence, they would be more likely to reject religion. As well, Mauss suggests that the tendency to drift from religion may be caused by guilt and shame, perhaps over sexual conflicts, or anger over a past trauma in which religion turned out to be ineffectual.

Caplovitz and Sherrow (1977) offer a similar explanation to Mauss. In their book, The Religious Dropouts: Apostasy among College Graduates, they use General Social Survey data collected by the National Opinion Research Center from 1961 college graduates. They find that students who rebel against their parents and experience familial strain and dissociation are likely to become apostates. Caplovitz and Sherrow mention four traits in particular that may be predisposing factors towards apostasy: (1) poor parental relations, which may weaken the transmission of parental beliefs; (2) a politically radical or leftist orientation; (3) intellectual commitment; and (4) maladjustment and neurosis. Wuthnow and Glock in their 1973 article, 'Religious Defection and Experimentation Among College Youth,' share this view. They say that religious defection may be more than just dissatisfaction with a religious organisation. It may represent dissatisfaction with life in general.

These studies then are beginning to acknowledge the complexity of the self in the negotiation of the religious. They open up questions regarding how the individual's orientation to the social may impact on religiosity. I argue, however, that certain problems are evident in these
works. Mauss’ use of ‘dropouts’ from a fundamental religious group, Caplovitz and Sherrow’s use of general surveys with an apostasy criterion of a shift to ‘no religious preference’, and Wuthnow and Glock’s use of college students, open the studies to the aforementioned methodological criticisms. Second, these authors discuss the correlations they find as though they represent cause and effect. There is, however, no way to know if the traits they mention are a result of, rather than a cause of, apostasy.

Finally, I argue that findings are limited by prescribed approaches to knowledge. These authors for example, suggest that those who are emotionally unstable, unhappy, or dissatisfied with life are most likely to become apostates. The focus is on emotive traits of the individual, not tied to explorations on the level of society. What needs to be asked is whether there are aspects of contemporary society which may be causal to those emotive states. While Mauss goes on to explore societal connections to apostasy, there is a lack of integration between these two realms of explanation. Similarly, Caplovitz and Sherrow’s investigations suggest a link between psychological and social/psychological factors, such as education/political values. These characteristics, however, are not drawn out on a societal level. The authors do not pursue macro-theoretical explanations of their findings; findings are directed towards hypothesis and limited to the traits of the individual.

I argue that research which concentrates on the level of society, is equally problematic. A grounded theory approach to the data is not adopted and the insights offered by these works are not well integrated into alternate explanations for apostasy. In the ‘societal apostasy literature’ we again find a proliferation of quantitative works with questions designed to shed light only on specific hypotheses.
One such set of hypotheses centres on the exploration of social learning as a potential correlate to apostasy. Hunsberger, for example argues that an increase in apostasy is the result of weaker transmission of religious beliefs from parent to child. For Hunsberger's (1983) article, ‘Apostasy: A Social Learning Perspective’, survey data collected from introductory business and introductory psychology students at the Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, Canada was used. His final sample consisted of seventy-eight apostates and seventy-eight controls.

Hunsberger found that in addition to individuals who are less conventional and have less satisfying parental relationships, individuals who had less emphasis placed on religion in their formative years were more likely than controls to become apostates. Hunsberger suggests the importance of social learning theory, stating that the key predictor of apostasy is early religious socialisation in the home.

In 1984, Hunsberger and Brown attempted to replicate Hunsberger's 1983 findings using a larger sample. In their article entitled, ‘Religious Socialisation, Apostasy, and the Impact of Family Background,’ eight hundred and thirty-six introductory psychology students at the University of New South Wales completed a fifteen page questionnaire relating primarily to religious background and orientation. Participants were considered apostates if they did not currently affiliate with any formal religion, but reported growing up with a religion. Thirty-six percent of the sample was classed as apostates.

In general, Hunsberger and Brown found support for the previous study. The extent to which early home environment stressed religion was a strong predictor of later religious affiliation. In particular, they found that those individuals with a strong maternal religious influence would be
less likely to become apostates. Being religious, and even being nonreligious is often learned at home. The authors further suggest that in more secular societies, religion is not strongly emphasised by the parents, weakening the transmission of religious beliefs.

These studies then, are important in drawing out the significance of early childhood socialisation and maternal influence, in relation to apostasy. They also open the door for questions regarding the relationship of socialisation and secularisation. Has secularisation had an impact on socialisation, and in what ways? Has the transmission of all aspects of religiosity ‘weakened’ or have modes of socialisation simply taken on a new face? Or, has secularisation caused a rethinking of religion itself, wherein only the traditional aspects of religion cease to be transmitted? Can these changes be felt across the population, or are changes likely to impact on certain individuals?

The work of Roof attempts to address some of these issues. In his 1978 article, ‘Alienation and Apostasy’, Roof posits that secularisation will have its impact felt most strongly on certain segments of the population, specifically the counterculture. Roof states that a solidified self-conscious counterculture developed in the late sixties in the United States. This counterculture stemmed from the difficult transition of the conventional lifestyle of the fifties to the radical nature of the late sixties. This counterculture was youth’s response to the political and social turmoil of the day, i.e. the Vietnam war, student activism and the civil rights movement. Roof claimed that it is this counterculture that sparked the seeds of discontent among Americans and led to general disenchantment in many American institutions. Roof states that in the late sixties, Americans (especially the young) lost faith in the government, in corporations, in the military, and in the church. In fact, disenchantment with the church was seen as particularly
detrimental for society because it is the most ideological of American institutions. For many Americans, the church's influence could no longer justify the actions of the government and military. People no longer wanted God as a part of the infrastructure of the United States and would no longer accept it. There was a move towards secular consciousness amongst this group.

This study brings up interesting questions. Roof suggests that the unique political climate of the day and the historical context from which it stemmed, caused widespread religious alienation among the youth of American society. This trend, however, may strictly be a cohort effect; an effect which may represent either change as a transitory youth phase in the lifecourse or a change in beliefs maintained throughout the lifecourse. Additionally, and perhaps more consequential, Roof does not fully explore whether this alienation would diffuse into other segments of the population. Roof's findings do not address whether a more significant and widespread shift in belief and the ways and means of negotiating belief, have permeated the culture. Just as the lasting effects of change in the individual can not be examined, neither can the lasting effects of such changes on the level of society.

A more global approach to secularisation and its impact on apostasy is taken up by various authors. Mauss for one, believes that increased secularisation is increasing religious defection. He suggests that the diversification of secularisation gives more opportunity for experimentation and conscious choice in beliefs. In his 1969 article, 'Dimensions of Religious Defection,' Mauss discusses the intellectual and social components of disaffiliation that can be found in addition to the emotional component previously discussed.
Mauss claims that the intellectual dimension of disaffiliation is based on an individual’s disbelief in one or more of the central tenets of their religion. He states that this disbelief is often accompanied by rival secular doctrine. The social dimension is one in which social bonds or social experiences within the church become dissatisfying and disintegrate. As with belief, these bonds are likely to be replaced with strong social ties and opportunity for contact and experiences outside the church.

Twenty years later Tamney, Powell and Johnson (1989), in their article ‘Innovation Theory and Religious Nones’ put forward an argument similar to Mauss. They suggest that an increased tendency to report ‘no religious preference’, actually comes from greater exposure and opportunity to experience divergent ideas. In times of increased secularisation, opportunity for experimentation increases. For example, the authors suggest that the exposure to a wide variety of ideas likely to occur in a college environment will increase opportunity to experiment with one’s beliefs, values, morals, and ideologies. The authors refer to this as innovation. Using data from the General Social Survey conducted by the United States National Opinion Research Center aggregated for the years 1973 to 1985, the authors conclude that there does exist a type of apostate that they call the ‘socialised none’. Socialised nones are individuals who have been exposed to divergent secular or humanitarian beliefs and have been resocialised to accept these beliefs.

The work of Sherkat and Wilson (1995), follows a similar argument. Their article, ‘Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in Religious Markets: An Examination of Religious Switching and Apostasy’ draws on rational choice theory to explore disaffiliation from familial faith. The authors suggest that in modern secularising society, religion can be viewed as a
marketplace consisting of freely choosing individuals and competitive organisations. Using data collected from high school seniors and their parents, the authors find that disaffiliation has become ‘rationalised’, and can be examined as the calculation of the cost and benefits of various cultural choices.

These studies are interesting because they point to a significant shift in the state of society. The emphasis for these authors is on the choices available in a secularised world, and the effect this can have on the collective conscious. As intellectual and social bonds are no longer held to the religious, both meaning and identity can be derived in a rational fashion, based on both exposure and choice. A shift from the traditionally religious to the secular, is now pervading the culture. We are led to the conclusion that regardless of the development of a specific counterculture, the growth of secularism may be fostering apostasy as other outlets for belief and identity become more easily accessible in mainstream society.

What is not explored, however, is how on the level of epistemology, we come to a point where alternate choices can be explored. Does the existence of choice alone explain the tendency to give up familial faith, or is there alternate reasons for religious abandonment? Can apostasy be seen as indicative of, and connected to changing orientations to knowledge, necessary in a ‘nontraditional’ world? Is there a fundamental change in our society, which sees increased negotiation of roles once taken for granted?

An article which begins to skirt around such issues, and explores apostasy as a construct capable of connecting with other ‘secular’ social phenomenon is Wright’s 1991 work, ‘Reconceptualising Cult Coercion and Withdrawal: A Comparative Analysis of Divorce and
Apostasy'. In this work, Wright finds that apostates have many characteristics in common with the recently divorced. Specifically, Wright finds that patterns of withdrawal, post involvement, adjustment, and rebuilding, are similar for both the apostate and the divorcee. Although the sample is small and drawn from cult defectors\(^2\) this research is a step in the integration of apostasy with other dimensions of ‘role exit’, increasingly common in contemporary society.

Ebaugh also strives for a broader theory of social change which includes the apostate. In her 1988 book, *Becoming an EX: The Process of Role Exit*, Ebaugh argues that while ‘...subdisciplines in sociology and psychology have generated empirical data on specific types of exits... The concept of role exit has not been elaborated in the general social science literature’ (11-12). Ebaugh, through a series of in-depth face to face interviews, offers an examination of the disaffiliation experiences of apostates, divorcees, retirees, transsexuals, widows, widowers, ex-convicts, etc, looking for similarities and patterns. Her findings suggest that these varied transitions can be seen as processes of role exit which have common stages of disillusionment, a search for alternative roles, a turning point that triggers a final decision to exit, and finally the creation of an identity as an Ex. Apostasy is thereby linked to more general social/psychological processes.

Ebaugh’s work is a commendable example of a nuanced approach to the data, which breaks from the overly discrete nature of apostatic research and links apostasy to other dimensions of role exit. I believe, however, that Ebaugh’s examinations remain a descriptive account of role exit, not tied to societal change. Her work does not explore the links between role exit and the

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\(^2\) Wright uses a sample of forty-five respondents drawn from the Unification Church, Hare Krishna faith and Children of God religion (1991).
contemporary conditions of society which sees ‘exit’ as an increasingly common phenomenon. They do not connect individual change with a changing society.

In fact, awareness of an evolving societal condition is not often recognised in the literature. There seems to be an implicit operating paradigm, which sees society in a static, secularised state. There is little recognition of history as fluid. The work of McAllister is an exception. In his 1988 article ‘Religious Change and Secularisation: The Transmission of Religious Values in Australia’, McAllister attempts to compare and explore varying correlates to apostasy. Data from the 1967 and 1979 Australian National Political Attitudes Survey and the 1983 Australian Values Survey were used to secure a sample of 1228 individuals. Using this data McAllister finds that more Australians are now religious ‘nones’ (over 10%), than at any other time in this century, pointing to the increasing secularisation of Australian society. He puts forth three explanations for this proliferation in non-affiliation.

McAllister tests whether secularisation can be attributed to: (1) modernisation - continued socioeconomic development and reliance on technology accompanied by a consequent decrease in reliance on the nonrational, the non-scientific, and religious; (2) lifecourse effects - the changes in ideologies and beliefs associated with both a questioning youth phase and a maturing adult phase and; (3) generational change - a break in the transmission of religious beliefs between parent and child. He does not, however, attempt to integrate these varied realms of investigation, rather each explanation is treated as discrete. McAllister reports limited support for both the modernisation and the lifecourse hypotheses. He does, however, find that generational change, particularly divergent religious socialisation across generations,
explains much of the increased tendency of the Australian population to report 'no religious preference' in surveys.

The conclusions that McAllister draws from these findings are quite interesting. He refers to the non-affiliated as 'secularists' distinct from the traditionally religious, in not only religious values, but in political and social values. He refers to these secularists as 'postmaterialists' and suggests that with weakening religious socialisation and increasing secularisation, Australia will become more liberal morally, and more left-wing politically. He claims that Australia is entering a phase of 'postmaterialism' that will increase in importance over the next decade.

While these are interesting speculations, I argue that McAllister draws a long bow in the equation of the non-affiliated with liberal postmaterialists. For one, his explorations do not extend into the realm of beliefs and values. Second, his contentions do not draw out the heterogeneity of the non-affiliated. There is no recognition of diversity of both apostates, and the processes of apostasy.

His speculations on 'postmaterialism', however, are thought provoking because they recognise the transforming nature of society. For many of the authors reviewed, secularisation in the West, and the 'problems' it causes for religion were considered the key to understanding the societal dimensions of apostasy. It is, in fact, a common denominator among these works. Secularisation as a construct of modernity, however, is not addressed; neither is religion. There is little recognition of the evolving nature of society, and the possibility for a 'postmodern' re-negotiation of 'religion'. McAllister, however, opens up the possibility for a dialogue regarding a society in transition; a dialogue not often taken up, even by those theorists who have examined a trend in religious 'nones' over the past decades.
Two studies which examine such trends in religious affiliation are Condran and Tamney's 1985 study, 'Religious "Nones": 1957-1982,' and Glenn's 1987 study, 'The Trend in "No Religion" Respondents to U.S. National Surveys, Late 1950s to Early 1980s'. Condran and Tamney's data comes from US Population Surveys and general social surveys, while Glenn uses data from one hundred and ten United States National Surveys. In both cases, the authors report that there has been an increase in the number of individuals reporting 'no religious preference' through the early eighties. Glenn goes on to state that from the early to mid eighties there is some evidence of a levelling off or minimal reversal of this trend.

I argue that both sets of authors present explanations for their findings that rest on a modernist reading of secularisation. Condran and Tamney, for example, acknowledge the heterogeneity of religious 'nones', and claim that 'nones' fall into two basic categories. The first type is the structural none. These would be individuals who have become isolated from religious institutions or reject the church because of its bureaucratic structures. The second type of 'none' would be the cultural none. These are individuals who no longer accept the prevailing religious belief system. These 'nones' have not only lost faith in the system, but also in the system's beliefs and central tenets. The authors state that an increase in those reporting no religious preference is due predominantly to an increase in cultural rather than structural nones. The authors suggest that this loss of faith may point to, and be an effect of increased secularisation in the United States, and refer to the rise of secular cultural values available for the replacement of traditional religious belief. They also claim that since cultural 'nones' are more likely to exhibit a deeper rejection of religion than structural 'nones', their increase may

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3 Condran and Tamney's surveys were collected by the Bureau of the Census, and the National Opinion Research Center (Condran and Tamney 1985). Glenn's surveys come from both the Gallup Organisation and the National Opinion Research Center (Glenn, 1987).
be particularly detrimental to religion in the United States, and may foster secularisation. Cultural ‘nones’, after all, are rejecting the ideological components of religion and not just its structural inconsistencies. What Condran and Tamney do not address, however, is the construction of religion and secularisation as constructs of modernity. Perhaps cultural nones are less a threat to all aspects of religion, than they are a threat to a particular understanding of religion. Rather than secularisers, perhaps, cultural nones can be seen as postmodern negotiators of faith.

Glenn too relies on secularisation to explain some of the details of trends in apostasy, and does not accept aberrations in this pattern as problematic for secularisation theory. Glenn states that a declining and levelling off trend in affiliation is evident both within and between birth cohorts, suggesting that individuals’ ideologies are changing over time and that intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs is also weakening. He takes these findings as supportive of secularisation. Glenn goes on to suggest that the trend’s tendency to level off or even reverse, is likely to be a reflection of the dynamic nature of secularisation; secularisation is a trend of fluxes and hesitations. Glenn states that as society becomes increasingly secular there are likely to be times when this process is slowed, or even temporarily halted or reversed as reaction and protests against its development ensue. Glenn, however, does not use these findings as a catalyst for re-thinking the presuppositions of secularisation theory. Total spiritual abandonment may not be the phenomenon signified by the survey data. The possibility that a re-negotiation of faith, one which may not be easily classifiable or easily reconcilable with the categories for religiosity offered on the standardised questionnaire, is not considered.
A number of criticisms then, arise in a review of the literature, and can be tied to the modern discursive processes which direct the research. In addition to methodological shortcomings which problematise findings, I argue that over-reliance on empirical methods has left the exploration of apostasy deductively approached at the level of hypothesis testing. I argue that this results in findings not well integrated at the level of theory. Second, empirical approaches to apostatic research do not allow for in-depth nuanced analysis that can draw out the significance of the apostatic process for respondents themselves. Nor does this approach allow for the exploration of the linkages between of the significance of apostasy at the level of the individual and the level of society. Finally, I believe that the concepts of religion and secularisation as constructed and understood in modernity premise, and in turn bias the literature.

I argue that these limitations open large gaps for further exploration of apostasy. The findings of the above mentioned theorists that in turn stress: the distinct demographic characteristics and personality traits of apostate; the heterogeneity of apostates; the influence of religious socialisation; and the choice and weakening collective conscious of a secularised society, point less to contradictory findings, than restricted, confined and limited approaches to data. The review suggests that there is a need for an integrated and nuanced approach to apostatic research, not bounded by the modern discursive processes. There is a need for the use of grounded theory. This approach can allow for theorisations not initially considered by researchers. It allows for complexity and integration in theory, and for indepth analysis which can explore the significance of apostasy for both the individual and society. Further, removing the confines of empirical approaches to research may allow apostasy to act as a window to

\[4\] Grounded theory uses inductive reasoning that allows for theoretical engagement throughout progressive stages of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).
larger societal questions. Apostasy can thus become a marker of continuing societal transformations connected to fundamental aspects of the social. Specifically, I argue that apostasy can be instrumental in illuminating constructs of socialisation, negotiations of the self, and the evolving nature of religion/religiosity. In order to employ apostasy as a site capable of illuminating aspects of the social, however, modernist understandings and assumptions of apostasy must be deconstructed and re-imagined.

Apostasy: A Site for Exploring the Re-negotiation of Religion

Apostasy is understood as religious disaffiliation and religious abandonment. The exploration of the phenomenon progresses accordingly. I argue, however, that ‘abandonment’ and even ‘disaffiliation’ are value laden terms that direct investigation. Apostatic research, is not neutrally driven by definition. It is, in fact, driven by a biased operating paradigm that does not allow apostasy to signify phenomena contrary or alternate to the traditional understandings. Apostasy is relegated to the study of: religious dissolution; movements towards atheism and; secularisation of society manifest at the level of the individual. It does not allow the construct to be used as a site capable of asking and answering more fundamental questions about the nature of religion, the self or society.

To free understandings of apostasy, I argue that there is a need to re-examine and perhaps re-imagine the modern sociological understandings of religion that are central to apostasy knowledges. This is essential, for neither religion nor the ways and means by which we understand it are stagnant. Asad makes the point:
...there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes (1993:29).

The recognition of religion as an ‘historical product’, thereby implies the need for understandings of religion, thus apostasy to be rethought and re-imagined, particularly as we embark on a postmodern age. Religion as constructed and understood in modernity, may no longer be applicable to the case of the contemporary apostate. Religious disaffiliation and religious abandonment may no longer adequately portray the contemporary situation of apostasy. The occurrence of apostasy needs to be considered as, potentially, disaffiliation from particular understandings of religion, rather than disaffiliation from all aspects of religiosity possible in postmodernity. Thus, freeing religion from its modernist definition allows apostasy to be a signifier of the transformation of the self and religion in a postmodern world.

**Postmodernity and ‘Reimagined’ Religiosity**

Before continuing discussion of the potential for apostasy to signify and illuminate major sociological constructs in relation to a shift from a modern to a postmodern era, it may be sensible to formally engage aspects of postmodernity, and their relation to evolving conceptions of religion and religiosity. What are the major shifts that mark the emergence of a postmodern age? What might it mean to be ‘religious’ in this new world order? What is our orientation to knowledge in this new world, and how does it impact on our ability to be religious? Such questions are explored in an attempt to understand what apostasy may represent to those negotiating a shift to a postmodern world.
Exploring postmodernity is necessarily complex; modernism itself must be acknowledged as a phenomenon with very divergent and multiple realities. Postmodernism can not, therefore, be expected to be any less polysematic. As Beilharz states:

What is meant by ‘postmodern’? Even to ask the question is to beg it, for the meanings given to the postmodern are plural and diverse, and some would define the enterprise as beyond definition (1994:10).

Conceptualisations of the postmodern are without a historical perspective which allows us to retrospectively examine its constructs. It is a period in which we are immersed, it is constantly shifting and moving, and there is a unique recognition of its shifting borders. In short, postmodernity is a moving target and is recognised as such.

The past decades, however, have seen growing recognition of the emergence of a postmodern age in Western Society. Theorists have left us with an awareness that notions of a postmodern condition reach into all facets of human activities ranging from the current economic order, to our means of intellectualisation, to aspects of our social relationships, to the creation of one's identity.

One of the clearest points of departure from high modernity to postmodern society can be pointed to in the shifting face of capitalism. The Western world is now post-Fordist and post-industrial. This shift sees society moving from a goods producing economy to that of a service economy, and is commensurate with the growth of the professional and technical classes, eventuating in the widespread diffusion of intellectual technology (Bell 1974, Touraine, 1971). Furthermore, postmodern society is characterised by the growth of consumer capitalism and the development of multinational and technological identity. Society moves from the
standardised production lines of the factories to the decentralised use of information technologies sophisticated enough to allow ‘flexible specialisation’ (Piore and Sabel, 1984). There is a shift towards participative rather than authoritative leadership and from operational to strategic management (Halal in Harvey, 1989). Commensurately, the state becomes decentralised, deregulated, flexible, privatised and in fact, destabilised (Swyngedouw in Harvey, 1986).

This changing economic order has far reaching implications for postmodern culture and the postmodern individual. For one, the decentralisation seen at both the level of production and at the level of state, is further evidenced culturally. Postmodern society is marked by diversity, plurality and fragmentation. The West has become more consumer oriented, multicultural, global and intellectual (Harvey, 1989). Postmodern society allows for choice and thus threatens to weaken the social fabric, as fewer rituals of significance apply to societies as a whole. Put simply, postmodernity allows room for multiple cultural realities.

Baudrillard (1983) takes this a step further when he speaks of a shift from a ‘productive’ to a ‘reproductive’ social order. Power is replaced by culture with hyper-reality having the ability to overcome reality itself. Images or ‘simulacra’ create a society where the distinction between appearance and the ‘real’ is blurred. Thus, as Pinkney tells us:

In a world dominated by mass media and technologies of cultural reproduction, the modernist dream of a utopian, ‘authentic’ experience beyond mass culture vanishes. Saturated as we are from birth by the images, stereotypes and narrative paradigms of a ubiquitous mass culture, we have long since lived on the pulses that ‘death of the subject’ which poststructuralism has recently articulated at the level of theory (Pinkney, 1992:391).
While perhaps not often directly explored within theorisations of the postmodern, the implications for religiosity in postmodernity are quite profound. Lyotard (1984) argues that a shift towards the postmodern encompasses an, ‘...incredulity towards metanarratives’ (xxiv) which would include the religious. Understandings of religion grounded in the discourses of modernity may thus become outmoded for understanding religion as it reformulates in a world of choice, diversity and plurality. The Christian narrative that has supported Western Culture is facing postmodern crisis. Religion must be re-imagined as we ask how religion will come to reformulate itself in order to survive a shift to the postmodern. What various forms will religious meaning, belonging, and ‘collective conscious’ take, as they are freed through postmodernist recognition of multiple subjective positionings and postmodern possibilities? Only by addressing these issues can an examination of apostasy become instrumental for uncovering the contemporary significance of the phenomenon.

Explorations of the nature of religion in postmodernity are most often taken up by theologians and spiritualists. Many theorists have attempted to project and, in fact, pursue a spirituality capable of arising in a new millennium. They have embarked on the task of rebuilding and reformulating religion from the ground up. Common to many of these postmodern conceptions is an awareness of global interconnections.

Postmodern Christian Jerry Gill (in Weathers, 1994), for example, tells us that reality exists not in realms, but in dimensions. All knowledge is mediated through this multidimensional reality, and religion must break from the dichotomies so prevalent in its modernistic make up. Griffin, a constructive postmodernist suggests that religion must contain a perceptual experience that is not produced from ‘culturally conditioned frameworks’(1989:4) and is, therefore, common to
everyone. Spretnak (1991), is also concerned with global connections and suggests that reclaiming the teachings and practices of tradition is essential for the well being of a postmodern earth community.

Charlesworth and Kelly also acknowledge the need for global religious connections. They, however, premise their arguments from the standpoint of Christianity.

God's message will only be known in its fullness when all the 'revelations' to be found in various other religions are related in some ways to the paradigmatic revelation given through Jesus Christ, and the jigsaw is complete (Charlesworth in Daniel 1991:286).

Christian theology, by expanding to meet the demands of the age, is coming into its own as a great intellectual adventure. As faith works to express its meaning in the light of new ways of understanding the universe and in the context of a new ecological awareness of our planetary coexistence there are plenty of splendid beginnings (Kelly 1993:1).

These conceptions of religion in postmodernity, are but a sampling of 'new' religious possibilities. When placed aside 'traditional religions', emerging cults, and secular possibilities for deriving meaning and identity, they point to the overwhelming range of spiritual possibilities available in a postmodern world. Turner (1991) speaks of this mushrooming of diversity in terms of a 'pluralistic supermarket' where:

...choices are not politically constrained and the selection of cultural lifestyles is, in principle, limitless. One can opt for Buddhism on Monday, Zen on Tuesday, Sufism on Wednesday and have the rest of the week off... there are no effective constraints on these personal options (200).
More than just a range of possibilities, however, this plurality points to choice, and the need to consider and adopt a religious framework. Thus, orientations to faith, traditionally passed down through generations without much reflection, must shift as diversity leads to considerations on the level of epistemology.

The exploration of religiosity in a postmodern world has recently entered the realm of sociological investigation. I argue, however, that much of this work approaches postmodern religious phenomena from an unquestioned modernistic framework, hence reading as further secularisation and apostasy research. It is therefore not surprising to find the demise of a sacred canopy and the 'dissolution' of religion cited as central themes of sociological postmodern religious investigation (England and Tilley, 1995; Richey and Tilley, 1995).

This modern approach to postmodern spirituality can clearly be seen by sociologists who cite changes in institutional dimensions of religion as proof of religious dissolution. Decreasing percentages of the affiliated, an increase in the percentage of religious 'dropouts', and the difficulties of clergy recruitment are provided as proof that religion will not survive the shift to postmodernity. What is not considered by these authors, however, is whether changes in these dimensions point to disenchantment with particular understandings of religion, rather than disenchantment with all aspects of religiosity. More than evidence of the overall demise of religion, these dimensions may point to the failure of modernistic religious institutions to survive a shift to a postmodern world.

The 1988 article by Eisenstadt and Corradi, 'Some Observations on Religion in Postindustrial and Postmodern Society', serves as an example. These authors suggest that the specialisation
of different domains of life in postmodernity such as politics, public relations, family, business, and religion causes each to be ascribed a certain semantic and ideological content. Various groups and individuals then ascribe different levels of importance to each area. The authors conclude that religion must necessarily become less significant as it becomes fragmented in a postmodern world. They do not, however, consider whether the changes they describe are reflective of new motifs and new orientations for postmodern religiosity, rather than a complete evacuation of religion from social life. Understandings of religion are not recognised as a product of modern discursive processes, and findings are accordingly confined.

In fact in the sociology of religion, recognition of contemporary understandings of religion and religiosity as constructs of modernity is not often made explicit. Thus the possibility of a postmodern reformulation of ‘faith’ is not often considered, and generally not brought into the realm of sociological investigation. A few authors, however, have begun to examine and deconstruct the assumptions and metanarratives which define traditional religion and religiosity.

Flint (1993), for example, suggests that the democratic and self reflexive nature of critical knowledge can be used to expose oppressive elitist narratives, so common for religion in modernity. Howard, Andrews and Donahue (1994), concur. These authors state that a reconstructed discourse devoid of patriarchal, Western, intellectual traditions is essential for a new religious order. Falk (1988) argues that this new discourse will thrive as science and technology lose their modernistic credibility, thus leading to the inevitable rise of a political renewal based in religious concerns. Clark (1993) agrees, stating that there is a need to break from truths embedded in cultural traditions. He tells us that we, ‘...must abandon a
foundational search and emphasise the commonalities that bind the human species’ (18). In short, there is an increasing awareness and acceptance of the need for a discursive shift in the sociology of religion that can free understandings of religion and religiosity from their modernist definitions. Only when there is a break from the modern confines of religious knowledge, will sociology be able to engage ‘religion’ in postmodernity and understand the significance of these constructs in times of societal change.

The need to keep pace with postmodern religiosity is reflected in examinations of the epistemological orientations of the religious populace. Shifting cognitive dimensions of religiosity point to movement between modern and postmodern understandings of faith. While movements may not be linear or universal, there is evidence suggesting that the location and understanding of religion may be changing in a postmodern world.

Chalfont, for example, in his 1993 article ‘Images of God in a Postmodern World’, starts from the premise of a postmodern condition. Chalfont claims that in contemporary society there is increasing postmodern fragmentation that allows for a diverse range of spiritual possibilities. He states, however, that even with this diversity traditional religious terms of reference are still the most comfortable for those describing belief, especially images of God. Nowotny (1978) on the other hand, found that even though a full 95 percent of the Catholic students surveyed believed in at least some vague notion of God, there is often questioning of traditional worship and beliefs among these respondents. Bouma and Dixon (1986) also find religion still present in the minds of Australians, with most (85%) believing in a transcendent dimension to reality. The scope for defining the religious, however, is quite wide. Similarly, McCallum (1989) found that in a relatively short period of time there has been a marked decline in certainty and
stability of belief in God. Yet a majority of Australians still believe in the possibility of some form of transcendence.

Religiosity in a world verging on the postmodern is thus shown to be a situation of complexity. Postmodern choice, and new orientations of the religious do not infer that there is a willingness, desire or ability for all to explore such options. What is suggested by these studies, however, is the need to consider the possibility for disaffiliation and apostasy to represent more than just postmodern religious demise. These studies point to a growing need/desire for individuals to redefine and reformulate religiosity as it accommodates and reflects the conditions of postmodernity. This view is shared by both Abu-Rabi (1990) and Roof (1992). Abu-Rabi states that while postmodernity is characterised by reductionism and division, religion has not disappeared and indeed still dominates secular intellectualism, albeit in less traditional forms. More than abandonment, there is an active negotiation of faith.

Roof, in his 1992 presidential address to the Religious Research Association, concurs. He claims that religion has not died in a postmodern world:

The postmodern spiritual narrative is defined by new motifs, eg. disorientation, marginality, and fluidity. Stories that search for meaning are still being told, but they are highly individualistic and draw on many religious and nonreligious traditions (297).

These authors then, both suggest that religion may not be in a state of dissolution, as much as in a state of postmodern reformulation.
Implications for understanding religiosity in a world still tied to, but no longer blindly embedded in knowledges of modernity are significant. Postmodern understandings of religion need to be fluid and dynamic. They need to reflect the movement between reliance on tradition, and the exploration of possibility. The complexity of the social world, the shifting epistemological orientations of the individual, and the potential for the active negotiation of faith need to be acknowledged.

I would thus argue that studies of religion which attempt to ‘capture’ the essence of religion may not be as illuminating as studies which treat the understanding of religion as an ongoing and continual discursive process; one which allows for both the impact of societal forces and the agency of the individual. I argue that explorations of religion in postmodernity need to approach the field as a site for shifts; shifts exploring not only what can be believed, but how it is that we come to believe. There is a need to explore how the postmodern world is negotiated, thereby redefining understandings of religion. Only when there is recognition of the historically specific boundaries of religious investigation can apostasy be used to signify more than the postmodern demise of religion. Apostasy, when considered as a potential site of resistance to modern forms of religion, can be employed as a vital signifier of postmodern transition, and point to a need for discursive shifts in understanding apostasy.

Examinations of apostasy thus need to explore whether the phenomenon represents a complete loss of spirituality and religiosity, or whether apostasy is better understood as a rejection of religion as constructed and understood in modernity. In a postmodern society apostates may have abandoned the idea of a fixed and objective structure of both meanings and social relations, allowing for a multiplicity of subjective realities. Thus the contemporary apostate
may be reformulating not only what is thought, but how it is come to be thought. There is increased potential for interrogating and negotiating previously unquestioned faith. The apostate may no longer be the ‘heathen’ of the past, but merely the active negotiator of their own spirituality. Thus, studies of the apostate need to allow for the ability of the individual to negotiate the fissure between the modern Western world of inherently socialised, unquestioned Christianity, and the postmodern world of open-ended spiritual possibility. They must further recognise apostates as a heterogenous group whose apostasy represents a range of possibilities and trajectories for faith that can be negotiated in the transition to a postmodern world.

A re-imagination of apostasy allows the construct to be a useful marker of change. In the contemporary situation, individuals begin to actively negotiate the cognitive, emotional and intellectual shifts occurring as religion evolves with an evolving society. Studies of apostasy which sit at the intersection of a postmodern societal condition and postmodernist concerns over knowledge, can illuminated these processes of religious transformation as they unfold in quite dynamic processes of interaction between society and the individual.

**Apostasy: Linking Theory and Practice**

I have argued that apostasy, as it has been traditionally approached in the literature, has not been employed to its full potential as a signifier of postmodern shifts. Rather, it has been relegated to the study of religious disaffiliation not tied to larger sociological questions. I believe, however, that apostasy can be a window that allows for the examination of how the self is created, negotiated and redefined in periods of change. It can point to both epistemological shifts in the individual, and epistemic shifts on the level of society. Chapter
Three takes on an examination of the changing socialisation experiences of apostates. Chapter Four explores evolving epistemological orientations to knowledge. Chapter Five is a discussion of technologies and negotiations of the self, while chapter Six concludes the paper with the exploration of post apostatic religiosity. While the topics of these chapters are diverse, a common thread running throughout, is the ability of apostasy to point to the need for discursive shifts away from knowledges and assumptions of modernity; assumptions which must be re-imagined as we move towards a postmodern world.

In theorising this shift from modern to postmodern orientations, I have called upon two theorists. The first is Emile Durkheim, one of the most influential modernist theorists in mainstream sociology, the other, Michel Foucault, one of the most influential post-structuralist theorists in postmodern sociology.

**The Durkheimian Influence on Apostasy Research**

Durkheim’s contribution to contemporary understandings of religion have been highly influential for apostatic research. Durkheim viewed religion as ‘...a body of collective beliefs and practices endowed with a certain authority...(1973:51). Durkheim saw religion, not as a transcendent force, but as a cultural phenomenon, one embedded within, created by, and essential to society. He saw religion as instrumental to mechanical solidarity, and as perhaps the most fundamental element of a collective conscious. For Durkheim, religion is both functional and necessary. The maintenance of the society and the well being of the individual both rely on the solidarity built on the rites and rituals of religion. He states:
By the mere fact that their (religions’) apparent function is to strengthen the bonds attaching the believer to his God, they at the same time really strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member, since the God is only a figurative expression of the society. (1965:257)

Religion in fact, can be seen as a reflection of the utter dependence of the individual on society. There is acceptance of symbiotic relationships between religion and society/ religiosity and the individual.

These Durkheimian understandings of religion as necessary and utilitarian, are particularly influential in shaping apostasy knowledges. Accordingly, the literature proceeds from a premise of religion as essential and functional, and apostasy as dysfunctional and aberration. Thus, quite consistently, and often without explicit recognition, the underlying assumption of disaffiliation research is that apostasy is detrimental. In fact, a review of the literature claims that apostasy is, a ‘falling from faith’ (Brinkerhoff and Burke, 1980); a manifestation of ‘guilt and shame’ (Mauss, 1969); a product of ‘maladjustment or neurosis’ (Caplovitz and Sherrow, 1977); a ‘disenchantment’ (Roof, 1978); a ‘failure’ of socialisation and intergenerational transmission (Hunsberger, 1983); and a ‘detrimental rejection’ (Condran and Tamney, 1985). More than objective findings, however, I argue that these negative orientations exist as an implicit operating paradigm which biases the work. This can be clearly evidenced by Robert Heiner’s 1992 article. His study of the attitudes of the members of the Freedom from Religion Foundation is entitled, ‘Evangelical Heathens: The Status of Freethinkers in Southland’. It is published in the journal, Deviant Behavior. This quite obviously points to negative subjectivities surrounding issues of nonbelief.
Durkheim’s work on anomie has also contributed to negatively biased knowledges of apostasy. Durkheim claimed that anomie is likely to develop when ‘...individual passions (are left) without a curb to regulate them’ (1993:287). For Durkheim, religion was one means for keeping such ‘individual passions’ in check. This belief can be evidenced in the operating paradigms of contemporary religious research in which a negative correlation between religious disaffiliation and anomie is taken for granted. McGuire presents this assumed relationship well:

Religion's capability of providing meaning and order suggest that religion functions as a protection from anomie in two ways: A firm religious basis of order is a buffer against the occurrence of anomie in the first place; and if the group does experience an anomie situation, religion can potently respond to the crisis of moral meanings (1987, 30).

Accordingly, hypotheses of research that uses anomie as a theoretical construct centre on the negative correlation of anomie and the strength of one's religious affiliation. Many researchers have in fact, found some support for this claim. Lee and Clyde (1974:35) find that: 1) religion has an immediate negative impact on anomie; and that 2) religiosity can inhibit the effects of alternate factors which could otherwise produce anomie. Lee (1981) found that while religious consciousness is not found to be significantly correlated, church attendance does have a weak negative correlation to anomie. More recently, Heiner (1992) found that 'freethinkers' or atheists are more likely than theists to experience alienation and anomie, and feel less connected to society at large.

Equally interesting, however, is the plethora of research, still premised on the negative correlation of anomie and religiosity, which does not bear out this hypothesis. For example, Fay (1978), contrary to hypothesis, found that within a religious community anomie was more
likely to be concentrated among those most orthodox in their religiosity, specifically amongst those who are authoritarian, traditionalistic and nonrational. Seubert (1985), again contrary to hypothesis, found no significant relationship between anomie and orthodox religious belief. Seubert goes on to describe the problems this causes for interpretation. Christiano (1986) hypothesised that those individuals with incomplete family ties resort to religious participation as a means of relieving anomie. Support for this hypothesis was not found. Willits and Funk's research (1989) actually went on to find a correlation between the acceptance of non-traditional beliefs about God and lower expressions of anomie. Finally, Kanga, Willits and Cruder (1990), found that the more traditional the religious beliefs, the greater the expressed anomie.

The relationship of anomie to religiosity is thus shown to be complex, and should not be handled linearly. Anomie needs to be seen as having a rich nexus of relationships to both religious socialisation and religious disaffiliation. Studies of anomie, however, which are premised upon un-critically engaged Durkheimian notions of religion, have difficulty capturing the complexity of the situation for both individuals and society, as they negotiate an emerging postmodern world; a world not imagined or predicted by Durkheim.

As we move from a modern to a postmodern condition it becomes essential to historically situate the operating paradigms central to apostatic research. Durkheim needs to be reflected upon as a modernists theorist who was interested in the rupture of traditional social ties by industrialisation, the Enlightenment and individualism. Rather than the death of religion, Durkheim was concerned with the demise of the beliefs and practices of premodern forms of religion as they had their authority threatened in modernity. Durkheim’s concern was over the
alienating effects of transitions through modernity in which he sees the collective conscious in an unresolved state of flux. He was concerned with the ‘...incertitude and confused agitation...’ (1965: 474) he sees as a potential of high modernity. His theorisations, however, did not reach in to a postmodern world. Thus, when Durkheim speaks of the plight of religion and the impact of change he is referring to a time when,

...societies become more voluminous and expand over vaster territories, traditions and practices, in order to accommodate themselves to the diversity of situations and to the mobility of circumstances, are obliged to maintain themselves in a state of plasticity and inconstancy which no longer offers enough resistance to individual variations. These variations, being less well restrained, are produced more freely and multiply; that is to say everyone tends to go off in his own direction. At the same time, as a result of a more developed division of labour, each mind finds itself oriented to a different point of the horizon, reflecting a different aspect of the world, and consequently the contents of consciousness (conscience) differs from one person to the other. Thus we make our way, little by little to a state, nearly achieved as of now, where the members of a single social group will have nothing in common among themselves except their humanity (1973: 51).

In other words, Durkheim is referring to a conception of the future which he sees offered by capitalism and industrialisation; the projected site of high modernity. Durkheim’s theories, however, have been taken from their historical setting of modernity and non-critically applied to a world emerging on a postmodern age. The possibilities and complexities of renegotiating faith in a postmodern world are generally not taken into account by theorists who uncritically rely on modern understandings of religion. Thus for theorists who continue to uncritically apply the work of Durkheim to contemporary knowledges of apostasy, the complexities of understanding the significance of re-negotiating faith are not drawn out.

As we negotiate the passage from a modern to postmodern world, the applicability of Durkheim’s theorisations must be put under examination. Certainly, I believe that many of
Durkheim’s conceptions reflect important and fundamental aspects of our contemporary situation. Societies have expanded, mechanical solidarity has given way to organic solidarity, and there has been a weakening of the collective conscious. I would thus argue that many of the alienating aspects of modernity described by Durkheim still impact on the individual. Durkheim’s insights on the emotive toll, or the anomie and egoism associated with modernity are still instrumental for understanding aspects of the contemporary individual, hence contemporary apostate. This thesis, in fact, is premised on the viability of these Durkheimian conceptions of anomie and egoism as developed in his work *Suicide* (1993).

In *Suicide*, Durkheim proposed that the breakdown of a traditionally based collective conscious will cause great and overriding feelings of angst. Egoism and anomie will be a consequence of modern society, wherein individuals are left with the ‘infinity of dreams’ and/or the ‘infinity of desires’ (287), that may lead to suicide. I believe this is analogous for the case of apostasy. Modernity, and its impact on traditional structures of religiosity, have created anomic and egoistic forms of apostasy. Individuals do not feel connected to traditional familial faith, reacting with either confused agitation or melancholic introspection.

In contrast, however, applying altruistic suicide, a traditional or pre-modern form of suicide based on obligation to the contemporary situation of apostasy is more difficult. ‘...(S)erene conviction derived from the feeling of duty’ (283), does little to explain the foregoing of faith in a world where the ties to religion are no longer central to the infrastructure of society. In a ‘secularised’ modern world, moving towards a postmodern condition, apostasy is not generally a ‘cause’. Altruistic resistance does not find applicability to the current situation.
As we move from the site of high modernity as predicted by Durkheim, to that of a postmodern world, we find that our understandings of religion, hence apostasy need to shift accordingly. Durkheim, for example, firmly believed that religion as the misplaced worship of society, must necessarily continue. He theorised that a religion of humanity must eventuate:

‘...[a] day will come when our societies will know again those hours of creative effervescence, in the course of which new ideas and new formulae are found which serve for a while as a guide to humanity’ (1965:475).

These understandings of religion, however, are based on predicted sites of high modernity. Durkheim’s narrative regarding civil religion and an eventuating religion of humanity may hint at one possibility for re-imagining religion in a postmodern world. I argue, however, that these Durkheimian conceptions do not allow for significant meaning and protection from anomie and egoism to be derived from a plethora of sources, both religious and secular, in postmodernity.

I further argue that this thesis also constrains the agency of the individual. There is little room for the active negotiation of faith. For Durkheim, religiosity will be likely to be directed by a national level of symbolism until a religion of humanity is attained. The Durkheimian school of thought does not allow for religiosity in a world where individuals can negotiate meaning at diverse and varied sites. It does not allow for the possibility for the development of more than one collective conscious, as might be possible in a postmodern world. Nor does it allow for negotiated and reformulated religiosity to operate in a society devoid of a unified mechanical solidarity. Thus, as we shift along the time line, there is a need to recognise the limitations of Durkheimian conceptions of religion.
Accordingly, I argue that in addition to anomic and egoistic apostates, there is the need to create a new category of apostate; the postmodern apostate. This class of apostate is one who better reflects the postmodern condition. This apostate type is open to the possibilities and potentialities of the postmodern world, and is not subject to angst produced by a society devoid of a singular source of solidarity. These apostates are able to negotiate a societal condition, where unlike the one predicted by Durkheim, there are options for faith, meaning and solidarity. Religion and religiosity are open for negotiation, in a world where meaning need not be located globally, and apostasy is not axiomatically seen as aberrant.

Assuming that pluralism, privitisation, rationalism and breaking away from the ‘collective conscious’ of our immediate socialising influences are negative properties, does not allow for recognition of the positive or emancipatory capabilities of the process. Nor does it allow for a possible state of society in which breaks with tradition are not necessarily indicative of social breakdown; it does not allow for a society in which breaks with tradition are indicative of new and evolving epistemological orientations to knowledge. Choice, freedom, and the positive aspects of the ability to choose one's own destiny, are all down played, due to operating paradigms not reflective of the contemporary situation.

The contemporary situation needs to be seen as one of transition. With this recognition apostasy can be used to reflect a variety of responses to this level of societal change. Whether apostasy is a response to secularisation in a modern world that leaves individuals without faith, or whether it is a rejection of modernity’s construction of religion, may be dependent upon the individual’s relationship to a postmodern world. Apostasy needs to be seen as having a complex set of relationships to both religiosity and the self. This is particularly relevant as
societies begin to negotiate a world no longer embedded in the discursive processes of modernity.

Towards a Foucauldian Approach to Apostasy Research

The question then, becomes how apostasy can be re-imagined and re-theorised so that it represents the complexity of the current situation. To answer this question, I turn to Michel Foucault. Foucault did not specifically address apostasy, or even secularisation and religion. Nonetheless, I believe that his studies of the subject can be highly insightful for apostatic research.

Foucault was a post-structuralist whose investigations can be seen as a critical reflection on the difference between pre-modern and modern cultural forms. Thus, as was the case for Durkheim, modernity is a central focus of his work. Rather than simply describing the effects of modernity, however, Foucault’s interest was in the historical conditions which made possible the modern subject. For Foucault, one central and defining aspect of modernity is the power relations or techniques of power which create and constrain the modern individual. He is interested in how the modern subject is made, and how the making of the subject is linked to power. Foucault states:

...in a society such as ours... there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body,... there can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operate through and on the basis of association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (1980:93).
Foucault’s analysis of the power relations operating in modernity can thus be seen as instrumental for understanding the techniques of socialisation which created the modern religious self. Truth and power conspire to create an undeniable reality for the individual which can be highly constraining. This would be particularly true when the ‘religious’ is embedded within power relations. As Foucault states:

...a system of constraint becomes truly intolerable when the individuals who are affected by it don't have the means for modifying it. This can happen when such a system becomes intangible as a result of its being considered a moral or religious imperative... (1989:21).

Nevertheless, Foucault recognises that even this particular landscape can be resisted; ‘... in the relations of power, there is necessarily the possibility of resistance’ (1990:12). There are always ways to redefine power relationships and to resist domination, even if the cost is high. Thus, Foucault’s theories can be useful for understanding the emotive toll of certain forms of apostasy. In fact, I would argue that in a Foucauldian framework, anomie and egoism might be seen as natural by-products of resistance to dominating power relations which define religion in modernity.

Apostasy can thus be understood as a site of resistance to the ‘grid of material coercions’ (1980:104), and the dominating power relations endemic to religion in modernity. The nature of these dominating relationships, however, may constrain the individual from negotiating belief. Religious abandonment through the anomic response of anger, or through egoistic examination of religion, society and the self, may leave the individual without faith. Vann makes the point: ‘Lacking an adequate analysis and critique of modernity, worshippers’ discontent in response to oppression becomes focused on worship itself’ (1994:1).
Foucault is explicit his recognition of hidden frameworks. He states that the creation of the subject is embedded within particular historical parameters:

It is one of my targets to show people that a lot of things that are a part of their landscape - that people think are universal - are the result of some very precise historical changes, all my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence (1988:11).

In the Foucauldian tradition then, traditional understandings of religion and apostasy would be recognised as constructs of modernity, which can, in fact be deconstructed and re-imagined. Modernity is recognised as a point in a never-ending historical change, one in which ‘technologies of the self’ (1988:18), used to control and shape the subject can be transformed into more productive means for negotiating the self. These conceptions allow for both transforming individuals and the possibility of a new form of society in which ‘technologies of the self’ (1988:18) no longer need to be punitive and restrictive. Rather, in a society such as the one offered by postmodernity, there may exist new epistemological means for changing the self. Foucault’s analysis is therefore helpful for understanding the agency of the individual in initiating change, and for understanding a potential form of society which allows for the exploration of new orientations to knowledge.

Following this argument, Foucault’s analysis would allow for a new breed of apostate free from modernity’s angst. Foucault’s recognition of shifting and evolving historical periods allows for subjects whose relationships to religion and spirituality need no longer be based on the dominating power relations of the modern era. This new breed of apostate may reflect a societal condition in which complete and punitive domination no longer defines ‘power’.
Foucault’s theories are thus important for understanding the development of the postmodern apostate and the significance of this new category for illuminating epistemic change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I argue that all definitions and understandings of religion, hence apostasy, are embedded in historical conditions and party to discursive processes. Based on a set of now untenable presuppositions, these discursive processes have shaped apostasy literature. From broad ‘universal’ knowledges of religion accepted as given, to conceptions of society which are historically stagnant, to subjective positioning which prioritises the functional aspects of religiosity, understandings of apostasy must be seen as the product of discursive processes; processes which have not allowed for: 1) the emotive complexity of disaffiliation in a period of transition; 2) the agency of the individual for negotiating and creating new postmodern forms of religiosity and 3) a postmodern condition which redefines relationships between the self and religiosity. With the shift from modernity to postmodernity, it is necessary that our thinking and knowledges allow for and reflect continued transformations on the part of religion, society and the individual.

The traditional emphasis on what religion is, may thus be substantially augmented by postmodernist examinations of how it is that religion evolves and reflects, and is reflected by the social situation. I argue that a site capable of being, but not yet employed as, a signifier of both the shifting nature of society and the ability of the individual to negotiate the religious is a postmodernist examination of the processes of apostasy. I believe it is a site that allows us to:

... ask instead, how things work at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes... we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of
organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects. (Foucault, 1980:97).

Apostasy can be used as a window to such processes. Rather than limiting examinations of apostates to description and correlation, we can begin to explore how it is that religious subjects are constituted by modern society, and how this constitution may be resisted. We can also begin to explore postmodernity and the impact this new form of society has on the constitution of the postmodern subject. Apostasy under these circumstances can now be explored as representative of new epistemological approaches to knowledge, no longer a process of resistance, but perhaps processes of reflection and transformation of the self, now possible in postmodernity.
Chapter Two

RESEARCHING APOSTASY

In the previous chapter, I argued that apostasy has not been explored as a construct connected to major themes in sociology. In a suitable analytic framework, however, I believe apostasy can illuminate fundamental social phenomena such as socialisation, negotiations of the self, religion and religiosity. Apostasy knowledges need to be freed from the modern understandings of religion and society that dominate traditional sociology of religion literature. Similarly, apostatic research needs to be freed from the modern, empirical methodologies that organise and construct knowledges in a particular fashion. In short, apostasy needs to be re-imagined. The relationship between the contemporary situation of apostasy and the shifting discursive processes that accompany a move to the postmodern, must be acknowledged, theorised and researched.

For apostasy to be used as a signifier of fundamental aspects of the social, I believe that research design needs to incorporate two basic components. First, I argue the need for a grounded theory approach, which allows for theorisations contrary to the biases, subjectivities, and implicit operating paradigms that have historically premised research. Grounded theory can aid in the exploration of a more complex understanding of why apostasy occurs and why it is doing so with increased frequency. It can help to uncover how one moves from traditional religiosity to what is understood as atheism, and how this may be theorised to reflect the predominant discourses of knowledge operating in a world verging on the postmodern. As Ebaugh states:
Grounded theory is especially powerful in illuminating social processes since the focus is on the individual’s statements and actions regarding patterns, inconsistencies, intended and unintended consequences of action, meaning systems, assumptions that people hold, and social systems and interactions that are part of behavior (Ebaugh, 1988:30-31).

Second, I argue that apostatic research needs to offer respondents a voice. There is a need for rich and descriptive narrative that can draw out the significance of apostasy for apostates themselves. There needs to be nuanced analysis of the stories, anecdotes and metaphors of the apostate that does not simplistically collapse experiences solely on the basis of the quantifiable. I argue the need for analysis that can allow similar quantitative phenomena to be explored as divergent based on the state of mind, emotions and belief systems operating behind the actions of those who give up faith.

Understanding of apostasy in the contemporary situation must be recognised as complex beyond the traditional, modern perceptions of the phenomenon. Epistemological approaches to research need to be able to deal with new postmodern possibilities for apostasy, generally unforeseen in traditional apostasy literature. The methodological frame for this project was born of these considerations and culminates in a research design that incorporates theoretical, qualitative and quantitative analysis. These methods are employed as varied ‘tools’ for reflexive research and are incorporated in the hope of drawing out the complexity and heterogeneity of contemporary apostates and apostasy.
The Sample

A common shortcoming in sociological apostasy literature has been the use of inappropriate, non-representative samples. Before locating and interviewing respondents for this project, I was thus aware of the need to precisely determine my apostate population. I did not consider finding apostates according to the foregoing of religious affiliation in large scale surveys adequate. This methodology is entrenched with ungrounded belief assumptions, and does not offer ‘apostates’ a voice. I therefore decided that original interview material was most appropriate for this research. This decision predicated the need for the determination of an appropriate population and the selection of a representative sample.

Foremost in these considerations was that my apostate population was based on belief rather than affiliation. I did not, however, want my criteria to be so restrictive that it was constrained to modernist conceptions of religion and apostasy. Apostate criteria were thus based on belief structures flexible enough to reflect the possibility for new postmodern motifs for both religion and apostasy. Accordingly, the general criteria for the apostate population were that respondents: 1) currently consider themselves atheists or apostates without belief in a Western, Christian conception of a supernatural deity and; 2) have been raised by their parental figures as a Christian. In addition to offering a standard baseline for exploration and discussion, I hope that these criteria provide an understanding of apostasy beyond a shift in affiliation, and offer enough scope for redefining the traditional parameters of religiosity.

In an attempt to facilitate the use of apostasy as a site for exploring postmodern shifts, the population for this research is delineated by date of disaffiliation. For inclusion in the first
cohort an individual must have gone through the process of disaffiliation prior to 1967. For inclusion in the second cohort, the forgoing of religious belief must have occurred after 1982. The dates reflected in this time frame were chosen in an attempt to capture a shift in Australian culture indicative of an emerging postmodern condition.

Individuals who qualify for inclusion in the first cohort were generally raised in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, a time prior to the rise of the technological advancements, diversity and pluralism associated with postmodernity (Harvey, 1989). Further, these individuals would have been raised in a climate that was thought to be favourable towards the church and religion (McAllister 1988). In Australian society, a pervasive Christian culture was clearly evident (Hogan 1987)\(^1\). Additionally, 1967 would be considered prior to the rise of political and social rebelliousness associated with an Australian ‘60s’ cohort. This is significant because the rise of a ‘60s’ youth culture is often shown to accompany rebelliousness towards traditional societal structures, including religious institutions (Roof, 1978; Caplovitz and Sherrow, 1977). Thus apostasy in the midst of this youth movement, may confound findings. Rather than point to epistemic change accompanying a shift from a modern to a postmodern condition, the use of such a ‘60s’ group may simply locate an historically specific cohort effect.

I chose apostasy post 1982 as criteria for inclusion in the second cohort, to approximate a generational difference in sample. The minimum gap in date of apostasy is fifteen years, with an average gap of was over twenty-five years. During this period, certain changes in Australian society point towards movement into a postmodern age. Bouma for one, argues

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\(^1\) This is reflected in Australian Bureau of Statistics findings, which show that until 1966, less than 1.5 % of the Australian population reported religious affiliation (including no religion), other than Christian (Bouma, 1995: 288).
that ‘Australia has become over the past 25 years one of the world’s most plural and multi-cultural societies.’ (1995: 285). Further, he states that ‘Australia has become one of the most religiously diverse societies in the world’ (1995:286). For the individuals of the second cohort then, socialisation would have occurred in a time when the demographic (including religious) backgrounds of Australians were becoming more diverse. The conception of Australia as a Christian country was being threatened by immigration, and access to alternate belief structures was vastly improved. Australian had adopted a platform of ‘multi-culturalism’, which included religious diversity.

While this division in population may be unusual because it is based on date of apostasy, rather than age of apostates, I believe it is the most appropriate means for reflecting a postmodern cultural shift in Australian society. The division is an attempt to delineate the social influences, cultural milieu and history of the times that may have had an impact on an individual’s process of apostasy, regardless of age.

Once I determined the criteria for the two cohort population, finding the appropriate sample became next on the agenda. A number of approaches were considered. As discussed, Census or political attitude surveys would not allow for the isolation of beliefs. Advertising for apostates in local newspapers was also considered. While this design would have insured a large response, I was concerned that those responding to such an advert might have a greater interest in apostasy and religion than my target population. Such a sample might miss those apostates who have very little academic interest or curiosity about the apostatic process. I also considered going to various churches and looking for the disaffiliated through the clergy. I saw two problems with this methodology. First, respondents may have abandoned the church
but not a Western conception of God. Second, this design might miss those individuals who believed in a Western conception of God and perhaps even a certain Christian faith, but did not affiliate with any particular parish.

Because of the inadequacies of the above methods and the difficulties associated with sampling populations that are relatively small and hard to locate, I employed a convenience method of non-probability sampling. To that end, initial respondents were referred by friends, acquaintances, and colleagues, with many of these respondents able to suggest others for inclusion in the study. Consequently, the list of potential respondents grew rapidly. From this list, I chose respondents to reflect apostates of varying genders, ages, socio-economic classes/ backgrounds, and levels of educational attainment. Care was also taken to insure that respondents did not come from clusters of families or friends. While this method may not produce a sample where the validity of the population inferences is assured or testable (Frankel, 1983:22), I believe that the sample will produce valid and reliable findings. I also believe this method represents the best means for reflecting my target population, a population who will be able to shed light on the varied meanings of apostasy possible in an ever changing world.

There is no control group in this study. I decided to compare varying classes of apostates, rather than compare apostates with the general population via a control group. This decision was made based on the desire to explore processes of apostasy and how the shifting cultural climate has affected these processes for apostates themselves. Rather than an examination of how apostates vary from controls, the focus of this project is to understand the negotiation of
familial faith and how those negotiations have been redefined in a changing world. In total then, eighty respondents, forty from each cohort, were chosen for inclusion in the sample.

The Interviews

Central to the research design of this project is my desire to allow apostates their own voice. I thought it highly important to hear the tales and stories of apostasy, that I believe are often fundamental to the creation of the self. I wanted to engage in a nuanced analysis of the beliefs, emotions, and negotiations associated with a forgoing of faith. It was therefore essential to personally interview the apostates, and hear their stories. These interviews were conducted from mid 1993 through 1995. They were informal in nature, and in-depth in scope. The interviews were taped and lasted approximately twenty to thirty-five minutes. Basic background demographic information was covered in a traditional question/answer format, while open ended discussions explored familial faith.

A topical checklist\(^2\) was developed and employed for two purposes. First, such a list could act as a vehicle for note taking while areas of interest were covered within the course of free flowing conversation. Second, it could be used to direct conversation into undisussed areas, insuring that all relevant data was obtained with a high degree of reliability. The checklist was thus employed to provide rich and nuanced narrative text, with enough standardisation to allow preliminary quantitative analysis across the range of apostates. This preliminary analysis could then be used as a referenceable structure for further narrative investigation. Theoretical questions raised in a review of the quantitative material could then be confirmed, denied and

\(^2\) The checklist is attached in the appendix.
investigated through narrative analysis of the range of apostates, before individual stories are explored.

This approach is best likened to a topical life history method. Such methods present an individual's experiences from the perspective of that particular individual (Denzin, 1978). Understanding what an event means to the person experiencing it is a paramount concern. The subject's definition of the situation takes precedence over the objective situation, since it is the subject who goes on to create the consequences. As is commonly the case in postmodern epistemologies, objective realities are taken over by subjective representations. Particular attention is given to the temporal sequence of events, the social context in which they occurred, the interpretation by the individual, and how this leads one to believe or behave in a particular fashion.

In this case, the checklist covered background demographic information and four additional substantive areas. The first substantive section covered respondents' experiences of religious socialisation. The second stage involved recounting processes of disaffiliation. Section three centred on current belief structures, while the final section saw respondents discuss the need for post apostatic religiosity.

The data for each of these four sections was highly reliant on memory. The respondents were required to retrospectively construct accounts of past events. Certainly, this opens up the interview to the possibility of failures in recall. Memories are not always accurate, and in fact, have a tendency to fade with time (Bradburn, 1983). Additionally, life experiences have a way of influencing and tainting the perspective with which one recalls past events. Memory as a
means of reconstructing history, however, is not the goal of these recollections. In this work, the recounting of experiences is undertaken in a bid to understand the significance of past events for those experiencing them and, to understand the consequences of those memories as they have been constructed. If the reconstruction of the past represents the meaning of those events for that person in the present, then validity is not problematic and understanding processes of change becomes enhanced.

**Variables and Analysis**

An immense amount of data was generated from the interviews, and both quantitative and qualitative programs were used to organise and analyse the data. In the quantitative case, individual case notes were transferred to data sheets, where eighty variables were recorded. This data was then entered into a quantitative statistical package, SPSS, for analysis. Independent variables were derived directly from the survey data or through mathematical extrapolation of that data. The only exceptions to this are the variables regarding anomie, in table A.3, which were derived directly from the narrative text. The variables used in this analysis, their means, and an explanation of scoring, are shown in tables A.1 through A.4, located in the appendix.

For qualitative analysis, the taped interviews were each transcribed³ and entered into a narrative text program, NUDIST⁴. The NUDIST program allows for the indexing of narrative in multiple and intersecting ways. It uses the metaphor of a genealogical tree which from the

³ Each transcription was approximately fifteen to twenty-five pages.

⁴ NUDIST is an anagram for Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching and Theorising (Richards and Richards, 1992).
root, 'parent', to the leaves, 'children', has dialogue structured and indexed from most inclusive to most particular and shows connections between 'siblings' (Richards and Richards, 1992). It allows the researcher to break free from a priori analysis and offers understanding of both explicit and implicit dynamics of events and processes from the perspective of respondents. It allows for analysis of not only what is said, but of how it is said, in what context and with what intensity and emotion; it can be used to record narrative subtleties. In short, the NUDIST program allows for nuanced analysis and the use of grounded theory.

Reflexivity

A final consideration in the development of the methodological frame for this project was handling the 'crisis of objectivity'. Theoretically, I wanted to avoid unreflective use of the modern definitions of social phenomena that I believe premise apostasy research. I also wanted to avoid the shortcomings and biases often inherent in positivist methodologies born of the Enlightenment. Equally important, however, I wanted to be explicit in a recognition of my own biases. My interest in, and curiosity about the phenomenon of apostasy stems from personal experience. I hold opinions about the process that might influence both data collection and analysis.

This subjectivity became a concern during the interview pre-test. The dilemma I faced is perhaps best described by Converse and Schuman. They state:

The in-depth interview offers a respondent an opportunity that is quite rare in ordinary conversation... that is the chance to talk freely about personal experiences and concerns and be listened to by a person who by the nature of their work must be tolerant and attentive. While the interviewer may know the importance of not contaminating the data by offering one's own opinions it is
often the case that it is asked for quite consistently by respondents (Converse and Schuman, 1974: 62-63).

Often interviewers regard over involvement with respondents as their chief failing as interviewers (Hyman et al., 1954). This was certainly the case during the pre-test. There was a strong temptation to discuss apostasy, rather than to just absorb and record narrative. To combat this, I set guidelines for limiting such involvement. At the onset of interviews, I explained to respondents that I needed to refrain from expressing personal opinions until after the interview was complete. I did find, however, that some input was at times essential for the respondent's continued concentration, interest, and sense of interviewer acceptance. While true objectivity may not always be possible, recognition of the dilemma made me cognisant of the need to remain as neutral as possible in these instances.

Reflexivity was also crucial during analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis are acts of subjective interpretation. Preserving narrative is one method of creating a check for these subjectivities. It allows participants to have a voice, to explain the meaning behind the response, and to have a say in the interpretation of their data. Subjective interpretation is an invariable part of the research process. I argue, however, that rigorous employment of various methods, a recognition of one's biases and subjectivities, and a sense of reflexivity, can add depth to analysis while being instrumental to the maintenance of a study's integrity.

**Initial Observations**

In an attempt to organise and open up the data for further exploration, quantitative investigations were undertaken. These investigations were initiated with an exploration of the
complete sampling of apostates, in a bid to uncover the commonalities that define the group. What is most interesting about the results, however, is not the commonalities but the range of responses. Data on socialisation experiences, processes of disaffiliation, current belief structures, and religious replacements showed vast amounts of diversity; heterogeneity is the hallmark of the data. Thus constructions of religion and apostasy are not likely to be standard for the group.

In fact, very few unilateral, uncontested statements can be made regarding the apostate and processes of apostasy. Take for example the data on religious socialisation. Preliminary perusal of the data suggests that apostates do not come from particularly irreligious homes. Respondents generally had parents of the same faith and each set of parents formally passed religion on to their child through the rite of baptism. The majority (73%) went on to participate in further religious rites and rituals. Overall, the apostates rate their parents as having ‘relatively intense’ religious beliefs, with a commensurate need to transmit those beliefs. Furthermore, the intensity of the religious experience for the respondents themselves, and their conviction in childhood were generally as high as that of their parents. In short the findings infer that apostates do not necessarily come from ‘parents without faith’. The majority of parents in this sample sound not too dissimilar from the parents of those who do not go on to apostatisate.

Such generalities, however, mask the high variance found on these socialisation variables. There is a range of orientations to familial faith, and socialisation is not standard for the group.

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5 Apx. 14% report having parents from interfaith marriages.
Mean scores then, coalesce experiences that range from the highly traditional to the radically unorthodox.

Variables exploring processes of apostasy also point to diversity. A lone exception is age of first doubt. The range here is quite small and averages at 18.9 years. The phenomenon of apostasy thus seems to be one of adolescence and young adulthood. The length and intensity of the apostasy process, on the other hand, vary significantly. The apostatic process can take anywhere from a few months to 20 plus years, with an average process length of 6.83 years. Similarly, the reported intensity of the process is highly varied. Some report virtually no emotive costs in processes of disaffiliation while for others, the experience is particularly emotive.

A review of actual process types further draws out this heterogeneity. The referenced processes of disaffiliation can not be reduced to suit the sample as a whole. The varied forms of catalysts for the apostatic journey are highly diverse and pointed to a multifarious, complex and intricate phenomenon. Table 2.1 shows the range of responses, and the percentage of apostates acknowledging each response as a significant correlate to their apostatic journey.
Table 2.1  Percentage of Respondents Referring to Apostatic Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Process</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactionary</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Disappointment</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disenchantment</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Disappointment</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are interesting, because they suggest that apostasy does not represent any one particular means of negotiating faith. Both emotive and logical processes exist, opening the possibility that apostasy may be reflective of both modern forms of resistance and more postmodern forms of negotiating the self. Traditional understandings of apostasy may thus need to be re-considered. For example, apostasy as a reactionary or rebellious response is referenced by 84% of respondents, while 36% claim apostasy as a response to external disappointment. These two measures seem to reflect apostasy as an anomic type response to religion. These respondents are acting out against faith. Egoistic type responses also present. 61% of respondents recount disenchantment with religion as a catalyst for apostasy. 35% report a sense of internal disappointment. Both variables allude to apostasy as a highly emotive and personal response to having been let down by faith. Finally, I would argue that apostasy as a process free from angst is reflected by those respondents who claim the process of disaffiliation as: logical (61%); a search for meaning (30%) or, influenced by elements of a society where the collective conscious is no longer entrenched in Christianity, i.e. education,
partners, peers. These apostates appear to be engaged in a negotiation of faith, rather than emotive dismissal of faith. Apostasy is thus shown to represent very divergent phenomena.

The complexities of apostasy are also alluded to in the respondents' presentation of anomie\textsuperscript{6}. Traditional understandings of the relationship between anomie and religion would lead to the expectation that as one forgoes faith and disaffiliates from religious structures, anomie is likely to occur. This, however, was not shown to be the case. Five times as many respondents narrated symptoms of anomie before apostasy than after processes of apostasy (35\% as compared to 7\%). During processes of disaffiliation, 19\% expressed such feelings. Traditional Durkheimian understandings of religion then, must be called into question as reflections more often point to religion as a source, rather than mitigator of anomie. I argue in fact, that this data points to a need for apostasy to be explored as a potentially emancipatory process.

The current belief structures of apostates further reflect the multifarious nature of both apostates and processes of apostasy. In this sample, 78\% of respondents claim to be atheists without belief in a Western conception of God. 15\% label themselves agnostic\textsuperscript{7}. The remaining 7\% used a variety of terms ranging from astro-spiritualist to white witch. Amongst this varied group, credibility ratings for alternate religiosity, which include supernatural deity, spirituality, and afterlife varied greatly, and averaged .29 of 1.

\textsuperscript{6}Anomie, characterised by powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and estrangement was amassed through narrative investigation of the transcribed interviews.

\textsuperscript{7}The term agnostic carries various meanings for respondents. Amongst this sample, however, agnostic could broadly be defined as those individuals who do not believe that the existence of a supernatural deity can either be proved or disproved, and therefore, have no faith in such a deity.
Mainstream religion/religiosity faiired much worse. Measures of church of origin, Christian God, and organised Western religions were consistently rated very low (.07 of 1). The sample was also unequivocal in expressed comfort with new labels, and positioning regarding familial faith. Virtually the entire sample had every intention of remaining without their traditional God. In data marked by diversity then, the consistency of these findings suggests that a common denominator amongst apostates is a lack of faith in the religious institutions of modernity. Rather than the unilateral abandonment of all aspects of faith, apostasy can be seen as a reaction to a particular construction of religion.

This hypothesis is supported by data on post apostatic religiosity. Apostates do not appear to have altogether moved away from a need for the spiritual. Such forces have not been fully removed from their lives. In fact, 55% of apostates state that there exists a need to replace religion, while a greater percentage (64%), state that a replacement has been sought at some stage during or after the apostasy process. 31% were successful, having found what they consider to be a replacement for religion. For at least a proportion of apostates then, disaffiliation may not be the end of the apostatic process. Post apostatic negotiations appear to be an integral part of the apostatic journey.

Apostates and apostasy are thus shown to be multifarious; varying respondents present apostasy as very divergent phenomenon. I argue that this heterogeneity signifies quite distinct epistemological approaches to the negotiation of faith and the self, and points to the need for understandings of apostasy to break free from the constraints imposed by traditional understanding of religion and religiosity. Apostasy need not be a process destined to produce

---

8 This replacement is more often of a supernatural (58%), rather than secular (42%) origin.
angst. The process needs to be considered as potentially emancipatory. Similarly, beyond recognition of apostasy as resistance to modern constructions of religion, I argue that apostasy needs to be explored as a site for negotiating the spiritual opportunities of a postmodern world.

The question that arises then, is how to explore this heterogeneity. How should apostates and apostasy be meaningfully differentiated, in order to add significance to interpretation? What are the characteristics of apostates that see them negotiate religiosity and the self in very different ways? In an attempt to answer these questions a quantitative perusal of the data continues with an examination of apostates and apostasy in relation to the demographic categorisations of gender, religion and cohort.

**Demographic Characteristics**

According to research design, the sample in this study is delineated by cohort. Background information, however, such as familial faith [Catholic/ Protestant] and gender [male/ female] can also be used to compare the eighty apostates. Table 2.2 presents the distributions for familial religious affiliation and gender, by cohort.
Table 2.2  Frequency Distributions for Gender and Religion by Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Prior 67</th>
<th>Post 82</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Prior 67</th>
<th>Post 82</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of forty-two males and thirty-eight females participated in this project. Apostates were more likely to come from Catholic backgrounds (forty-six), than Protestant backgrounds (thirty-four). Distribution by cohort, however, is relatively stable. An attempt to investigate the heterogeneity of apostates and apostasy according to these dichotomies is initiated with an investigation of the Catholic/Protestant divide.

Religion

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1991), Weber argues that the ideologies associated with a particular religious faith are instrumental to both negotiations of the social and the development of the social itself. Since his work, there has been continued interest in how various forms of Christianity impact upon social and individual action. Such investigations raise interesting questions for this research. For example, a contemporary relationship between forms of Christianity and relationships to faith, knowledge, and the self might be explored. Are there differences in the socialisation processes of Australian
Protestants and Catholics that give each a different orientation to faith? Would varied constructions of religion help to explain heterogeneity in the apostatic process? In other words, can differences in orientations to apostasy be identified according to familial faith?

The data suggests that this is unlikely. The Catholic/Protestant divide seems to be narrowing in Australian society, and appears to have little impact on processes of apostasy. For example, McAllister (1988) claims that Protestants of an older generation would be expected to have higher ratings of SES (socio-economic status) than their Catholic counterparts. In the contemporary Australian situation, however, he argues that such differences have all but disappeared. The data in Table 2.3 confirms these claims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.3</th>
<th>Mean Scores and Significance for Demographic Variables by Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' SES</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Educ</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's SES</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Occup</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Educ</td>
<td>12.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

Respondents from Protestant family backgrounds reported parental educational attainment and ratings of socio-economic status as significantly higher than did respondents from Catholic
backgrounds. These differences, however, level out for the respondents themselves. Measures of current socio-economic status, occupation and educational attainment are all reported as non-significantly divergent for actual respondents. This suggests then, that in contemporary Australian society the affiliation between SES and varying Christian denominations may be weakening.

The situation is somewhat analogous for socialisation. Evidence exists that child rearing in Catholic families may be more traditional than what is experienced in Protestant families. These differences, however, are minimal and do not seem to impact on later negotiations of familial faith. Table 2.4 for example, shows that the rate of interfaith marriages for those who raise their children as Catholics, is much less common than the reported rate for the parents of Protestants (6% as compared to 21%). Similarly, participation in religious rituals (.80 as compared to .65) is more common for those with a Catholic background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.4</th>
<th>Mean Scores and Significance for Religious Upbringing Variables by Religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catholics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Marriage</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Trans</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Intensity</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Conviction</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05
The variables reliant upon reminiscences of childhood tell a similar story. Parent’s religious intensity, parent’s need to transmit faith, and the childhood conviction of respondents themselves, although not statistically significant, show slightly greater orthodoxy for Catholics. The higher recalled intensity of religiosity in the childhood home is also greater for Catholics, with results more conclusive.

Three possible explanations are offered. First, orthodoxy may be affected by private schooling. Christian schools were attended by 13% of those raised in the Protestant faith, 57% of Catholic respondents, however, attended Catholic schools. Divergences in both rites/rituals and the intensity/perceived intensity of religious experience may be attributable to these varied educational experiences. Second, Catholic parents may be more traditional in their childrearing practices and orientations to faith, than Protestant parents. The strength of faith and/or the centrality of that faith in the home may be divergent according to religion. Finally, there is the possibility that experiences of religious socialisation are actually similar. In the reconstruction of past events, however, Catholics may be prone to recall the strict and traditional nature of their socialisation experiences more readily than their Protestant counterparts.

Irrespective of source, respondents raised with a Catholic upbringing recall practices of religious socialisation as more traditional than did those raised in the Protestant faith. These divergences, however, do not follow through in the negotiations of that faith. The mean age when a respondent has first religious doubts, the length of the apostasy process, and the percentage of those who feel they have completed the apostatic journey is stable across
religion. Measures of process intensity and likelihood of return to familial faith also vary insignificantly for the two groups.

Furthermore, regardless of apostasy phase, anomie showed little difference for the two faiths; both Catholic and Protestants rate close to the mean of the overall sample. The processes of apostasy and the catalyst for such processes generally followed this pattern of similarity. Regardless of the epistemological orientation, or the logical versus emotive components of the process, Catholic and Protestants were similar in their referencing of cause. All process variables bar one, varied insignificantly from the mean for the two religions (see table 2.2), the exception was the family influence variable.

21.7% of Catholics believed that their family had a considerable influence on their decision to apostatise. Only 5.9% of Protestants felt that this was a significant correlate for their apostatic journey. If one accepts greater orthodoxy for Catholic families, then perhaps this finding supports the work of those who find conventional, stringent religious upbringing, a potential source for rebellion from the religious fold (Mauss, 1969; Caplovitz and Sherrow, 1977). The other variables reflecting rebellion (reaction and external disappointment) however, do not show any statistical divergence. There may exist then, a particular association of apostasy and familial relationships that needs to be drawn out in further qualitative analysis.

For the post apostatic respondent, familial faith does little to explain the heterogeneity of current beliefs. Labels, comfort, and commitment to apostasy, as well as the credibility of both mainstream and alternative beliefs are reported as non-significantly divergent for Catholics and Protestants. Similarly, the need for religious replacement, as well as the likelihood for seeking,
finding, and replacing religion is comparable for the two groups. Post apostatic experiences and belief are not meaningfully delineated by an examination of the Catholic/Protestant divide.

Familial religious affiliation then, points to divergences generally accepted in the literature. In this particular sample, the families of Protestants report a slightly higher SES and a slightly lower religious orthodoxy than their Catholic counterparts. This, however, seems to have little influence on processes of apostasy. Except for family influence, forms of disaffiliation, current beliefs, and religious replacements, are all comparable across faith. In the contemporary Australian situation then, varying forms of Christianity do not seem to account for the heterogeneity seen in apostates and apostasy processes.

**Gender**

Varying negotiations of religion are not easily traced to experiences dependent upon familial faith. But what of gender? Can heterogeneity in apostates and apostasy be explained by gender? The divergent nature of early childhood socialisation for Western males and females suggests that it might. For example, it is argued that traditional socialisation of females with an emphasis on conflict resolution, submission, gentleness, and nurturance, is likely to predispose women to religion. The instrumental and rational emphasis of male socialisation, on the other hand, is said to see religion as less compatible with male roles, values and self image, (Mol, 1985: 74). The relationship between the self and religiosity, including negotiations of faith, disaffiliation, and the post apostatic self, would be expected to reflect such distinct socialisation patterns. The ability to adopt and reject faith would be tied to gendered socialisation experiences.
In quantitative analysis, however, support for this hypothesis was limited. Divergences in the familial socialisation practices of male and female respondents were found. Heterogeneity in apostasy processes, however, could not be meaningfully delineated by gender. Gender divergences were generally insignificant, and could not be readily tied to varied means for deconstructing faith or renegotiating the self.

A review of the demographic profiles of the respondents in this study, found that males and females were generally drawn from similar class backgrounds. SES measures of respondents themselves were also in line. I argue, however, that this non-divergence is potentially significant. The expectation would be that measures of SES would be lower for women, particularly in a sample which contains a contingent from an older cohort. While similar SES might be explained by the adoption of familial SES, high occupational prestige and educational attainment rates may reflect an association between ‘success’ and apostasy. This raises two interesting questions which are taken up in subsequent chapters: 1) Are women who seek success in a patriarchal society likely to apostatise and; 2) Might apostasy start a process of reflection and deconstruction of a patriarchal world?

Processes of socialisation, also point to findings of significance when explored by gender. Table 2.5 summarises the results.
Table 2.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Marriage</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Conviction</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Trans</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Intensity</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

Parental interfaith marriage rates were reported as similar for each group. Participation in religious rites and rituals also showed no major variations. In the recollections and reconstructions of subjective experiences, however, divergences are more common. Experiences of familial faith were consistently rated as more intense by male respondents than by female respondents. Ratings of the intensity of parental beliefs (.59 as compared to .49) as well as the perceived need for parents’ to transmit those beliefs (.49 as compared to .37) were significantly higher for males than they were for their female counterparts. It is not surprising then, that males also rated their religious intensity, that is the strength or passion associated with religiosity in the home, higher than did the females (.63 as compared to .49). Divergence of this nature, although statistically insignificant, was also found in the reporting of early childhood conviction. Religious socialisation experiences then, are consistently recounted as more orthodox by males.
Two types of explanation are offered for this divergence. The first involves experiences of socialisation; the religious socialisation of the male respondents in this survey may have been significantly more intense than that of the females. Perhaps the parents of boys who become apostates are more orthodox than the parents of girls who become apostates; or perhaps the orthodoxy of the parents is similar, but parents present differently to children. Parents' may feel a stronger need to formally pass their religion and religious beliefs on to the males in the family, or may be more inclined to present these needs in an authoritarian and traditional fashion.

The other possibility is that the orthodoxy of the parents, and the need to transmit beliefs are not necessarily divergent according to gender; religious socialisation might actually be similar for the two groups. What may, in fact, be divergent is the level of passion or intensity perceived, remembered or even recounted by the respondents. The processing and recounting of the experiences of youth may differ according to gender. Perhaps, as Mol might suggest, the incompatibility of religiosity with male roles, values and self image, makes experiences of socialisation much more cognisant for males. Men may thus recount tales of youth with impression and assertiveness, while women remain more passive in their narratives.

In processes of disaffiliation, however, this pattern of intensity for males, and passivity for women is reversed. Table 2.6 summarises the results.
Table 2.6
Mean Scores and Significance for Apostasy Process Variables by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age First Doubt</td>
<td>19.68</td>
<td>18.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Length</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Completed</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Return</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  \( p < .05 \)

The age of first doubt, the length of the apostasy process and the percentage of those who feel they have completed the apostatic journey are comparable for the two genders. In relating the intensity of the apostasy process, however, it is the females who are more apt to claim greater fervour (.56 as compared to .48). Women are also more assured in their belief that they will not return to their faith of origin (.06 as compared to .12). Within these subjective variables then, it is the women who show a greater conviction to apostasy. Perhaps religiosity, argued to be more compatible with female qualities, is given up with more angst and ultimately more conviction by women. Again, however, it needs to be remembered that it is difficult to discern whether differences are due to the varied intensity or the varied reporting of intensity for the two genders.

While gender may help to explain varied emotive costs of apostasy, the processes themselves and the catalyst for such processes, are reported as similar for both males and females. Neither
gender varies significantly from the mean of the entire sample (Table 2.2) or differs from the other gender for any process type variables. Whether processes were considered anomic and reactionary, egoistic and emotive, or born of a rational search for knowledge, meaning and belonging; both males and females were apt to mention the same processes and catalysts for processes with striking regularity. Anomie also showed a stable distribution across gender with both females and males reporting similar levels across all phases of the apostasy process.

Gender also does little to explain variation in the current belief structures of apostates. The labels used to define oneself, the level of comfort and commitment to apostasy, and the credibility of both mainstream and alternate beliefs all present as non-significantly different. Similarly, both males and females are non-divergent in their reflections on religious replacements. Both report parallel need for replacement, and claim to be equally likely to seek, find, and replace religion.

In an exploration of this sample by gender then, there is a similarity in processes of disaffiliation that is not expected. Regardless of the recalled experiences of religious socialisation, apostasy presents according to gender with conspicuous similarity. Forms of disaffiliation, current beliefs, and means of replacing religion, are all reported as non-divergent. I believe this opens up numerous possibilities and questions for further exploration. First, it might be suggested that the catalysts for apostasy itself, dampen the effects of gender. Perhaps the similarity of the experience causing apostasy overrides the varied socialisation practices of the parents, resulting in a convergence in apostatic possibilities. Second, varied socialisation experiences of males and females may influence the means of recalling and reconstructing past events. Gendered means for controlling and presenting the self, may obscure variance in
processes of disaffiliation. Finally, there is the possibility that gender can draw out and explain divergences in the apostatic journey. Quantitative analysis, however, may be ineffectual to the task, and a more nuanced qualitative examination may necessary for drawing out gender distinctions. Gender distinctions are thus further pursued in subsequent chapters.

Cohort

In the previous chapter, I argued that apostasy has not been employed as a signifier of postmodern shifts; shifts that will affect an individual’s practices of religious socialisation, processes of disaffiliation, negotiations of the self, and relationships to post apostatic religiosity. The impact of an emerging postmodern condition on the apostatic journey, has not been explored. In an attempt to examine the relationship between postmodernity and apostasy, two distinct cohorts of apostates were interviewed in this work. While the cohorts are delineated by date of apostasy rather than age of respondent, they nonetheless reflect a quite wide divide in contemporary history. The mean age of respondents of the older cohort is just over 61 years, while the mean age for the younger cohort is 25 years. It is hoped, then, that this divide will reflect some of the changes associated with the emergence of a postmodern condition in Australian society.

The data in table 2.7 suggests that this cohort division does reflect economic changes that might be indicative of an increasingly postmodern society.
Table 2.7 Mean Scores and Significance for Demographic Variables by Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prior 67</th>
<th>Post 82</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ SES</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Educ</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's SES</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Occup</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Educ</td>
<td>12.13</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

Both the families of respondents, and respondents themselves, show a trend towards improved socio-economic status over time. Educational attainment for the parents of the ‘post 82’ respondents was reported as just over two years higher than that of the parents of the ‘prior 67’ group (11.09 years as compared to 9.08 years). The education of the respondents themselves, rose by one and a half years, from 12.13 years for the older cohort to 13.71 for the younger cohort. This differential, however, may be under represented. The educational attainment of the respondents of the younger cohort may not have reached its peak; many of the respondents from the ‘post 82’ cohort were still involved in tertiary study at the time of interview.

The younger cohort also reported higher ratings of SES. The familial economic standing of the younger cohort was reported as significantly higher than the standing of the older cohort (.47 as compared to .35). The score for the respondents’ current SES (.64 as compared to...
and the respondents' occupation (.59 as compared to .43) followed a similar pattern. Again, these differentials are possibly underestimated due to the younger mean ages of the 'post 82' cohort.

I argue that increased SES in part, reflects changing economic conditions of Australian society. The rise in status of occupation, as well as the increase in educational attainment, may be seen as part of a move into a post-industrial, postmodern society, a society in which education and information technologies change the economic relationships of individuals. This increase can be seen as movement into what Bell refers to as a 'knowledge class' (1974) that has increased in importance and prevalence in recent times. Cohort, then, does seem to reflect a societal movement towards a postmodern condition.

Examination of the socialisation practices of the two cohorts also reflect postmodern changes in contemporary society. The data in table 2.8, offers evidence that religious socialisation has undergone a transformation in the time lapse separating the two cohorts. Religious socialisation no longer axiomatically implies strict and traditional religious upbringing.
Table 2.8
Mean Scores and Significance for Religious Upbringing Variables by Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Prior 67</th>
<th>Post 82</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Marriage</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Intensity</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' Trans</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Conviction</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

In table 2.8 all variables bar one, show that the orthodoxy of parents has diminished over time. The exception is ritual participation, for which cohort effects may be obscured by sample design. Shifting orientations to beliefs, however, do seem unequivocal. Interfaith marriage, for example, tripled in the time lapse marking the two cohorts (.07 to .22). This measure is particularly interesting because it alludes to the postmodern condition of diversity, plurality and choice. This increase in interfaith marriages infers that orthodoxy may not only have decreased over time, but opportunities for one to break from the parameters of the past have, in fact, increased.

The variables that rely on reconstructions and reminiscences of youth are also apt to show a pattern of diminished orthodoxy over time. The respondents from the ‘post 67’ cohort rated

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9 For inclusion in this study, respondents needed to be raised with some level of religious belief; baptism was therefore common to both cohorts.
their parents’ religious intensity at .60, while the figure for the ‘post 82’ cohort fell significantly to .49. Similarly, respondents report that parents’ need to transmit their religious beliefs dropped from .49 to .38. Not surprisingly, then, the intensity of religious socialisation as perceived by the respondents, showed weakening over the generational gap. The older cohort rated the intensity of their childhood religious experience as .62, while the corresponding figure for that of the younger cohort was .51. The childhood beliefs of the respondents themselves seem to be correlated to this intensity. The ‘prior 67’ cohort rated childhood conviction at .57, the figure, however, for the ‘post 82’ cohort plummeted to .31. While the perceived need for transmission of parental beliefs, and the intensity of religious experience in the home both dropped by 11 points, the respondent’s childhood conviction dropped by two and a half times that amount. This may indicate that the shift towards apostasy may be more than a weakening in intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs in secularised society. It may, in fact, indicate that there is increased opportunity, even in youth, to break from a tight collective consciousness owned by family and local community. In short, there is evidence of a societal shift affecting the socialisation practices of apostates over the time frame represented by the two cohorts. Modern techniques of authoritarian replication may be making room for more open postmodern socialisation techniques.

A postmodern transformation in the religious socialisation practices experienced by the two cohorts then is apparent. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to expect patterns of divergence to continue throughout the apostatic journey. If the intergenerational transmission of beliefs, and the strength of childhood conviction have weakened over time, while the ability to access the diversity and potentiality of postmodernity has, in fact, increased, then one would expect processes of apostasy to vary accordingly. This is a major hypothesis of this project;
postmodernity will affect forms of apostasy, current belief structures of apostates, and the potentiality for post apostatic religiosity.

The evidence meant to glean the effects of a postmodern condition on processes of apostasy, however, is limited. Table 2.9 is indicative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.9</th>
<th>Mean Scores and Significance for Apostasy Variables by Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prior 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age First Doubt</td>
<td>20.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Length</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Completed</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Return</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

In table 2.9, the age of first doubt and process length are shown to be significantly divergent by cohort. The average age when the ‘prior 67’ cohort begins to question faith is 20.60 years. The average process length is 10 years. For the younger, ‘post 82’ cohort, the average age when respondents’ recall having first doubts in 16.93, with the process taking approximately 3.65 years. Certainly, some of this difference can be attributed to sample censoring. A fair proportion of the apostates from the younger sample (38%) were under the age of 21 at the
time of interview. One would, therefore, expect that the age of first doubt be necessarily younger, and the process length be necessarily shorter than that of the older apostates.

What becomes interesting, then, is the percentage of respondents from each cohort who claim to have completed their apostatic journey. Following the logic of the sample censoring hypothesis, one would expect significantly fewer respondents from the younger cohort to have completed re-negotiations of faith. This, however, was not the case. 83% of the younger cohort report that have completed their apostatic journey; a figure identical to that of the older cohort. Two explanations are offered. First, a high figure for ‘completion’ in the younger cohort may reflect a cyclical tendency in processes of apostasy. Perhaps respondents from the younger cohort have come to a point where they feel the apostatic journey, as it stands, has come to an end. They may, however, again come to question religiosity and recommence an exploration of faith in the future. Alternatively, there may be a real and meaningful divergence in the apostasy processes for the two groups. While apostasy may not vary significantly in intensity (.54 for the ‘prior 67’ cohort, as compared to .50 for the ‘post 82’ cohort), or in the likelihood of a return to beliefs of origin (.10 for the ‘prior 67’ cohort, as compared to .09 for ‘post 82’ cohort), there is a distinct possibility that apostates from the younger cohort are better able to fully accept the transition into atheistic belief structures.

The two cohorts then, may be divergent in their ability to accept a lack of faith. Does this suggest that cohort may be used to meaningfully differentiate varying apostatic processes and/or the catalyst for such processes? Does the apostasy of the older cohort represent phenomena quite distinct from the apostasy of those socialised in a postmodern world?
From the data presented thus far, I would hypothesise that religious socialisation for the older cohort may be reflective of the dominating power relations and constructions of religion endemic to modernity. Apostasy for this group then, might be seen as resistance to the restrictive epistemological orientations of modern religiosity. Experiences of religious socialisation for the younger cohort, however, seem to reflect less restrictive conditions. Apostasy in this case, might reflect new, less emotive epistemological means for negotiating both religion and the self. Accordingly, anomic and egoistic type processes would be referenced with greater frequency by the older cohort, while the younger cohort would cite more postmodern process types. The data in table 2.10 finds only limited support for this hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Process</th>
<th>Prior 67</th>
<th>Post 82</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactionary</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Disappointment</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Disappointment</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disenchantment</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One way ANOVA (LSD) p< .05
The data is this table shows that the younger cohort is as likely to reference anomic type, reactionary variables as the older group. Apostasy as a rebellious or reactionary process was not found to be correlated to cohort. For egoistic type variables, however, there was some divergence. While disenchanted was referenced consistently by both groups, internal disappointment was less commonly referenced by those socialised in an increasingly postmodern world. Only 20% of the younger cohort mention that internal disappointment, a feeling that God had let them down personally, was a correlate to their apostasy. The corresponding figure for the older cohort is 50%. Perhaps this suggests that in the reconstruction and recounting of past events, there is a greater sense of personal abandonment within the older cohort. This seems to be born out by the ‘logic’ and ‘search’ variables. These figures, although not statistically significant, support the notion that younger apostates may be less personally rebellious towards God and religion than their older counterparts. 70% of respondents from the younger cohort acknowledge their apostatic process as logical; the corresponding figure for the older cohort is 52%. Similarly, 10% more apostates from the younger cohort mention that their process of apostasy was in at least some manner an epistemological search for meaning and/or identity (35% as compared to 25%). This data then, is interesting because it points to a possible correlation between those born into an increasingly postmodern world, and varying apostasy processes. In a postmodern society, apostasy may no longer solely reflect resistance to the dominating power relations of the religious institutions of modernity. There is evidence suggesting that apostasy in a postmodern world, is increasingly reflective of new epistemological approaches to knowledge.

Following this argument, anomie was expected to show some level of divergence based on the emergence of a postmodern condition. The expectation was that during and after processes of
disaffiliation, anomie would be more prevalent for the older cohort. The tight religious collective conscious of Australia's past and its lack of religious pluralism and diversity, would give a sense of belonging to the pre-apostate. Forgoing belief under such circumstances might be cause for anomie. As was found for anomic type process variables, however, anomie showed stable distribution across cohort. Both 'prior 67' and 'post 82' respondents reported similarly across all phases of the apostasy process. A relationship between cohort and apostasy then, is suggested by the data, but not incontrovertibly so. Cohort is thus limited as an explanation for heterogeneity in apostasy processes.

The limits of cohort are further brought out in an exploration of the post apostatic self. Defining oneself as either atheist, agnostic, or 'other' varies insignificantly for the two cohorts.

As well, comfort and commitment to post-apostatic beliefs and lifestyle, and the credibility ratings for mainstream and alternative beliefs, fall in line. Given the virtually limitless possibilities for 'religiosity' in the postmodern age, it is these similarities that are most surprising. Alternate belief structures and the supports available for those who seek out alternatives, has assuredly gone through a transformation in contemporary Australian society (Bouma, 1995). A division of sample by cohort, however, does not seem to uncover the effects of this societal transformation. This situation is replicated in the data on religious replacement. As compared to the older cohort, the younger, 'post 82' cohort ranks higher on the belief that there is a need for a religious replacement (60% as compared to 50%). They are also somewhat more likely to seek a replacement (67.5% as compared to 60%) and in fact, more likely to replace religion (32.5% as compared to 30%). These divergences, however, are shown to be minimal and statistically insignificant.
What interpretation then, can be made of cohort differentiation aimed at understanding the heterogeneity of apostates and apostasy processes? Findings are equivocal. Evidence of changing economic conditions, as well as a loosening of orthodox Christian religious socialisation practices is supported by the data. The cohort evidence that supports an emerging postmodern condition, however, does not fully extend to the realm of new epistemological approaches to religion, apostasy and the self. Evidence such as the divergence in the internal disappointment tells us that there might be fundamental differences in epistemological approaches to apostasy that need to be uncovered. Overwhelming evidence of a strong correlation between cohort and a transforming nature of apostasy, however, does not exist. Processes of disaffiliation, current belief structures, and religious replacements seem only minimally affected by a shift to a postmodern condition. Cohort alone is thus inadequate for drawing out the complexity of relationships between angst, the self and societal condition.

A likely explanation for the equivocal nature of these findings, is the erroneous assumption that cohort alone can reflect the adoption of a postmodern mindset and postmodern orientation to knowledge and the self. Postmodernity is not a linear or ubiquitous phenomenon. It can not be fixed within a specific time frame. It is, in fact, more malleable and elusive. For example, one can not pin the conception of a postmodern age to a particular date in the ‘60s, ‘70s or ‘80s. This, however, is the implicit assumption behind a cohort division of sample. Postmodernity needs to be seen as an amorphous force that has slowly changed both the condition of society and the consciousness of the individual. It is asymmetric, particularly in its effect on individuals; some embracing the potentialities and possibilities of postmodernity, while others hold on to what might be best described as modernistic ways of seeing. A postmodern mindset, or a postmodern way of looking at the world would not be unilaterally evidenced by those
individuals born from any particular date; rather change would be slow and haphazard, with the occurrence of a postmodern mind set slowly increasing over time. Thus assuming that the emergence of a postmodern condition implies universal acceptance and adoption of new epistemological approaches to knowledge, does not acknowledge the complexities and intricacies of both the individual and the transformations associated with a postmodern age; it does not allow for a complex rendering of a postmodern condition, and its relationship to the potentially transforming epistemological orientations of the individual.

The limited findings of cohort then, and the recognition of the complex relationship of societal condition and an individuals’ orientation to knowledge, suggests the necessity to explore apostates and processes of apostasy by the internal characteristics of apostates themselves; to investigate apostasy on the basis of respondents’ postmodern mindset and epistemological orientations to apostasy. Rather than have examinations focus solely on the emergence of a postmodern societal condition, examinations may be more fruitful if they proceed on the basis on apostate types. Cohort delineation within these types might then be examined in a bid to understand the impact of a postmodern societal condition on apostates with varying orientations to religion, the social and the self.

Towards an Apostasy Typology

Examination of the data thus far suggests that the most productive means for delineating apostates by their intrinsic characteristics and epistemological orientations to knowledge, would begin with an exploration of anomie and egoism. Durkheim’s analysis of suicide found anomie and egoism to be common consequences of the angst caused by an emerging modern
society (1993). Apostasy in a world verging on the postmodern still shows signs of this angst. The data in this study suggests that anomic and egoistic approaches to knowledge still apply in a society moving from a modern to a postmodern condition. Along with the modern responses of anomie and egoism, however, the contemporary period also sees less emotive responses to a ‘crisis of faith’. There appear to be more postmodern ways of negotiating both religiosity and the self. Preliminary qualitative analysis of the narrative text supports this claim.

Narrative investigation using the NUDIST program to index and cross classify interview material, uncovered three distinct patterns of apostasy: apostasy as a reactionary dismissal of God; apostasy as an emotional and introspective soul searching; and apostasy as the unemotional exploration of alternate possibilities. In other words anomic, egoistic and postmodern approaches to apostasy could be seen.

Furthermore, an individual’s epistemological approach to processes of disaffiliation was strongly correlated with their negotiations of both early childhood socialisation, and the post apostatic self. Throughout the apostatic journey there could be seen three apostate types, each with a characteristic approach to apostasy: the anomic apostate, who approaches issues of religiosity with reactionary rebellion and little critical reflection; the egoistic apostate, who approaches such issues with internal angst, depression and equivocation and finally; the postmodern apostate, who approaches issues of religiosity with an open mind, and does not seem adversely affected by transformations in the location of meaning.

It is my hope that this trilogy of apostate types will be able to capture the complexities of individuals engaged in an apostatic journey during the contemporary period of transition. Through examination of ‘anomic’ and ‘egoistic’ or more modern forms of apostasy, as
compared to the ‘postmodern’ form; an examination of the correlation of these types to cohort; as well as an examination of cohort delineation within types, it is hoped that a complex treatment of an emerging postmodern condition and the individuals attempting to negotiate this period will emerge. Apostasy can then be explored as a signifier of postmodern epistemic shifts and redefining relationships to knowledge.

These three apostate types then, anomic, egoistic, and postmodern are pursued in the remainder of this work. An examination of the apostates’ socialisation experiences, processes of disaffiliation, current belief structures, and experiences of post apostatic religiosity; along with their connection to an emerging postmodern condition, are taken up at length in the following chapters. As grounding for further analysis, however, a description of each type, a discussion of cross classifications, and a brief demographic overview concludes the chapter.

The Anomic Apostle

In speaking of anomie, Durkheim states that, ‘(a)nomie, in fact, begets a state of exasperated and irritated weariness...’ (1993: 375). He goes on to say that, ‘...it is anger and all the emotions customarily associated with disappointment’ (1993:284), and that, ‘(t)he dominating note is more or less irritated disgust with life’ (1993:286). It is these characteristics: weariness; anger; irritated disgust, perhaps not with life, but at least with God or religion, which best describe the anomic apostate. If the above characteristics were found to dominate the tone, feel and emotive nature of the interviews; if a reactionary or rebellious nature was central to the apostatic journey, then one's primary classification was anomic. In this sample of
eighty apostates, twenty-four or thirty percent are classified in this manner. Quantitative and qualitative analyses paint the following broad picture of these apostates.

The anomic apostate generally experiences traditional, orthodox Christian upbringing. A sense of Christian identity, meaning, values, and morals are well established within the home. There is often reference to religious dogma and established links with a religious community are commonplace. Often this group is part of a traditional patriarchal home where independence and free choice are not valued. The family religion generally goes unquestioned and is accepted until a situation of crisis wherein religion becomes a source of anomie and alienation.

The process of apostasy is not part of an ongoing epistemological quest for knowledge. Rather, it tends to be a reactionary or rebellious response to a particular event. It is an emotive response to religious disillusionment and disappointment and has little sense of rationality or logic. This group feels personally let down by their faith and attack their beliefs with hostility. Perhaps more than no longer believing that there is a God, they no longer believe or have faith in that God. Apostasy is generally an intense process, born of anger.

These anomic apostates have become somewhat comfortable with their lack of religion. The anger caused by their religious disappointment is often lessened through their apostasy. They generally reject all things Christian and do not give much thought to alternative religious beliefs, before or after processes of disaffiliation. As a rule, these anomic apostates have not given much credence to post apostatic spirituality. Most have not considered, and unilaterally dismiss the 'spiritual'.
Grounding morality and social order without reference to a traditional Western Christian God was not something well considered by this group. Many gave off the cuff explanations and mentioned that they had not really thought much about this topic. This group of apostates has abandoned religion. Because their apostasy was not born of an epistemological quest, religious replacements are not commonplace. Many felt no need for an explanation or system of meaning.

The Egoistic Apostle

Regarding egoism, Durkheim tells us that it,

...is a condition of melancholic languor which relaxes all the springs of action...(and) inspires the person only with indifference and aversion... what is lost in activity is made up for in thought and inner life. In revulsion from its surroundings consciousness becomes self occupied (1993, pp. 278-279).


For the egoistic apostate, it is this empty, melancholic intellectualism as well as sense of confused detachment wherein religion becomes deconstructed to the point of irreconcilable doubt and emptiness, that best reflects the classification. Correspondingly, if disconsolate detachment is shown as the dominant inclination within one’s narrative, the primary classification would be egoistic. Twenty-nine percent or twenty-three of the eighty apostates follow this pattern. The following is a generalised overview of this particular apostate type.

The background of the egoistic apostate is not easily pinned down. Some come from orthodox, patriarchal families with traditional Christian beliefs, while others come from more
liberal, free-thinking families with diversity and pluralism at the fore. Whether traditional and orthodox, liberal and free-thinking, or somewhere in between, a common denominator in this group's early socialisation, is that their particular family structure created a need/desire for self reflection. During this period of introspection, questions are thought and rethought. Religion is deconstructed and examined to the point of irreconcilable doubt. Egoistic intellectualism causes one to feel detached from their system of meaning.

The process of apostasy is part of an ongoing epistemological quest for knowledge, but with a negative inclination. Rather than being reactionary or rebellious, it is more an intense intellectual exercise in confusion and detachment. This group feels as though they need to make sense of a world which, for them, does not make sense. Religion for the egoistic apostate can not be reconciled with the condition of the world or the condition of themselves.

These egoistic apostates are not necessarily uncomfortable with giving up their birth religion, rather they tend to be uncomfortable with the lack of knowing. The process of apostasy tends to be long and intense. This group tends to generally reject all things Christian and may or may not give credence to alternate beliefs, although they are generally well considered. As a rule these egoistic apostates have given substantial thought to post apostatic spirituality. Some have replaced religion with the spiritual, some with secular concerns and others still look for a system of meaning.

Grounding morality and social order without reference to a traditional Western Christian God was at times problematic, yet well considered by this group. Many gave answers that had been thoroughly considered while others, even in their inability to answer, showed that the question,
or a similar one had been considered. This group of apostates has been unable to reconcile religion in their lives, and their apostasy can be seen as a means of easing this religious dissonance.

The Postmodern Apostate

The postmodern apostate is an individual who shows little of the anger of the anomic apostate, or the melancholic introspection of the egoist. This apostate type is open to the opportunities associated with the postmodern condition, and does not seem to suffer from any negative emotional outcomes in the process of forgoing religion. The existence of an epistemological quest for knowing without a reactionary basis, or a confused intellectualism; a desire to explore options because of an awareness of their existence; and a willingness to expand the realms of spiritual possibility beyond immediate experience and frames of reference, are all characteristics of the postmodern apostate. Forty-one percent, or thirty-three of the eighty apostates in this study were classified as postmodern. This apostate type presents as follows:

Postmodern apostates generally experience a less traditional Christian upbringing than their modernistic apostate cousins. There is little sense of Christian identity, and a strong Christian community goes unreferenced. Pluralism in religious beliefs is often evident in the home and rarely is there reference to religious dogma. In youth these apostates are often part of a democratic, ‘thinking’ family where independence and free choice are valued, and blind acceptance to authority is not. There is little reference to egoism or anomie caused by religious background.
In contrast to the anomic apostate, the process of apostasy does not tend to be reactionary or rebellious. Neither is it tainted with egoistic introspection. For the postmodern apostate, apostasy is part of an ongoing epistemological quest for knowledge. Whether through self search, or by means of logic and rationality, increased access to diversity of information, lifestyles, and ideologies has led one to question the whole realm of religion and the religious. This is not necessarily an intense process, but rather one born out of a quest for knowing.

These postmodern apostates are quite comfortable with their lack of religiosity and feel little sense of alienation. They reject mainstream religions, particularly Christianity, but do not unilaterally reject all things spiritual. As a rule these apostates are not opposed to post apostatic spirituality. Many feel that there is a real need for something ‘more’ and most have actively looked, and indeed found religious replacements.

Grounding morality and social order without reference to a traditional Western Christian God was not generally problematic for this group. Postmodern apostates were quite comfortable in the transition from the modernistic religion of their forbearers, to a personal, individual system of meaning possible in postmodernity.

**Cross Classifications**

This trilogy of apostate types is used as a starting point in acknowledging the complexities of the individual, the complexities of a shift to the postmodern, and the intricacy of the interactions of the two. Of course, these classifications are ideal types, and should not be
considered distinct in all individuals. Durkheim makes the point. In speaking of suicide types, he states,

... they are not alway found in a state of purity and isolation. They are often combined with one another, giving rise to composite varieties... The reason for this is that different social causes... may simultaneously affect the same individual and impose their combined effects upon him... They mutually reinforce each other (1993:287).

This situation is analogous for apostasy. While each respondent is labelled with a primary classification, composite varieties also present. Table 2.11 shows the occurrence of these cross classifications for the sample in its entirety, and for each of the two cohorts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.11</th>
<th>Composite Varieties of Apostates by Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomic-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anomic alone</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egoistic</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postmodern</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egoistic-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egoistic alone</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anomic</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postmodern</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern-</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postmodern alone</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anomic</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egoistic</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All numbers are expressed as percentages
The extent of cross classifications shown in this table further alludes to the complexity of the apostate, and the journey of apostasy. One third to one half of the apostates primarily classified in any one group are cross classifiable. This is interesting because in addition to intricacy and affinity of apostasy types, patterns of association point to the emergence and influence of postmodernity. Cross classifications of the postmodern type with the anomic and egoistic types are found to be divergent by cohort.

In the case of the anomic apostate for example, 70% of the older cohort were classified as strictly anomic. Only 11% were cross classified as anomic/postmodern. For the younger cohort, however, 40% are classified as solely anomic, while 50% were cross classified as anomic/postmodern. These figures might suggest then, that the emergence of a postmodern condition is influencing a younger cohort of anomic apostates. Perhaps the anger, disgust and weariness that characterises this classification are somewhat tempered by acknowledgment of postmodern possibilities in an ever changing world.

The scenario for the egoistic apostate is analogous, but perhaps more pronounced. Among the older cohort, 70% were classified as strictly egoistic, with only 7% cross classified as egoistic/postmodern. Amongst the younger cohort, however, 22% are classified as solely egoistic, while a full 67% could be said to have characteristics of the postmodern classification. Clearly, this can be presented as evidence for the emergence of a postmodern condition affecting the younger generation of egoists. In fact, for the younger cohort, egoism without postmodern influences is relatively uncommon. A strong association between the younger cohort of egoistic and postmodern apostates is thus implied.
The situation for those primarily classified as postmodern is divergent. Table 2.11 shows relative consistency in cross classifications by cohort, the percentage of apostates who present as solely postmodern holds steady at approximately two thirds. Anomic and egoistic influences are seen in the remainder of both groups. A proportion of the narratives of even those who embrace and are embraced by the postmodern world are thus marked by both anomie and egoism. Perhaps this should not come as a surprise. It would be naïve to consider postmodern society a utopia with little sign of cultural strain. Anomie and egoism, often associated with modernity, are not axiomatically fended off by the choice, plurality, and diversity of a postmodern world. In fact, these facets of postmodern society may be seen as an actual source of what Durkheim (1993:287) refers to as the ‘infinity of desires’ and ‘infinity of dreams’ in which anomic and egoistic apostates potentially lose themselves. I would not suggest then, that the emergence of a postmodern condition is likely to see traditional anomic and egoistic apostates replaced in full by the postmodern type. Society and the individuals within it, remain far too complex.

**Employing the Typology**

Recognising and appreciating the complexities and composite characteristics of respondents, is essential in a bid to avoid reduction. I argue, however, that exploration of the ideal types offered above can be insightful for understanding the complexities of apostasy commensurate with the emergence of a postmodern world. Rather than be reductionary, it is my hope that the apostate typology can provide a new map for understanding the phenomenon of apostasy and open the construct as a potential signifier of epistemic cultural transformation.
Table 2.12 identifies the apostates according to the new typology and shows the correlations of type to gender, religion, and cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-67</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-82</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Chi² test of significance  p < .05  
All numbers are expressed as percentages

As shown in this table, anomic, egoistic and postmodern apostates are as likely to be male as female. Gender presents as having a weak and non-significant correlation to apostate type. The results for religion are somewhat more interesting. Egoistic and postmodern types are made up of similar proportions of Catholic and Protestant apostates. Anomic apostates, however, are somewhat more likely to have a Catholic heritage. Perhaps the greater orthodoxy of a Catholic upbringing can be seen as a catalyst for this reactionary stance, and causal to anomie itself.
Cohort is also found to be significantly correlated to apostate type. The majority of anomic and egoistic apostates (66.7% and 58.3% respectively) were from the older cohort. In contrast, the preponderance of postmodern apostates (68.8%) were from the younger generation. These results then, show an association between an emerging postmodern condition and a postmodern mindset. They also show, however, that relationships between cohort and type are not always in line with expectations. A significant proportion of younger apostates are classified anomic or egoistic, while many of the older cohort are considered postmodern. The asymmetric nature of postmodernity and its varied impact on an individual’s epistemological approaches to knowledge, is thus shown.

Concluding Remarks

Before turning to subsequent chapters and engaging the apostasy typology in an exploration of the apostatic journey, a final question is explored. Does the apostate trilogy pick up distinctions in apostate types, beyond epistemological orientations? The data in table 2.13 suggests that it does. There appears to be an association between apostate type and class background.
Table 2.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>35.78</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent's SES</strong></td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent's Educ</strong></td>
<td>9.47</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>10.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent's Occup</strong></td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent's SES</strong></td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent's Educ</strong></td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>13.38</td>
<td>13.84</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

Most striking in table 2.13 is the divergence between the anomic and postmodern apostates. Without fail, anomic apostates report significantly lower levels of SES than their postmodern counterparts. Measures of respondents’ familial class background and parents’ educational attainment, for example, both show postmodern families as better off than anomic ones. Families of the egoists present as a non-significant centre point between the other types. These divergences are continued in an examination of respondents themselves. Postmodern apostates rate higher than anomic apostates on measures of occupational prestige, with egoists again acting as a centre point. Measures of respondents’ SES and educational attainment show a slightly different pattern. For these measures both egoistic and postmodern apostates stand in opposition to anomic apostates. The anomic apostates rate significantly lower than the other types for both variables.
A correlation between SES and apostate type then is clearly shown. The families of the anomic apostates were significantly worse off than the families of their postmodern counterparts. Similarly, anomic respondents themselves have a significantly lower standing than both egoistic and postmodern apostate types. I believe these findings are of interest because they may reflect variance beyond cohort effects. Cohort correlation may partially explain variance in SES; an emerging postmodern economic condition may be reflected in the above divergences. The strength of the findings, however, implies that there may be a more fundamental correlation between SES and epistemological approaches to knowledge.

Apostate types then, are shown to be distinct. Relationships to religiosity and orientations to knowledge, however, are not their only points of departure; apostate types vary in basic social /economic conditions. Drawing out these varied types and understanding the significance of their apostatic journeys in relation to a changing world order, is the challenge of the following chapters.
Chapter Three

RELIGIOUS SOCIALISATION

In this chapter, research on apostasy is presented as a means of uncovering the premised assumptions and constructed knowledges which surround our understanding of socialisation, particularly religious socialisation. I argue that apostasy is an effective site for such an endeavour, for critical examinations of socialisation are not generally pursued while the understandings they provide are non-problematic; problematic sites within socialisation processes can be key to understanding the implicit assumptions of the construct itself. Apostasy is a rupture in processes of socialisation, specifically the religious socialisation goals understood in modernity, or the inculcation of individual to the group. Apostasy is therefore consequential as it represents a certain failure in the replication orientation of religious socialisation. Via an investigation of this ‘failure’, it becomes possible to undertake an examination of the elements of replication which are unsuccessful; as well as an examination of the assumptions of replication and inculcation which define and limit the construct itself.

The site of apostasy also allows light to be shed on the negotiation of socialisation practices in periods of transition. Apostasy from organised Christianity is more prevalent in current Western society than at any other time in modern history, and the emerging postmodern condition coincides with this increased foregoing of faith. Apostasy is therefore interesting as it may signify a form of resistance to modernistic socialisation practices. Exploring this resistance can open up our understandings of socialisation, particularly as this resistance points to societal transformation that may see modernistic conceptualisations of the term become less germane.
In grounding this case, I argue that socialisation understood as essential and necessary unquestioned adaptation and replication must be recognised as an understanding which arises from particular discursive processes. There are specific historical antecedents to our current understanding of the socialisation construct which must be recognised. Thus what classical psychology and sociology give credence to as general processes of socialisation, are better described as modernistic understandings of socialising individuals into societies embedded in a modern, capitalistic world; a world where preparation for successful participation into both the current social and economic order was the primary concern. For example, Durkheim's (1965, 1973) work on the rites and rituals which shape the 'collective conscious', as well as Freud's (1921, 1922, 1961, 1966) psycho-analytic approach to socialisation focusing on the id, ego, superego, have become basic assumptions of socialisation theory. These early 20th Century theorists, followed on by the likes of Piaget (1929, 1932, 1970), Cooley (1962, 1964), G. Mead (1934, 1964) and Erickson (1950, 1958), have set up a tradition of research grounded by and positioned within a certain historical framework; a framework of modern capitalist society. Additionally, the work of these theorists sits within a certain climate of academic disciplines of psychology and sociology within this historical juncture. They are part of a specific discursive process endeavouring to understand how individuals of the day adapted to the modern Western world and how that world reproduced itself.

Thus understandings of socialisation are not premised by looking at our current society as a part of continuing historical transition. Rather, our understanding is based on an examination of 'society' as a falsely stable construct frozen in the early 1900s, understood via the academic epistemological orientation prevalent at the time. Accordingly, in the classical school of sociology, socialisation is understood as non-negotiated processes of adaptation and
replication which are critical for both the development of the self and the maintenance/reproduction of society. It is from this modernistic platform that much contemporary socialisation research progresses.

While there are theorists who question the tendency to see both society and socialisation as stable, I argue that their work can still be seen as embedded within assumptions implicit to modernity. Mannheim, for example would be cited as one social theorist attempting to deconstruct the notion that socialisation is a stable construct. Mannheim (1952) suggested that processes of socialisation may actually involve different experiences for each new generation; individuals in successive cohorts may be socialised in very distinctive ways, leading to varied consequences. In speaking of a cohort Mannheim tells us that,

(t)hey are in a position to experience the same events and data, and especially that these experiences impinge upon a similar ‘stratified consciousness’ (1952:304).

In short, divergent socialisation forces lead to divergently socialised groups, with equally divergent consciousness.

Close examination of this quote, however, shows us that while there may be room in Mannheim’s conception for societal change, the overriding understanding of socialisation is still grounded in the assumptions of modernity which sees socialisation as an authoritarian force. A theme of domination can be detected in even this fluid conception of the term. To socialise is to ‘impinge’. For Mannheim, the agency of the individual to mediate socialisation is not only constrained, but unrecognised. Socialisation is imposed from on high with little negotiation or interplay by the inculcated individual.
Durkheim, as well, recognises that shifting historical conditions can change the goals of socialisation. Like Mannheim, however, his understandings are still premised on socialisation as unquestioned replication and domination. He states:

The pressure to which the child is subjected unremittingly is the same pressure of the social environment which seeks to shape him in its own image, and in which parents and teachers are only the representatives and intermediaries (1982:54).

Durkheim recognises that as the social environment evolves, so too must the forms of pressure applied by societies’ intermediaries. Careful examination of this passage, however, shows that the assumptions of replication and inculcation still operate even in this paradigm which allows for societal change. The child is ‘subjected unremittingly’, by ‘pressure’ whose goal is to ‘...shape him in his own image’. There is authority, domination and a lack of agency in the individual. While Durkheim’s understanding of socialisation may seem adaptable to new historical conditions, it does little to show the possibility for transformation in the means of socialisation itself.

Perhaps in Foucauldian terms then, these ‘traditional’ socialisation practices may be best understood as modernistic ‘technologies of power’; technologies which act to ‘...determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivising of the self’ (1988:18). According to Foucault, modernistic means of socialisation involve the immersion of the individual into the gratification/punishment system which acts to control the self; it is immersion into a system of punitive power relations (1973, 1977, 1980).
The work of Foucault, however, is particularly interesting because it recognises that the creation of the ‘subject’ is embedded within particular historical frameworks. Foucault explicitly recognises that the constitution of the self is a dynamic relationship in which agency of the individual can vary with the forces of domination that exist within a particular historical juncture. His conceptualisations of the ‘subject’ allow us to reframe understandings of socialisation, freeing the concept from its confining and restrictive ‘modernistic’ boundaries. He states:

I had to reject a certain *a priori* theory of the subject in order to make this analysis of the relationships which can exist between the constitution of the subject or different forms of the subject and the games of truth, practices of power and so forth (1989:11).

Socialisation as the replication of, reproduction of and assimilation to current societal structures by forces beyond the control of the individual, is not adopted by Foucault. In contrast, Foucault presents an analysis of the possible relationships that can act to constitute one or more forms of the subject. He suggests that rather than domination forced from on high, the ‘constitution of the subject’ is embedded in ‘games’ and ‘practices’ which allow for interplay between socialising forces and the individual. Emphasis is on the ‘technologies of the self’ which ‘... allow for... transform(ations)... in order to obtain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’ (1988:18).

Foucault’s analysis then, can be used as a framework for re-examining how we think of the socialised self. As we move from a modern to a postmodern era, the relationships of ‘games’ and ‘practices’ may move away from the all pervasive authority and domination so prevalent in
modernity, to relationships which allow for redefined parameters in the processing of knowledges of both the self and society.

Within the current climate then, one must consider whether modernistic understandings of socialisation are sufficient. Or, do they underestimate the potential for traditionally unrecognised forms of ‘socialisation’ to prepare individuals for a re-defining world. Perhaps in a postmodern age, ‘socialisation’ may see a shift away from understandings of the construct which now hold a position of priority in academic discourse. Postmodern understandings of ‘socialisation’ may need to become less focused on replication and assimilation, and perhaps re-imagined such that choice, freedom, and plurality are no longer considered detrimental to, an anomaly of, or aberration to, successful socialisation. As society evolves so too must our recognition that the means of inculcating individuals towards those new orientations also evolves.

I argue that understandings of religious socialisation follow this same pattern of constriction by limiting parameters. The construct is understood under a certain paradigm of knowledge which accepts a dual functionality of religious socialisation, often unquestioned given the current orthodoxy within the field. Put simply, religious socialisation is seen as a process which provides an individual with crucial labels, a sense of identity, and a clear system of meaning. It sets the stage for belonging, and gives a place and connection with the outside world (McGuire, 1987). On the other hand, religious socialisation is seen as crucial for the perpetuation of religion itself (Beckford, 1975).
These orientations feed the commonly accepted understanding that religious socialisation is a symbiotic relationship wherein the individual assimilates and accommodates into a group which provides meaning, identity and belonging. Meanwhile, the religious organisation ensures its own perpetuation and survival while getting much of the credit for both the stability of the individual and of society in general.

Following the pattern for general socialisation, however, I argue that this understanding of religious socialisation progresses from particular discursive processes. Our current understanding of religion itself, stems from modernistic knowledges of religion constructed by the ‘founding fathers’ of sociology. To that end, I would argue that understandings of religious socialisation embedded in classical sociology are actually non-engaged modernistic understandings of how mainly Christian, Western, religious structures are driven towards replication in modern capitalist societies.

The emergence of a postmodern world, however, presents the opportunity to deconstruct both notions of religion and religious socialisation. In exploring the intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs, there can be recognition that what may have constituted ‘weak’ transmission or a ‘failure’ of transmission in modernity, needs to be more fully explored when situated in a postmodern world. Thus I argue that while ‘religious socialisation’ as understood in modernity may become superannuated, the ‘creation of the subject’ in relation to spiritual possibilities still occurs. It is the means by which this is done and the ultimate goals of the endeavour, however, which may show an epistemological shift commensurate with a new age. Uncovering how both religion and the transmission of religion are renegotiating themselves in
times of postmodern change, and the effect this has on both the individual and religion itself, becomes both meaningful and possible.

To that end, this chapter consists of an examination of the socialisation experiences of the apostate. Specifically, it is an examination of the experiences of those who have experienced a rupture in religious socialisation in which success is seen as replication, and/or those who have simply explored the possibilities allowed for, as the means for subject creation redefines itself in a new world. These varied experiences are then examined in light of the emergence of a postmodern societal condition in an attempt to show how modern modes of socialisation may be going through a process of epistemological evolution, evolving beyond the parameters of understanding constructed in modernity. An examination of the apostates' religious socialisation processes by both apostasy typology and by cohort is, thus, undertaken in an attempt to deconstruct and re-imagine 'socialisation' as it redefines itself in a postmodern world.

Apostasy Typology

As described in Chapter Two, the apostate classifications in this analysis are based on preliminary findings which suggest that three distinct apostate types are clearly evidenced in the data. In regards to the processes of disaffiliation, it is clear that there are apostates who are very reactionary or 'anomic', those who can be described as confused and detached or 'egoistic', and those who were more 'postmodern' and open to a range of religious possibilities. It is from these examinations of the apostatic process that an examination of religious socialisation retroactively proceeds. It is, therefore, important to remember that an
exploration of early childhood socialisation by type, is the exploration of antecedents to the epistemological orientations used in the classification criteria. These socialisation processes are examined as potential correlates to varied epistemological means of negotiating apostasy.

Quantitative analysis is presented as an overview of the varying strength and intensity of familial religious upbringing for each apostate type. The techniques used in socialisation experiences, the emotive negotiation of these experiences and their correlations to both type and cohort are more fully explored in narrative analysis taken up further in this chapter.

The quantitative results contained in table 3.1, provide a summary of the divergent religious background of the varying apostate classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1</th>
<th>Mean Scores and Significance for Religious Upbringing Variables by Apostate Type *</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anomic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Intensity</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Trans</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituals</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Conviction</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Inter-faith Marriage</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD) \( p < .05 \)
A quick perusal of the data on religious upbringing, as explored through an examination of both parental and childhood conviction and intensity, shows that there are indeed differences in the socialisation experiences of the varying classes of apostates. Two trends are clear. First, the data in table 3.1 shows a lack of divergence in the religious upbringing of egoistic and postmodern apostates. Second, socialisation experiences of the anomic apostate are distinct. The experiences of this classification of apostate are much more intense than the religious socialisation experiences of their egoistic and postmodern counterparts.

Divergences of this nature are first found in analysis of the intensity of parental religious beliefs. For the anomic apostates, parental intensity rated at .67 which is significantly higher than ratings of egoistic and postmodern apostates which were .53 and .47 respectively. This pattern continues in the respondents’ perception of the need for parents to transmit their religious attitudes and beliefs. While the ratings of anomic apostates on this measure is .59, egoistic apostates and the postmodern apostates rate their parents at .39 and .35, respectively. Parents of anomic apostates are also more likely to have their children participate in religious rituals than are the parents of apostates from the other two classifications.

Not surprisingly, then, the intensity of childhood religious socialisation experiences rate significantly higher for the anomic apostate (.71) than they do for egoistic and postmodern apostates alike (.48 and .52 respectively). In short, it could be said that the religious upbringing of the anomic apostate is significantly more assiduous than the experiences of religious socialisation undergone by the egoistic and postmodern classifications of apostates.
The data on childhood conviction suggests that these religious socialisation experiences do have some influence on the childhood conviction of the respondents themselves. The anomic apostate reports a childhood religious conviction rating of .53; significantly less than that of the parents, but higher then the ratings of .42 for egoistic apostate and .39 for postmodern apostates\(^1\).

A certain profile is thus emerging of the anomic apostate. The statistical overview finds that anomic apostates are likely to come from homes steeped in a strong religious heritage and tradition. Inter-faith marriage of parents is extremely low (0.05), while the faith of the parents and the desire to transmit that faith are quite high, as is the early childhood conviction for anomic respondents themselves.

Such distinct portraits of egoistic and postmodern apostates, however, are harder to discern from this level of analysis. The results show a lack of divergence in religious socialisation measures for these two groups. From measures of parental intensity to the respondents’ own childhood conviction, results are non-significantly divergent. The only exception to this pattern of similarity is in the percentage of parents who entered interfaith marriages. For this measure, egoistic apostates have a figure close to that of anomic apostates and are significantly less likely to engage interfaith marriages than their postmodern counterparts. One must remember, however, that the postmodern contingent is largely represented by younger apostates. It therefore must be recognised that this tendency for increased interfaith marriages may more likely represent an evolving societal condition, than socialisation differences between the types.

\(^1\) While scores on conviction for egoistic and postmodern apostates are similar (.42 and .39 respectively), only the divergence between anomic and postmodern apostates is statistically significant.
From this level of quantitative analysis then, one might assume that egoistic and postmodern apostates have had similar childhood religious socialisation experiences. Further, it might be assumed that any divergences which mark the two groups are less dependent upon one's familial religious upbringing, than subsequent life experiences or the examination of cohort correlation. The quantitative measures of the strength and the intensity of one's religious socialisation, as presented in table 4.1, however, do not speak for the more emotive components of the socialisation process. These emotive negotiations need to be further examined before such cause and effect determinations can be made. This is essential, for what the quantitative data does not explore is the possibility for very different ways of negotiating similar patterns of socialisation. While quantitative variables can point to differences in the intensity of experiences, they can not explore how these experiences are managed at both the emotional and cognitive level by the various classes of apostates.

An examination of the narrative material in this analysis is, therefore, fundamental. This qualitative examination should be constructive in drawing out the nuances which characterise the apostate's individual negotiations of the socialisation practices experienced in childhood. The remainder of this chapter will thus focus on the subtleties and negotiations of the respondents' narratives which uniquely mark the socialisation processes of each class of apostate. Examinations will pay particular attention to cohort in an attempt to uncover any recent epistemological transformation in Western practices of socialisation, and proceeds using the coarse grain classification scheme of 'anomic', 'egoistic' and 'postmodern' apostate types.
THE ANOMIC APOSTATE

Durkheim described a state of anomie as an, ‘irritated disgust with life’ (1993:286), ‘...anger...disappointment’ (1993:284), ‘...exasperated and irritated weariness’ (1993:375). While these are the qualities used to define the process of apostasy, rather than a state necessarily associated with religious socialisation, the quantitative overview presented above indicates that the recalled experiences of religious socialisation may have an association with the ways and means of processing disaffiliation. Such an association suggests that this categorisation is worthy of exploration at this juncture.

As shown by quantitative analysis, the anomic apostate often comes from a home in which a traditional religious heritage is evident. Irrespective of cohort, religious socialisation experiences were rated as intense. Intergenerational transmission of faith is an important goal of parents, and children are often immersed in the rituals of the church. Religious socialisation can be described as traditional.

A review of the narrative material supports these notions; religion is regularly recalled as central to the family of the anomic apostate and transmission of belief is described as strict and traditional. This fall back on tradition, however, is not isolated to experiences regarding religious faith. Often parents of anomic apostates are described as strict, traditional and even patriarchal in regards to the overall experiences of child rearing. The adjectives most frequently used to describe the experiences of an anomic respondent's religious upbringing point to fairly traditional and restrictive modes of conditioning. Terms such as ‘rigid’, ‘strict’
and 'old fashioned' were consistently mentioned by respondents when describing their
socialisation.

The following passages from respondents of the older cohort act to characterise and capture
the essence of these experiences as retold by many of this group:

I was raised with the absolute strictest, most Catholic parents you could imagine. My father was not just strict in his Catholicism, he was strict in about every damned thing... he was very old school and ruled with an iron fist. My mother basically raised us according to my father's wishes, we all did everything according to my father's wishes. He believes in the maxims... "a child should be seen and not heard" and... 'spare the rod spoil the child', he was a hard man. He didn't have much to do with us day to day, but what he did say went (ROI #3).

I was raised a Baptist in a strict family. My parents were very old fashioned. My father didn't even speak to us much... except to punish us. We often got the strap, we had a very regimented life that involved church and God. God and my father ruled the home. I was afraid of God and my father. My mother was strict too, not in the sense of the strap, but she had us toe the line (ROI #39).

For these apostates then, the constructed memories of childhood revolve around the centrality
of faith in the home as well as the 'strict' and 'regimented' nature of the respondent's religious
socialisation, and indeed overall socialisation. A regimented approach to child rearing is not
simply confined to the religious realm; 'life' and 'every damned thing' is expressed as
approached from an uncompromising position of authoritarianism. Experiences of
socialisation in general, were recalled as stringent, and religious upbringing was simply part of
this mode of socialisation. The austere nature of childhood familial experiences can be seen,
therefore, as contained less by religion, than they are by a certain style of parenting.
Also discernible in these passages is the discourse of patriarchy which presents itself quite consistently in the responses of the anomic apostates. While the mothers of the respondents were overwhelmingly described as being responsible for the day to day task of child rearing, respondents often mentioned the father as the authoritarian figure who had the responsibility for the direction of, and major decisions regarding, those child rearing processes. In the first instance the respondent tells of a mother who ‘...raised us according to my father’s wishes’, while the second respondent tells of a father who ‘...ruled the home’, and a mother who had us ‘...toe the line’.

Whether the respondents’ mothers were seen to mediate and soften the authoritarian and strict tendencies of the father, or whether the mothers were themselves characterised as ‘strict’ and ‘old fashioned’, the discourse of patriarchy dominance presents as quite commonplace amongst the narratives of these anomic apostates.\(^2\)

The scenario for anomic respondents of the younger cohort is not dissimilar. Many anomic apostates’ reminiscences of childhood have similar themes. Take, for example, this passage which describes the parents of an anomic respondent of the younger cohort:

My parents are a bit older than most of my friends’ parents... I always felt jealous of those kids with young parents. My parents were so old fashioned. They were very strict... They went to church every Sunday and were involved in all aspects of church life. I always felt jealous of kids with younger parents... my mother is fairly old fashioned... always in silent support of my father (ROI# 51).

Once again we see explicit mention of parents as ‘old fashioned’ and ‘strict’, while the discourse of patriarchy is evidenced through belief that the respondent’s mother was ‘...always

\(^2\) In approximately half such cases the mothers were described as ‘strict’ or dominating themselves.
in silent support of (the) father. Thus modes of socialisation for even the younger cohort of anomic apostate are still described as traditional, authoritarian, and patriarchal.

Certainly these authoritarian modes of socialisation described by the anomic apostates seem to fall in line with patterns of socialisation evident throughout modernity; socialisation as unquestioned replication, shaped by dominating power relationships. That this mode of socialisation was carried through in the realm of the religious is not surprising, particularly when one considers the centrality of religious beliefs in the lives of the parents. In speaking of parents’ religiosity, anomic respondents were consistent in their recollections of the importance of religious meaning, community and identity. Religion was recalled as central and inseparable from the social. This can be evidenced in the above passage where we are told of the parents’ involvement ‘...in all aspects of church life’.

This familial sense of centrality, community and identity often filtered its way, both explicitly and implicitly, to the respondents themselves during childhood. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the anomic child narrating a strong sense of unquestioned faith. The following narrative from a respondent of the older cohort serves as an example:

...the church was a strong part of their (parent’s) identity and heritage. Everyone went to church, all the family, extended family, all your friends, you never really thought about it, but it was the place where everyone got together.... Shit, yeah I believed, what else could you do? There was nothing to question... of course I believed, it was part of my everyday reality (ROI #31).

This respondent recollects little choice regarding any aspects of religiosity. The ‘identity and heritage’ of the parents leads to the embracing of a strong collective conscious regarding both God and religion. Modes of socialisation and the tight community structure simply left the possibilities of being without faith far removed, or as the respondent eloquently states, ‘...what
else could you do’. Identity was seen as strong, the religious community was central to one’s social structures and meaning was accepted without critical examination. Processes of socialisation then, temporarily achieve the traditional goals of socialisation as unquestioned replication.

The same can be said of the following passage from a respondent of the younger cohort. In this passage the respondent mentions the strong ties of the religious community and the unquestioned faith that followed:

... they had fairly strong ties to the church and I suppose it was the centre of not only their spiritual life, but their social life too... It was, back then, really the centre of the community. I went to Catholic school and had all Catholic acquaintances. ... I certainly believed in God when I was young, but by Jesus I hated him, not that I would have had the guts to say that or even think that back then, but I really hated that bastard. God was my nightmare, but as a child, not for a second did I not think that he existed... wished him dead yes, but never doubted that he was real (ROI #44).

Again we can see the consequences of an effectively transmitted religious collective conscious; for this respondent, the perception of unwavering socialisation and strong community support ensures belief. This passage, however, is of particular interest as it begins to show signs of the anomic anger which characterises this class of apostate through disaffiliation processes. For this respondent there may be an intense anger and hatred towards God, but this emotive passion, this anomie, did not lead the respondent to question the notion of God, ‘...not for a second’. Within childhood reminiscences, anomie may be present, but it does not lead to reflexive consideration of faith itself.
For anomic respondents of both cohorts then, the collective conscious of the parents was effectively transmitted by means of traditional, patriarchal, and authoritarian... in short modernistic modes of socialisation, leading to the unquestioned replication of religious beliefs. Obedience to authority, patriarchy, and blind acceptance were the modes of transmission for the explicit parental goals of identity and community and for an unwavering system of meaning. For the anomic apostate this was a very effective combination ensuring, perhaps not acceptance of control, but certainly an acceptance of both belief and identity. Contemplation of alternatives to familial faith was in effect inconceivable.

In fact, plurality, choice, diversity, epistemological questioning and the choosing of one's own destiny were often actively discouraged in the conditioning of the anomic apostate. Within the reminiscences of early childhood socialisation, contemplation of alternatives to familial faith was not only far from available, they were in fact associated with the expectation of strong, negative, parental value judgments. A respondent of the older cohort, for example, stated that the questioning of familial faith would have been seen by parents as, ‘...not just ridiculous’ but ‘blasphemous’ (ROI #12). Similarly, an apostate of the younger cohort stated that if parents had discovered that their child had doubts, ‘...not only would they have been angry, they would have been totally and utterly dumbfounded and flabbergasted...’ (ROI #55). The possibilities for exploring alternate means of faith at an early age saw the anomic respondent consistently report expectations of strong parental resistance.

In the face of these expected negative judgments, it is not surprising that so few young anomic apostates start an early journey of epistemological consideration. In fact, narrative analysis shows that amongst anomic apostates there is little recognition of alternate possibilities.
Further, when the rare opportunity to explore alternatives does present, there is resistance to thoughtful consideration. The following narrative is indicative:

Heaven and hell, well everyone knew that was true, but how stupid did reincarnation sound? What a bunch of fruitcakes who believed that one. (Laugh) Limbo, burning in hell, now that was logical (ROI #8).

This passage well articulates the mind set of the anomic child when facing alternatives to familial faith. The collective conscious surrounding meaning and belief, supported by both the identity and community, ensure that as children, anomic apostates very rarely question issues of God, particularly issues of his existence. Alternatives were not readily available and if such alternatives were to present themselves, critical examination would have been unlikely.

The narratives presented thus far paint a picture of the anomic apostate which is consistent, irrespective of cohort. Modes of socialisation, the centrality and importance of religious community and identity, and a lack of postmodern possibilities recalled in childhood, holds regardless of generation. Even though the collective conscious of the community at large has undoubtedly undergone a transformation in the generational gap separating the cohorts, the influence of an emerging postmodern condition has little effect on the socialisation practices of the respondents' families. For the anomic apostate, traditional authoritarian modes of socialisation or socialisation as a 'technology of power' (Foucault, 1988:18), and a continued familial emphasis on religious identity and community have stood the test of time.

This is not meant to suggest, however, that the influence of postmodernity is not evidenced in the qualitative data. The emergence of a postmodern condition does present, but rather than appear in the modes of parental socialisation, cohort influences are more clearly evidenced in
the respondent's negotiations of those experiences; emotive and cognitive responses to one's upbringing are often delineated by cohort, and show the effect of societal transformation on negotiations of self. Thus for the anomic apostate, the shift to a postmodern world is most clearly evidenced in the changing parameters of 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988:18).

It is the emotive reflections contained within the retrospective accounts of early childhood socialisation experiences then, which point to the emergence of a postmodern condition. This became particularly evident when anomic apostates articulated their emotional response to the strict, patriarchal, authoritarian upbringing experienced in youth. Within these reminiscences there is evidence that the strain of shifting historical periods may have an effect on both the emotive response to experiences of socialisation and the epistemological orientation of the individual.

For example, for the older cohort of anomic apostate, retrospective parental portrayals were not particularly negative. Even in recalling the rigid, traditional, authoritarian nature of the family structure, resentment was not quick to find its way into the narratives:

My parents were pretty strict, but I suppose they were no different than most of the parents of the boys I went to school with. Sure he (father) was strict, Lord and master, but that was the way it was then(ROI #7).

We often got the strap, especially for taking the Lord's name in vain, and golly did it hurt, but ... I... I mean my father was all right. Giving your kids the strap was what was done. He just wanted to raise us with respect (ROI #29).

Within these narratives there exists a non-begrudging acceptance of authoritarian parenting. Childhood experiences are not presented as a primary source of anger, disgust, weariness or, in
short, the anomie which comes to characterise this group of respondents. Authoritarian parenting, a parenting style widely practised and accepted by society at large, is not recalled as a source of angst. Further there is little evidence to suggest that such experiences and their uncritical acceptance lead to a path of reflection regarding the self. In other words, there is very little negotiation of the dominating ‘practices of power’ experienced by this group.

For the younger cohort, however, emotive reactions to parents are articulated with much more resentment and anger. A sense of injustice at the authoritarian nature of child rearing was a common theme. The following passage is indicative:

My father was the big man around the place. He put on a show that made me sick, he was full of it... strict, abusive, but in public he acted as if he were up for father of the year (ROI #61)

The use of highly emotive language such as ‘sick’, ‘abusive’ and ‘mean’ suggests that an irritated disgust, or anomie, may in fact stem from early childhood socialisation experiences. This argument is supported by the need of many respondents from the younger cohort to distance themselves from embarrassing parents:

In a way my parents are really old school. They seem to socialise with an older generation and live a bit in the past. At times it can be hard... I went to Catholic school... they heard there was drugs - pot - at the public school, so they didn't want me hanging out with any of my public school friends. Like there were no drugs at my school. Try explaining that one to your mates (ROI #47).

The sarcasm contained in this passage i.e. ‘(l)ike there were no drugs at my school’, alludes not only to a sense of embarrassment, but a need to actively engage in a process of detachment from the behaviours, actions and attitudes of the parents. While this may not directly lead to
the abandonment or even questioning of God in youth, it is a signifier that anomic strain may be occurring as postmodern society impinges upon traditional authoritarian family structures; a strain which may sow the seeds of doubt and self reflection. There is increased agency for negotiating both ‘practices of power’ and ‘games of truth’.

I would thus suggest that traditional authoritarian socialisation as replication, situated within traditional modern society, is relatively non-problematic and non-threatening in terms of initiating an epistemological journey of questioned faith. The all pervasive ‘...power to which the child is subjected unremittingly...’ (Durkheim, 1982:54) goes unchallenged. The same traditional modernistic modes of socialisation, however, when undertaken in a society sitting on the crux of postmodernity may be a potential cause of strain. The respondents experiencing this juxtaposition are more likely to resent some aspects of their childhood socialisation. It seems that as a traditional collective conscious weakens, a new generation of anomic apostates realise that the socialisation practices they experienced were no longer the ‘standard’. Rather, they may now see these practices as but one option in a world where others managed to escape both the pain and embarrassment of old fashioned, modernistic, punitive child rearing practices. They have begun to challenge and become an active player in ‘practices of power’.

In regards to the anomic apostate then, we find that experiences of socialisation are similar regardless of cohort. These experiences, however, are being handled somewhat divergently on both a cognitive and emotive level by each successive generation. The older cohort tends not to reflect on the significance of modes of child rearing and early childhood religious experiences, where the younger cohort has begun such a reflective journey of consideration.
Of course there are those from the older cohort who question their past, and others from the younger cohort who uncritically accept. The tendency for reflection, however, has a strong positive correlation to the younger cohort, indicating that there may indeed be a 'postmodern' epistemic shift occurring in the means individuals use to process knowledge. This shift continues to present throughout the narratives of the anomic apostate. Varied levels of reflection will continue to define two strands of anomic respondent, from this point forward labelled non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates.

THE EGOISTIC APOSTATE


It is this description which best exemplifies the cognitive and emotive states of over one quarter of the respondents during processes of disaffiliation. Narrative analysis has shown that in response to a crisis of faith, a proportion of apostates act in very egoistic ways, hence the categorisation. While this type is based on experiences during disaffiliation, it is interesting to look at experiences of socialisation in accordance with this schema in an attempt to discern if and how the negotiation of socialisation may be tied to eventuating negotiations of apostasy.

This is of particular interest when exploring the socialisation experiences of the egoist, for in contrast to the easily recognisable pattern of authoritarianism found in the narratives of the anomic apostate, the socialisation of the egoist does not as readily lend itself to classification.
The quantitative analysis of the strength and intensity of religious upbringing, as presented in table 3.1, for example, shows egoistic apostates as having significantly less traditional religious upbringing than their anomic peers.

Distinctions with the postmodern contingent, however, are somewhat harder to discern. While measures of orthodoxy were higher for the parents of the egoist than the parents of postmodern apostates, measures of intensity of childhood religious experiences and conviction of the respondents themselves show non-significant results. It is, therefore, interesting to consider the traits of the egoist as a potential clue in discerning how experiences of socialisation are processed. While socialisation experiences may be difficult to generalise, the egoistic apostate may have internal traits which see the emergence of common patterns in the negotiation of varied socialisation experiences.

An examination of quantitative material does not, therefore, provide sufficient data for discerning patterns of socialisation within the home of the egoistic apostate. Close examination of these socialisation processes clearly point to a wide range of orthodoxy and authoritarianism present across this group. While a portion of egoists are raised in a traditional fashion reminiscent of the socialisation experiences of the anomic apostate, others experience socialisation which is much less austere. In short, patterns of socialisation are varied.

These varied experiences, however, are not random, they show a significant correlation to cohort. While boundaries were not unyielding, we find that traditional, modernistic practices were often aligned with the older cohort, while the younger cohort recalled a more liberal
upbringing. A ‘postmodern’ epistemic shift in modes of socialisation is therefore evident through an inspection of cohort transformation.

For a substantial portion of egoistic apostates of the older cohort, then, childhood socialisation experiences were described as very akin to the socialisation experiences of the overall range of anomic apostates. The following narrative from an egoistic apostate of the older cohort is quite typical of this pattern:

Well my parents were both Catholic. They were quite strict in their upbringing when I was a child. I went to a parochial school and I followed all of the basic tenets of the church. I was baptised, confirmed, confessed I did it all... I was even an altar boy. It was what was done. I guess I was an extension of my parents and my beliefs were an extension of their beliefs... well at least while I was very young (ROI# 6).

As was the case in the range of anomic apostates’ narratives, this particular passage shows many aspects that one might associate with socialisation as understood and constructed in modernity. In this passage we are told of the ‘strict’ upbringing at the hands of the parents, the centrality of the church in day to day life, ‘...I did it all’, and the unwavering adoption of a collective conscious intergenerationally transmitted from parent to child, ‘...my beliefs were an extension of their beliefs.’ For this respondent, modes of socialisation were recalled as traditional and austere, belief was unconfounded, community was strong and the goals of the intergenerational transmission of faith were seen as unwavering.

Differentiation from anomic contemporaries, however, does occur although it is not so much contained in the modes or goals of socialisation, as in the negotiation of socialisation experiences. This egoistic apostate, for example, sees beliefs as an extension of parental
beliefs. There is recognition, however, that this is a scenario in need of deconstruction at a relatively young age. The respondent implies that while still young, there was a break from successful socialisation seen as replication.

The following passage, also narrated by a respondent of the older cohort, follows this same modernistic pattern of the traditional goals and authoritarian modes of socialisation, combined with some level of epistemological consideration:

My parents are both Protestant, both Anglican, Church of England, both I would say are devout. Neither was educated and a belief in God went along with the territory of being an Australian. My parents would have been trailblazers if they had questioned God, but they didn’t... they believed in God, Australia, and hard work. ...My father was old school, quite strict and head of the household. ...my mother was firm but fair. .....My parents loved us and did a good job, but they were not trained in allowing us to think or explore and I was always thinking and exploring... They wanted us to be good and successful but they did not really...they did not want us to be creative or even interesting (ROI #28).

In this case we again discern authoritarian modes of socialisation. Parents’ beliefs are described as ‘devout’, while ‘firm’, ‘old school’ and ‘strict’ were the adjectives used to describe the attributes of parents. Additionally, as was the case with many of the anomic recollections of childhood socialisation experiences, patriarchal structures are referenced, with the father named as ‘head of the household’. Belief is also recalled as central, in this case not only central to the family, but central as part of cultural heritage. Belief is described as part of the ‘...territory of being an Australian’. Thus, respondents narrate an overriding collective conscious that parents expect, perhaps subconsciously, to intergenerationally transmit to their children.
While these have been themes common to the narratives reviewed thus far, the tone of reflection for this particular respondent is distinct as it clearly alludes to consideration and deconstruction. This egoistic respondent explicitly recognises the strength of the collective conscious for parents, and the difficulties associated with breaking from beliefs so thoroughly entwined. This is clear when the respondent states that parents, "...would have been trailblazers if they had questioned God". The respondent then goes on to suggest that these beliefs and goals are at odds with the goals of the self. Parents are recognised as socialised beings who did not break from the confines of their own socialisation, however, for this respondent there is a realisation that this mode of unquestioned acceptance and replication is unacceptable; for as the respondent tells us, "...I was always thinking and exploring".

For the egoistic apostate of the older cohort then, it is clear in the reminiscences that many of the goals, and modes of religious socialisation, as well as general experiences of child rearing run parallel to the recalled experiences of the anomic apostate, and fit nicely into modernistic knowledges of socialisation; authoritarian modes of socialisation as unquestioned replication. Somewhat dissimilar from their anomic contemporaries, however, is a sense that these modernistic modes of socialisation can be a source of unease; an unease which may begin a journey of epistemological consideration regarding both beliefs and the transmission of such beliefs. There is resistance to these modernistic 'technologies of power'.

Further divergence from anomic apostates also present through an examination of the younger cohort of egoistic apostates. For anomic apostates, parental goals and modes of socialisation remained constant over the approximate generational gap associated with a shift to a postmodern era. Only in the respondents' emotive negotiations of these experiences did we
find evidence of an epistemic shift delineating the cohorts. For the egoistic apostate, however, an examination of the younger cohort finds that reflections of parental goals and modes of socialisation themselves have changed, and that the shift to a postmodern era is accompanied by divergent means for intergenerationally transmitting Christianity. Often this group of younger egoists recalled quite liberal and unorthodox styles of religious socialisation. The following narrative is indicative:

Religion wasn’t at the forefront of my upbringing. One could say that my parents were Catholic, and the Church of England⁶, but beyond a label and a vague belief in God handed down through the generations ... um ..., I do not think that my parents were very committed to the church or to a religious lifestyle. ... Well, my mother was Catholic, but my impression was that her beliefs were very much not her own but her parents’. Dad was probably the same (ROI #58).

This passage shows clear distinctions between the recollections of the younger egoist as compared to the recollections of both the full range of anomic apostates and older cohort of egoistic apostates. In contrast to the narratives previously reviewed, unwavering parental systems of belief and clear goals of religious socialisation as replication are no longer cited. It is suggested that the beliefs of the forbearers may not have been effectively transmitted through the generations. Parental beliefs are described as ‘vague’, and ‘...not (their) own.’, and parents were not seen as ‘very committed’ to the church. Given this lack of parental conviction and religious community, it does not come as a surprise to find the respondent stating that, ‘(r)eligion is not at the forefront of my upbringing.’

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³ In the case of this respondent, the mother was Catholic, while the father was affiliated with the Church of England.
The following narrative also from the younger cohort of egoists, provides further evidence of an epistemic shift effecting both the conviction of parents and the means of transmitting beliefs:

My parents are both moderately religious, they both raised me to believe in God, although our affiliation with any church was weak. I do not think that we believed in any parish or anything. We were just told of God, but not just told of him, but somehow he was worked into our lives... I don’t think I ...um... realised this until I saw my sister, who still believes, and my parents interact with her children. ‘God is watching’, ‘(y)ou’ll hurt Gods’ feelings’. Repeating stories about how the baby said ‘Be careful nanny, you’ll step on God because he is everywhere.’ All of that went into us when we were little (ROI #67).

Similar to the previous passage, the parents of this respondent are described as only ‘moderately religious’ while church affiliation was described as ‘weak’. This again shows a lack of both an unwavering system of beliefs and the support of a religious community.

Quite interesting in this passage, however, is the recognition by the respondent that there is some level of religious socialisation. Although traditional, modernistic means are not used, religion is nonetheless transmitted; parents, ‘...raised (him) to believe in God’. The modes of this religious socialisation, however, are quite distinct from the modes of socialisation as authoritarian replication previously explored. For this respondent, the inculcation of the religious occurred through a much more subtle process of story and metaphor which acted to create a subconscious reality regarding God. Perhaps the respondent narrates this best when he states, ‘...somehow he (God) was worked into our lives’. Notions of God were transmitted, but not through the traditional means of doctrines, rites and rituals; rather religious beliefs were filtered through much less explicit channels, embedded without a structural support system; a scenario not uncommon to many of the younger cohort of egoists.
An epistemic shift then, discernible only in the anomic apostates' negotiation of socialisation, now becomes evident in the egoists' socialisation experiences themselves. For this class of apostate, there is evidence that a shift in the modes and goals of socialisation is correlated with the emergence of a postmodern condition. Commensurately, acceptance of plurality, choice and diversity of beliefs associated with the postmodern world and its accessibility to the egoist is also correlated with cohort.

For the egoist of the older cohort, we once again have a situation reminiscent of the anomic apostate, wherein the 'traditional' is the only possibility acknowledged or seen by the parents. Take for example, segments of the following narrative previously reviewed:

I believed in religion, I had no choice, that was what was believed, practicing religion was what was done. ...My parents loved us and did a good job raising us, but they were not trained in allowing us to think or to explore and I was always thinking and exploring.... They wanted us to be good and successful but they did not really...they did not want us to be creative or even interesting (ROI #28).

Regarding belief, this respondent simply had, 'no choice', it was what was, 'done'. In fact, the perceived parental emphasis on being 'good' and 'successful', rather than emphasis on the ability to 'question', to be 'creative or even interesting' is a telling comment on the unconsidered potentialities of the postmodern world. These comments reflect on the familial inability to access postmodern possibilities. Further, the manner in which the respondent reflects upon these comments suggests that the limiting parameters of socialisation were subject to a process of ongoing interrogation, even in childhood. Thus for the older cohort, familial approaches to possibility may be similar to the approach of anomic families. There is a tendency for 'objectivising of the self' and little parental acceptance of agency in youth. For respondents themselves, however, the egoistic apostates may be less likely to dismiss
alternative belief structures without at least some level of epistemological consideration, showing a resistance to such modernistic tendencies.

The situation for the younger cohort of egoists is distinct; a lack of postmodern possibility does not apply. For the younger generation, access to the choice, diversity and plurality associated with a postmodern era was allowed and even encouraged by a large segment of the parents of egoistic apostates. The following narratives show the shift in parental modes of thinking, and the commensurate effect on the respondent’s own epistemological quest for knowing:

My parents were not overly authoritarian, I think that that came through in how they conditioned me. I never felt overly repressed as a child. I was always allowed to think and act of my own accord as long as what I did was respectful and not dangerous. I’m not sure if that was a good thing.... probably good, but sometimes hard... sometimes I think it might be easier to have everything including beliefs handed to you on a platter (ROI #42).

In this passage we see a move from socialisation as unquestioned replication to a more ‘postmodern’ form of socialisation which encourages critical thinking. This respondent was allowed to, ‘...think and act of (his) own accord...’, leaving him feeling less ‘repressed’, and less closed to the exploration of possibility and diversity. A definite shift in the modes of parental transmission of religious beliefs is alluded to, suggesting that encouragement for a Foucauldian transformation of the self (1984) is no longer denied.

For this egoistic respondent, however, these socialisation experience are not without angst. Socialisation is, in fact, referred to as ‘hard’. There is recognition that thinking itself is hard
work and having beliefs, ‘...handed to you on a platter’ can be a much easier answer. The following narrative, also from an egoist of the younger cohort, corroborates this perspective:

...my father didn't really put his religion in our face much. I don't think I could have stood that. He wanted us to make up our own minds in ...well...just about everything, even when it came to religion. ...I think he thought it was better to make up your own mind, even if he thought what you were thinking was wrong. Not that you can just make up your mind... When I was a kid I used to think about it a lot (ROI #76).

Not putting ‘...religion in our face’, allowing children to ‘...make up their own minds...' alludes to both a level of parental recognition and acceptance of the choice and diversity available in postmodernity, and the possibility for change in the means of inculcating children towards faith and spirituality. In fact, the respondent’s recollection is that the father did not just allow for thought, it was actually a goal; something ‘wanted’. Rather than unquestioned replication, a socialisation goal for this parent was to raise children capable of thinking critically; a certain shift from socialisation as understood and constructed in modernity. As with the previous respondent, however, this did not lead to easy answers. Religion was something that took considerable energy, for as the respondent tells us, ‘...I used to think about it a lot.’

This evolving orientation suggests that socialisation as replication may be under threat of negotiation. Within the egoistic apostates’ narratives there exists a range in modes of socialisation, and inconsistency in the recognition of postmodern possibilities. Both are strongly correlated to cohort and point towards an epistemic shift in the transformation of socialisation practices; socialisation as replication has started its postmodern transformation. As narratives run from traditional authoritarian modes of socialisation unwittingly seen as replication, to open minded ‘socialisation’ of thinking individuals encouraged to embrace all
which might be conceivable in postmodernity, a significant re-imagination of the construct becomes evident.

Egoism, nonetheless, is the defining characteristic of this group. The development of egoism occurs regardless of the evolving nature of socialisation forces. Thus, factors of, and explanations for, the development of egoism develop heedless of postmodern influences. This is interesting, for in the case of the younger egoistic apostate, a Neo-Durkheimian perspective might suggest that a contributing factor towards egoism is a sense of frustration at expectations for belief not sustained by any formal support structure. The egoistic apostate is often left to negotiate meaning without the benefit of strong identity and a supportive religious community, possibly leading to the irreconcilable doubts and melancholic detachment which defines the group. A belief in God and religion may exist, but without a sense of community and identity it may be a potential catalyst for the development of egoistic intellectualism. As Durkheim tells us:

If the individual isolates himself, it is because the ties uniting him with others are slackened or broken, because society is not sufficiently integrated at points where he is in contact with it. These gaps... are authentic results of the weakening of the social fabric (1993:281).

This argument is quite easily applicable to the socialisation experiences of the younger cohort of egoistic apostate. The identity and community that support and indeed create the social fabric is sufficiently weak, causing introspection that might ultimately lead to self destruction within the religious realm.
For the older cohort, however, even structural support for beliefs does little to mediate the effects of egoistic characteristics which may be intrinsic to individuals themselves. A sense of confused detachment, lifelong uncertainty, and melancholic intellectualism may thus be traits of the individual not explicitly tied to modes and means of socialisation. Rather, they may be endemic to the personality and epistemological orientation of egoists themselves.

Thus whether the processes of socialisation be authoritarian or liberal, closed minded or ‘postmodern’, there are aspects of familial faith which instil a need for contemplation, and are tied to a level of cognitive dissonance and egoism. A broad common denominator in the egoistic apostates’ socialisation experiences occurring regardless of cohort, may thus be the unfailing way in which aspects of socialisation cause angst. Whether the narratives suggest that religion itself is a considerable source of concern and consideration or that critical thinking and constant reflection are problematic, evidence exits which suggests that the egoist may have an epistemological approach to early childhood socialisation which may be a potential correlate to egoism itself.

THE POSTMODERN APOSTATE

If the anomic apostate’s characteristic approach to apostasy is angry reactionism and the egoistic apostate negotiates processes of disaffiliation with melancholic introspection, then perhaps the best way to describe the postmodern apostate is to focus on the absence of such emotive mediation. The postmodern apostate is best seen as one who manages to deconstruct and negotiate familial faith without the angst so prevalent in the narratives of the anomic and egoistic apostates. Again this delineation by type is done by an analysis of the negotiation of
processes of disaffiliation. Discerning variance in the socialisation/ negotiation of socialisation, however, may give insights into the epistemological orientation of the postmodern apostate and is therefore worthy of investigation at this point.

As shown by the quantitative analysis, the postmodern apostates’ overall reflections on religious upbringing are rated as significantly less traditional and more austere than the experiences of the anomic apostate. This suggests that the socialisation experiences of the postmodern apostate are significantly less austere than the experiences of the anomic apostate. Divergences from the egoist, however, are not so well defined. This is particularly true at the level of the respondents themselves; findings are varied and generally non-significant. In terms of parental attitudes, however, there does exist some evidence that parents of postmodern apostates may be less traditional than the parents of their egoistic peers. Thus while quantitative data may have difficulty differentiating variance between egoistic and postmodern respondents’ own attitudes and varied epistemological orientations to knowledge, divergence in socialisation practices may occur in accordance to varied parental attitudes. It is hoped that an examination of the narratives will draw out such distinctions and examine them in light of a shift to a postmodern societal condition.

An examination of the socialisation experiences of the postmodern apostate finds certain elements running true regardless of cohort. For both cohorts, the centrality and intensity of faith in the home is spoken of as much less rigorous than what is expected in the home of the anomic apostate, or the home of the older cohort of egoistic apostate. For the range of postmodern apostates, there is also an acceptance of critical thinking which has not been seen with consistency in the narratives of the other classes of apostate.
Take, for example, the following passage from a respondent of the older cohort who speaks of weak familial faith, passed on primarily through a sense of obligation and duty.

I guess my mother always had some internal faith, but she doesn’t get too involved with the church... The only real involvement she had with the church was making sure that I went through all the Catholic rites and rituals. I think she saw it as her obligation... She could then feel quite guilt free... My father did not believe in God. I think he himself was somewhere between lapsed Catholic and an atheist. He did not go to church but he never gave my mother a hard time about raising us. He just kept his thoughts private and my mother never really forced much down my throat. She did not want me to be a non-thinking 'anything', ah... even a non-thinking Catholic. Decisions were up to me, but she wanted them to be well considered (ROI #17).

In the case of this respondent, the mother is described as having, ‘...some internal faith...’, while the father is described as somewhere between a, ‘...lapsed Catholic and an atheist’. Religion is not presented as central in this home and involvement in the church was limited to participation in rites and rituals, executed so the mother could fulfil a sense of obligation and duty regarding responsibility for religious socialisation.

This respondent also tells of an irreligious father who ‘...kept thoughts private’ and a mother who did not want a ‘non-thinking’ child. Modes of socialisation were thereby ‘postmodern’ to the extent that they did not set out to achieve replication and acceptance without consideration. Thinking children with the ability to be critical, in fact, can be see as a socialisation goal within this family.

This respondent then, can be seen to have experienced a religious background virtually the antithesis of the familial experiences of the anomic apostate. While the anomic apostate experienced a strong sense of identity and community, accompanied by an unwavering system
of belief to be accepted without question or thought, the familial experiences of this
postmodern apostate ran practically contrary. In reminiscences of childhood, this family did
not immerse themselves in a religious community, did not gain a major source of identity from
the church, and did not cling to a strong system of Catholic beliefs. They also actively
encouraged the exploration of any and all parental belief systems.

The following narrative of a postmodern apostate, also from the older cohort, further
elucidates this point:

My mother was a Protestant and my father was an atheist. He did not believe in
any religion... at first he just had no church, but by the end of his life he no longer
felt any communion with God and thought it was all a load of malarky. My
mother raised me in her faith. ...I was baptised and went to church on occasion
when I was young... I would not say that I came from a religious household.
Even as we learnt about Christianity on the one hand, we were told to think
critically on the other. So there was always a process of curiosity and doubt that
was ongoing... a whole lifetime of questioning. Even my mother said to question
her beliefs. So naturally, if you have one parent who is an atheist, and one who
allows questioning... you tend to sort of question these things all along (ROI
#30).

While this respondent was raised in the Protestant faith of the mother, going to church was
limited to ‘on occasion’. A sense of communion with the church is not narrated, and evidence
suggesting that identity is derived through affiliation with familial faith is not presented. In
fact, this postmodern apostate not only acknowledges a nonreligious household, there is
further acknowledgment of a parent who believes that religion, ‘... was all a load of mularchy’.

Beyond diversity of beliefs, in the home of this postmodern apostate there is a marriage
involving one parent without faith; a situation virtually unknown amongst the anomic and
egoists apostates, particularly those of the older cohort.
The encouragement and nurturing of critical thought is also presented as a highly important aspect of childhood socialisation. Even given the beliefs of the mother, there is permission and encouragement to question, to explore and to deconstruct beliefs in order to raise a critically engaged child. Thinking and questioning are, in fact, presented as surpassing blind replication as of primary importance in the preparation of children for the outside world. In other words, children are encouraged to be active participants in ‘games of truth’ (Foucault, 1989:11).

This pattern of weak belief, minimal community, and lack of identity combined with new epistemological goals for socialisation is a pattern further reflected in the narratives of the younger cohort of postmodern apostates. For this contingent, the narration of traditional faith as central to family life is notable in its absence, while parental acceptance of critical thought is a common theme. The following narrative makes the point:

My father raised me as a moral and good child, but religion... well after the initial rite of baptism, was not really a part of it. He knew what he wanted for me and I do not think that he turned to religion to help him achieve his goals. I think that because of his beliefs, I also believed in God when I was young. But I would not describe myself as having much faith or um... as a member of a church. ...I think I came away with a vague notion of God and a vague notion of belief ... but I didn’t really have to believe, I think it was important to my father to have me make up my own mind(ROI 79).

Once again we see that religion does not hold a position of centrality in the home or in the upbringing of this postmodern child. For this respondent, religion as a tool or aspect of child rearing, ‘...was not really a part of it’. A ‘vague’ notion of God and the church were all that were handed down by a parent more focused on raising a ‘good’ and ‘moral’ child than a religious one.
Also evident in this passage is variance that sees deviation from socialisation goals that stress unquestioned acceptance. Goals now stress the importance of allowing children to, ‘...make up (their) own mind(s). For both cohorts of postmodern apostate then, there is a divergence in the means and modes of religious socialisation which suggest that the ‘religious' upbringing experiences of the postmodern respondent in youth, might be setting the stage for the open minded critical thinking which defines the group regardless of cohort.

Such cohort similarities are to be expected. After all, the selection criteria for the postmodern apostate suggest that experiences of familial faith and negotiations of that faith point to a shift in the epistemological orientation of respondents, regardless of cohort. It is the socialisation experiences themselves which may be the building blocks for the critical examinations which act to mark this group's negotiations of the world.

Even for the postmodern respondent of the older cohort there is a familial weakening in the intensity of religious beliefs and a shift in the modes of transmission not seen amongst anomic and egoistic contemporaries. For the postmodern socialiser, often faith is more than just replicated beliefs and an assumed system of meaning which acts to make sense of the world. Rather faith is recognised as something to be considered at a personal level. For these parents there is an expectation that children need to negotiate beliefs and issues of meaning for themselves; even if this negotiation threatens the family’s traditional beliefs.

Postmodern apostates, then, particularly those of the older cohort, are in the forefront regarding experiences of socialisation. This group stands alone in their cohort, and stand in contrast to the overriding modernistic orientations of religion and socialisation which were
central to the collective conscious of the time. They were, in fact, 'vanguard' in their orientations and will henceforth be labelled in such a fashion.

The younger cohort of postmodern apostate, however, while approaching aspects of faith from these same epistemological orientations, are not so vanguard. They have the support of a society beginning to embrace a postmodern condition, one where the collective conscious is opening up to the possibility of varying subjective realities. They are merely in line with the changing times and are more accurately labelled 'contemporary'. This distinction will prove quite helpful in unfolding the complexities of negotiating familial faith in times of change.

Given that the review thus far has concentrated on similarities, how does this delineation of 'vanguard' and 'contemporary' postmodern apostate show itself in the realms of socialisation and in the negotiation of socialisation?

Even amongst this grouping selected by non-emotive and rational epistemological orientations to the negotiation of familial faith, the influences of an emerging postmodern society can still be discerned. There are subtle differences in the narratives of the two cohorts which reflect a changing world order. For example, the following narratives from contemporary postmodern apostates show the influence of a changing world order on the parental acknowledgment and acceptance of postmodern possibilities:

I think I am a product of the 60s'. My parents are very spiritual people, lost hippies. My father is not traditionally religious, but he is very into the Earth and spirituality. My mother is Anglican, but she is also a spiritual hippie, she feels more in tune to mother nature than in outwardly religion. I was baptised and all, but that was because of my grandparents. They were the ones who were worried about a stable and moral upbringing, so my parents did it to shut them up (ROI #78).
I think they themselves (parents) are best described as disillusioned Christians. Both would still believe in something, but I think they have both given up on religion and the church. I do not think that they ever found a church were they felt they fit in socially or politically. I suppose I went with them on this journey, searching for truth and belonging, but I don't even know which church I was baptised in, I never felt like I had a religious ...centre or place to call home (ROI #64).

For the contemporary postmodern apostate, diversity of beliefs in the home and the need for self determination become a common theme, as acknowledgment of a changing world order becomes increasingly difficult to deny. In fact, parents of the contemporary postmodern apostate are, at times, themselves questioning traditional beliefs, and beginning to break from the confines of religion as constructed and understood in modernity. Parents were described as being ‘...disillusioned Christians’ who were ‘...searching for truth and belonging’ or as being ‘...into the Earth and spirituality’ and, ‘....in tune with mother nature’. These parents have, in fact, begun their own epistemological journey of exploration. The emergence of a postmodern condition, therefore, shows itself in the weakening of the collective conscious as society allows for diversity and exploration. Thus for the younger contingent of postmodern apostate, there are cases in which the parents may be most deserving of the label ‘vanguard’. Respondents themselves may simply be negotiating the legacy of parents’ open mindedness and deconstruction of modern Christianity.

Thus both contingents of postmodern apostate have broken from the confines of religiosity and socialisation as understood in modernity. It is, however, the vanguard postmodern apostate who stands at the forefront of change. The contemporary postmodern apostate, on the other hand, questions socialised religious beliefs as a consequence of a postmodern societal
condition and the parental acceptance of both postmodern possibilities and socialisation beyond replication.

The negotiation of socialisation is another arena in which a postmodern shift can be evidenced via narrative investigation. Quite clear cohort effects, in fact, are seen in the postmodern apostate’s cognitive and emotional management of parental upbringing; vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates’ negotiations of socialisation are distinct. This situation is analogous to the negotiations of socialisation as presented by anomic apostates. Socialisation practices not in line with societal expectations are worthy of note.

For example, in the case of the anomic apostate, traditional or modernistic parental modes of socialisation located in modern society were presented as non-problematic. These same modes of socialisation, however, situated within an emerging postmodern society were often reported as a source of resentment and anger. For the younger cohort of anomic apostates there was an emotive recognition of the juxtaposition between modes of socialisation and the condition of society. The same argument can be made for the postmodern apostates. In this case, however, it is within the narratives of the older cohort or the vanguard postmodern apostates that the juxtaposition of modes of socialisation and societal condition is contained. These respondents are quick to cognitively and emotionally react to postmodern ‘socialisation’ practices which are located within a still modernistic and traditional world. They are quick to recognise and appreciate the liberal, thinking, ‘postmodern’ upbringing of one’s youth, often distinct from the socialisation experiences of their peers. There is an unwavering positive recognition of ‘postmodern’ parents and parenting. The following two narratives make the case:
I respect my parents tremendously because they respected me. I was very lucky to have the parents I had. I grew up to be an inquisitive thinking person, and that is due to my parents (ROI #26).

I never felt silenced as a child. My mother... and father were great like that. They always treated me like my opinion mattered, even when I was just a youngster. ...It was so different from the 'seen and not heard' mentality of so many other parents of that day (ROI #33).

These apostates articulate a strong admiration, respect and appreciation of postmodern parenting skills, ‘...so different from the “seen and not heard” mentality of many parents of that day’. The efforts of the parents to go beyond the means and modes of socialisation embedded within the general collective conscious did not go unrecognised by the postmodern apostate of the older cohort.

This positive recognition, however, becomes less rigorously verbalised in the narratives of the younger cohort, or contemporary postmodern apostates. Just as modernistic socialisation in modern society is non-problematic, postmodern socialisation in postmodern society is not seen as overly extraordinary. The following narrative is indicative of this diminished level of appreciation:

It is quite a crutch to rely on God. You have to learn to take responsibility for your own life, emotions... You be the one who ends up taking control. Not your parents, teachers or some ‘God’. My parents weren't too bad, I don't know how long I would have lasted with old fashioned didactic parents (ROI#70).

Over an approximate generation then, parents go from being ‘great’ and ‘tremendously respected’, to being not ‘too bad’. A sense of keen parental appreciation evident in the
narratives of the older cohort is replaced with what appears as a sense of relief. One might be thankful that parents were open minded, but a sense of considerable appreciation for something once remarkable, is missing from these narratives. Parents are no longer seen as exceptional for their postmodern ways. They have simply adapted to a changing world. As one respondent stated, ‘(i)t (religion) is so... constructed, you just can’t pass that crap off any more’ (ROI #74). Society has changed, and parents are expected by children to have adapted to these changes.

For the postmodern apostate, classification criteria suggest that the most obvious signs of a postmodern epistemic shift will be obscured by a certain level of epistemological consideration. This has been found to be the case. Many aspects of socialisation, including the diminished importance of religion in the home and new ‘postmodern’ socialisation goals, are similar. Nonetheless, the legacy of a changing world order is still evident. Societal changes are reflected in an examination of the divergences between vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates. Whether it be in the increased access to diversity and plurality of a postmodern world, in the increased parental acceptance of self determination, or in the shifting emotive reflections of socialisation experiences, the emergence of a postmodern societal condition is hard to deny. As society evolves, so too do the orientations of the individual.

Concluding Remarks

The explorations in this chapter are an attempt to peel back the layers which shape and construct our understanding of socialisation. An examination of the processes, goals and
negotiations of religious socialisation by both typology and cohort, allows for the unmasking of the premised assumptions which construct our knowledges.

Certainly, as presented in the reminiscences of childhood, socialisation as blind replication seems well under threat. Cohort differentiation within the various types suggest that the emergence of postmodernity is remarkably evident in the socialisation practices experienced by apostates. From the traditional, patriarchal authoritarian modes of replication recalled by the anomic and the older cohort of egoistic apostates, to the postmodern socialisation marked by critical examination recounted by the older cohort of egoistic apostates and the range of postmodern apostates, the emergence of new forms and goals for socialisation is incontrovertible.

Preparation for the economic and social order of the day may thereby have seen authoritarian replication as a primary means of achieving socialisation goals. In a postmodern world, however, religious socialisation, meaning, identity and community, can no longer be intergenerationally transmitted without the expectation of negotiation. Blind replication is no longer central to socialisation.

The ability to critically examine the potentialities and possibilities of a postmodern society, may be the best means for preparing children for a changing world order; an order which can only continue to transform. Accordingly, children of a postmodern world are being socialised with the ability: to critically examine systems of meaning; to thoughtfully construct identity and; to choose a suitable community. In short, socialisation understood as a ‘technology of power’ is now losing some of its dominating modernistic overtones.
This demise of modernistic religious socialisation, however, need not mean the end of the meaning, identity and community which have traditionally defined religion. Rather than be unilaterally handed down, the expectation of, and the preparation for, negotiation of these components of religion becomes of critical importance. ‘Religious socialisation’ has not come to its end, rather what has been traditionally understood as ‘religious socialisation’ is reformulating itself for survival in postmodernity.

With an understanding of the varying modes of socialisation and its association with postmodernity we now turn our focus to the processes of resocialisation which mark the apostatic journey.
Chapter Four

APOTASY* THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIMENSION

This chapter is an exploration of the apostatic process. It explores how apostates come to give up familial faith. Abandonment, rejection, resistance, reflection and negotiation, how religious beliefs are foregone, the techniques and processes of apostasy, provide critical information for understanding the significance of religious disaffiliation.

The epistemological dimensions of disaffiliation, however, are not often pursued in apostasy literature. Sociological studies have traditionally focused on the demographic profiles of apostates, and causal relationships of apostasy. Few have addressed the apostatic process itself. Questions of how change occurs, and the epistemological orientations of this change are not commonly investigated. Thus the literature has yet to pose questions such as: How does an individual engage in breaking from socialised religious beliefs?; What are the modes of individual adaptation that allow for the negotiation of the religious experience?; What is the significance of the apostatic journey for the apostates themselves?; And finally, what do the processes of disaffiliation tell us about a transforming society?

I believe there are two reasons for this investigative deficiency. For one, the propensity for apostasy research to rely on large scale surveys does not allow for investigation of process. Without a voice, apostates can neither elucidate processes of disaffiliation, nor explain the significance of their apostatic journey. Second, I believe the assumptions that have traditionally premised disaffiliation research make investigations of the epistemological dimensions of apostasy appear inessential. Apostasy is assumed to be reflective of a glitch,
break, or rupture in practices of socialisation. It is an aberration or anomaly. In a society where religion is seen as functional and successful socialisation is seen as replication, apostasy is assumed to be a reaction or response to weaknesses in the fabric of the religious. Apostasy is thus indicative of ‘failure’.

I argue, however, that such approaches to apostasy do not adequately address the shifting parameters of socialisation. There is little recognition of epistemic shifts in socialisation. Consequently, there is little thought given to epistemic transformations in processes of disaffiliation. An emergent postmodern society, however, has influenced the intergenerational transmission of belief. In Chapter Three, significant, albeit varied epistemological transformations in child rearing were traced for each apostate type. As society transforms, so too does the individuals’ forms, modes, and negotiations of socialisation. I argue that these varied forms and shifting parameters of socialisation are carried through in apostates’ processes of disaffiliation.

In developing the typology for this research, I argued that anomic and egoistic forms of apostasy can be seen as responses to modes of socialisation and constructions of religion that are endemic to modernity. The ‘... incertitude and confused agitation...’ (Durkheim, 1965:475), of the modern world, is felt by those who attempt to resist the ‘techniques of power’ (Foucault, 1988:18) common to modern Christianity. A more postmodern form of apostasy, however, does not appear to be a response to the oppression associated with a particular understanding of religion. There is little need to rebel or retreat when systems of familial faith are open to exploration and negotiation. The postmodern form of apostasy is thus characterised by encouraged reflexivity.
I therefore argue that varying processes of apostasy need to be explored in relation to shifting practices and negotiations of socialisation. There are links between an emerging postmodern society, shifting practices of socialisation, and the varied orientations of apostasy. If techniques and modes of socialisation are transforming as we embrace a postmodern word, then the implicit assumptions regarding processes of apostasy must also shift. Given the range of goals, means and modes that characterise socialisation in the contemporary period, it is reasonable to expect that processes of disaffiliation will represent divergent phenomena for varying apostate types.

In theorising the significance of epistemic shifts in apostasy that occur commensurate with the emergence of a postmodern world, I argue that exploring process and epistemology is of critical importance. Such examinations can go beyond tracking demographic shifts in societal beliefs and labelling current forms of the religious born of circumstance. Deconstructing the traditional understandings of apostasy, and examining the epistemological orientations of religious negotiations can point to a significant intellectual and cognitive shift in the way individuals process the social world. It thus becomes feasible to examine not only the possibilities of a postmodern world, but whether such possibilities are being processed in new ways. Has there been a shift in the ability of the individual to negotiate the social? As Foucault might inquire, does a postmodern society reflect,

...a different kind of world, with a different set of techniques for approaching the self, (in which) a human being might no longer feel compelled to punish itself - and “sacrifice” itself - in order to become what one is (Foucault, paraphrased in Miller: 1993:324)?
Apostasy Typology

In an analysis of religious socialisation, two distinct demarcations in the data were uncovered and traced. Cohort correlations suggest that a postmodern epistemic shift affecting practices of socialisation is occurring across the range of apostates. Whether in the socialisation practices of the parents, or in the respondents’ negotiations of socialisation, the influence of a postmodern societal condition is clearly evident. Experiences and negotiations of socialisation, however, also vary significantly by apostate type. Varied classes of apostates process their experiences in distinct ways.

The same argument can be made for processes of disaffiliation. The apostatic journey varies by cohort; postmodern influences are evident across the range of apostates. Anomic, egoistic and postmodern respondents, however, embark on apostatic journeys with varied epistemological orientations. The development of the apostate typology is in fact, reliant on such distinctions. Table 4.1 shows the profile for disaffiliation by apostate type:
Table 4.1  Mean Scores and Significance for Apostasy Profile Variables by Apostate Type *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age First Doubt</td>
<td>20.88</td>
<td>19.58</td>
<td>16.94</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Length</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process Ongoing</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Return</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  p < .05

The figures presented in the above table suggest that heterogeneity in processes of disaffiliation can be meaningfully delineated by apostate type. While cohort correlation may partially explain variance in age of first doubt, the remaining variables point to varying and distinct patterns of disaffiliation for each apostate class.

Anomic apostates for example, generally complete an intense and relatively short apostatic journey, and have little intention of returning to familial faith. For the egoist, however, the process of apostasy is quite lengthy, lasting an average of almost eleven years, with one third still engaged in the apostatic process at the time of interview. The apostatic journey for the egoistic group is not as intense as that of the anomic contingent. A return to faith of origin, however, is still rated as highly unlikely. Finally, postmodern apostates go through a relatively short and often finalised process of disaffiliation. In contrast to the more modern classes of apostate, this group does not recount processes of disaffiliation as intense. Acknowledgment of a potential return to faith is nonetheless limited.
Quantitative data on varying disaffiliation profiles thus reveals patterns that begin to make sense of the variance and diversity seen in apostasy. A shift away from familial faith towards an unwavering atheism may be the end result for all categories of apostate. Processes of disaffiliation, however, take quite varied forms and in fact, can be linked to the varied socialisation experiences uncovered in the previous chapter. Thus, anomic intensity, egoistic introspection and postmodern rationality continue to mark disaffiliation. Table 4.2 draws out these varied paths through an examination of process type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Process</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactionary Anger</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disenchantment</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  \( p < .05 \)

A quick perusal of disaffiliation by type confirms that the defining characteristics of each apostate class are discernible in apostatic processes. Apostasy as a reactionary response was cited by 86% of anomic respondents. A sense of anger is a central component of the group’s processes of disaffiliation and can be seen as the keystone of the anomic respondents’ apostatic journey. For egoistic apostates, the Durkheimian profile would suggest that processes of disaffiliation are marked with a sense of lost confusion. This is confirmed as this group consistently (83%) present a notable sense of disenchantment with conventional religiosity.
While anger, logic, and/or a search for meaning and identity can be components of egoistic processes of disaffiliation, a strong sense of internal disappointment is the fundamental element of the apostatic journey. Finally, for postmodern apostates, the apostatic journey is marked by a logical, rational, and well considered approach to the foregoing of faith (84%). For 37%, this approach encompasses a search for meaning and belonging. For others, postmodern apostasy can involve anomie and egoism. Angst does not appear to be automatically fended off by postmodern approaches to disaffiliation. The emotive components of the process, however, show considerably less intensity than the processes of anomie and egoistic apostates, and do not lead to a reactionary dismissal of faith. Postmodern apostates are open to the possibilities of a less emotive negotiation of the religious.

Distinctions based on the emotive components of disaffiliation are further alluded to by the data on anomie. Table 4.3 confirms that emotive reflections in the form of anomie and alienation present according to apostate type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anomie/Alienation</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to Apostasy</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Apostasy</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Apostasy</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way ANOVA (LSD)  \( p < .05 \)
The data in table 4.3 clearly shows that the emotive aspects of disaffiliation can be tied to the epistemological orientations of the apostate types. Postmodern apostates for example, expressed little unease throughout any phase of the apostatic journey. A less emotive process is thus suggested. For the more modern classes of apostates, however, angst in the form of anomie and alienation was often recalled. Anomic apostates were likely to express such feelings prior to a loss of faith. Anger, confusion and alienation were generally tied to catalysts prior to apostasy. Apostasy as a reactionary response to dominating aspects of religion, can thus be seen as supported by this data. For egoistic apostates, a sense of alienation and anomie is also most common prior to apostasy. The melancholic, introspective nature of the egoist, however, often sees this sense of discomfort continue through processes of disaffiliation (38%), while 21% continue to express feelings of anomie and alienation post apostasy. The equivocation and internal angst of the egoists is thus alluded to by these figures, and falls in line with the longer time frame for processes of disaffiliation.

It is interesting to note that regardless of type, the foregoing of faith is not shown to be causal to anomie and alienation. For postmodern apostates, anomie is negligible regardless of apostasy phase. For both anomic and egoistic apostates, however, the discomfort felt prior to apostasy, actually eases throughout the disaffiliation process. Contrary to traditional expectations, anomie and apostasy present a negative correlation. Anomie appears to abate, particularly when associated with the modern forms of apostasy. Apostasy as emancipation from the dominating power relations of traditional Christianity is thus suggested in these results.
Quantitative profiles of disaffiliation then, fall in line with the defining characteristics of each apostate type. Anomic anger, egoistic introspection and postmodern rationality define the epistemological orientations of the apostatic journey for each group. A postmodern epistemic shift, however, can still be traced through an examination of cohort division within each type. In order to embark on a more nuanced analysis of the apostatic journey and explore delineations or movements indicative of postmodern transformations, the remainder of this chapter will engage in narrative examination of each class of apostate.

THE ANOMIC APOSTATE

As shown by quantitative analysis, anomic apostates’ processes of disaffiliation are marked by their quick intensity and emotive nature; anomic and alienation are not uncommon prior to disaffiliation. The reactionary nature of the process, however, is the most distinctive characteristic of the disaffiliation experience. Over 85% of anomic apostates can trace their processes of disaffiliation to a particular catalyst. Ease in articulation of a specific event or happening that sparked the apostatic journey is common to the group. Whether it be the loss of a child, the death of a friend, or an alcoholic parent, anomic respondents can trace the start of first doubts to a very specific event in their life history. Irrespective of cohort, statement such as, ‘I remember the first time I had doubts...’ and, ‘(t)hat’s easy, when I was...’, were commonplace¹.

The influence of an emerging postmodern condition, however, first uncovered and traced in an examination of the negotiations of religious socialisation, continue to delineate this group.

¹ Such explicit statements were actually made by 71% of anomic apostates.
Two distinct strands of anomic apostate, strongly correlated to cohort, continue to present. 'Non-reflexive' generally older, anomic apostates, whose authoritarian modes of socialisation were not critically examined or presented as a source of strain and, 'reflexive', younger, anomic apostates whose modernistic modes of socialisation were uncomfortable positioned in an increasingly postmodern world, continue in their divergent means for negotiating the social. Epistemological orientations of disaffiliation are thus affected by cohort. While 'anomic' commonalities define processes of disaffiliation, increased reflexivity shows that an emerging postmodern condition affects even those whose primary means for negotiating familial faith is through reactionary anger. Narrative analysis of non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates are thus taken up in turn.

**Non-Reflexive Anomic Apostates**

The reactionary anger which characterises the range of anomic apostates, is clearly reflected in the narratives of the non-reflexive group. These apostates, generally from the older cohort, present apostasy as a process of reaction tied to a particularly pivotal event in the lifecourse. Abandoning well entrenched familial faith is a process tied to an event of tragic proportions.

The following passage is a case in point:

I was twenty-three when I lost my first child, cot death they call it now. Well, it was a cruel blow, something that I never got over, it shattered my world, and it shattered my belief in God. The death of my daughter made me so angry with God... and... um... the church provided me with nothing. I can not believe in a cruel God, and I do not buy that plan business. You know, God has a plan... what the hell can taking a baby's life have to do with a plan? What kind of sick plan is that? ... I guess though I had to give up faith because she wasn't baptised and as any good Catholic knows, that is not a good situation to find yourself in. How could I maintain beliefs when those beliefs would have me think that my daugther was in limbo just because I hadn't had her baptised in time? No thank you. I had no choice but to give up religion all together (ROI #22).
For this respondent, apostasy is clearly tied to a tragic catalyst that causes tremendous resentment and irrevocably destroys faith. The event is presented as a watershed in one’s life, ‘... cot death... it shattered my world, and it shattered my belief in God’, and is presented with a clear sense of Durkheimian anomie. The use of emotive words and phrases such as ‘cruel’, ‘shattered’, ‘sick’ and, ‘what the hell’, all point to an overwhelming sense of exasperated fury, of disillusionment and grave disappointment. These feelings then lead to conflict, eventuating in atheism. As Durkheim tells us, ‘(u)nregulated emotions... (and) the conditions they are supposed to meet... conflict with one another most painfully’ (1993:280). For this respondent, pain caused by the fear of a child suffering in limbo, and the guilt of parental responsibility, forced a subconscious resolution of grief via apostasy. The parent was left feeling as though she, ‘... had no choice but to give up religion...’. Better to give up faith than face the consequences of that faith. This anomic response then, did not lead to a negotiation of faith, it lead to total abandonment.

Non-reflexive anomic apostates were not prone to critically examine the larger religious and societal structures surrounding their socialisation. This lack of critical examination appears to continue throughout the apostatic process. For this non-reflexive anomic apostate, the emotional process of disaffiliation is not well thought out or considered. It is an emotive response. Familial faith is not deconstructed. Rather, faith is abandoned at a time of high crisis with angry rebellion. The respondent simply could not, ‘... believe in a cruel God’, and felt that she had, ‘... no choice’. Critical examination of familial faith and reflexive consideration of the macro structures surrounding faith are not presented. Religion is simply abandoned out of anomic pain and an unconsidered anger towards God.
A similar story is told by a non-reflexive anomic apostate whose process of disaffiliation is marked by disgust, directed at the structures and beliefs surrounding God, rather than God himself.

I was just 23 when I got in a car accident with a mate of mine. I was driving and we had a pretty bad prang. I was hurt and had a broken arm, but he...he was really bad. He ended up losing a leg. Guess my first reaction, in respect to God was, why? You know...if anyone deserved to lose a leg it was me, I was the one who was drinking. But none of that made me forsake God. What really made me feel sick to my stomach was the religious crap that flowed from the mouths of every idiot that come to the hospital. All the ‘I’ll pray for yous’. If there is one thing that gets my goat, it is when a tragedy happens and some fool tells you that it was God’s will. That man’s will or a God that I want no part of. God’s will...I got so sick of hearing righteous religious bullshit. It just completely turned me off religion (ROI # 7).

The above passage is thoroughly entrenched with a sense of anomic anger initiated by a tragic catalyst. Expressions such as ‘gets my goat’, ‘sick to my stomach’, and the use of the words ‘bullshit’, ‘idiot’ and ‘fool’, all point towards a sense of anomic disgust. In this case, however, God is not seen as directly responsible for the tragedy. Blame is actually self directed, ‘...I was the one who was drinking’. Thus apostasy is not reaction against God, nor is it a reaction against the self. For this respondent, apostasy is a reaction to the religious repercussions that followed the actual incident. Anger is directed at the ‘fool’, the ‘idiot’, and all those who spouted, ‘righteous religious bullshit’. In this scenario, the social structures supporting traditional constructions of religion are what the respondent finds so objectionable. Religion, hence God becomes intolerable.

Rather than negotiating objectionable aspects of familial faith, all aspects of religiosity are again foregone without thoughtful consideration. The use of the word ‘just’, in the sentence, ‘(i)t just completely turned me off religion’, points to a decision without much introspective
contemplation. The respondent was left with such a feeling of disgust, that religion simply became intolerable, with no further need for discussion. Negotiating belief is not a concern. This respondent chooses to distance himself regardless of ‘truth’. Non-reflective rejection of religion then, appears to mirror the blind replication of religious socialisation. A catalyst causes an unexamined rejection of unexamined familial faith.

The following excerpt from a non-reflexive anomic apostate is interesting because it conforms to the same pattern. The emphasis, however, is slightly different. For this female respondent, a catalyst causes rejection of her father, patriarch of the home. The close association of the father with a patriarchal God then leads to a rejection of both God and familial faith:

I remember exactly when I started to doubt the church and God... I was 19 when I found out that I was 3 1/2 months pregnant. I was not married and had just ended a relationship with my boyfriend and the whole thing was tremendously painful. I was scared, confused and angry. My boyfriend had moved on and having an abortion was not really an option back then and I mean the thought of someone else having my baby was too painful, so for as long as I could I didn’t tell anyone... My mum I think guessed before I told her. Umm...she was all right I suppose, after the normal shock, and the ‘how could you’ and all of that... At least the guilt she poured on and disappointment she showed, wasn’t as bad as what my father did. I thought my relationship with my father was okay, but my father made me pay, he made me suffer, yet he considered himself a religious man of good moral character... He made me feel like nothing. He was embarrassed of my existence and it hurt and that made me distrust him, his religion, and his God. (ROI #36)

Tragedy is once again a catalyst for a reactionary abandonment of faith. For this respondent, however, paternal reaction to an unplanned pregnancy, rather than pregnancy itself, is presented as the main source of anomic repercussions. There is anger at the abandonment of the father, causing the respondent to distrust, ‘... him, his religion and his God’. For this respondent, reaction against the patriarch of the home, was also reaction against the patriarch
of religion. Thus even though God is not held accountable for the tragedy, the alignment of God and father meant that a distrust of the one, was inextricably linked to the distrust of the other.

The anger and pain this causes is clearly articulated throughout this short passage. Phrases such as ‘... my father made me pay, he made me suffer’ as well as the explicit mention of anger, fear and confusion show an emotive toll of disaffiliation that culminates in a non-reflexive abandonment of faith. Thoughtful consideration, and a search for epistemological knowing are conspicuous in their absence. Catalysts for disaffiliation are solely contained in emotion; in ‘anger’, ‘distrust’, and ‘pain’. Religious socialisation accepted without critical reflection or negotiation is abandoned with the same lack of reflection.

The non-reflexive anomic apostate could thus be seen as a classic product of the modern age. Durkheim would see the anomic characteristics of this class of apostate as indicative of the risks associated with a weakened collective conscious in high modernity. Similarly, for Foucault, the non-reflexive anomic apostate has a history embedded in highly unbalanced power relationships indicative of the modern era. Resistance within these unbalanced relationships may necessarily present as a dramatic reaction against those dominating forces. Foucault goes as far as to say that when relationships are heavily unbalanced, resistance may be limited to, ‘...committing suicide, ...jumping out of a window or ...killing the other’ (1990:12), in other words, extreme forms of anomie. When religious structures and modes of religious socialisation are not open to negotiation, the only site of resistance may be spiritual suicide.
Reflexive Anomic Apostates

Reflexive consideration of religion and religiosity, however, is not as alien for those anomic apostates whose socialisation was recognised as running counter to the promise of postmodernity. For a younger generation of anomic apostates, socialisation experiences did not generally reflect more postmodern motifs. The mere recognition of an emerging postmodern society, however, was enough for inherent beliefs to be critically examined.

The epistemological orientations of disaffiliation reflect this emerging critical nature. For this more reflexive group, a reactionary response to a clearly articulated catalyst is still central to processes of disaffiliation. These catalysts, however, no longer lead to non-thinking abandonment. Familial faith is now put up for examination and deconstruction; faith is no longer taken for granted. The narrative of a female anomic apostate of the younger cohort who fell pregnant in circumstances similar to that of the older respondent previously reviewed, shows this more reflective stance:

It was my mother’s reaction to my pregnancy that I found so scary, I mean she was really fearful. She was so afraid, of what others would think, of what God would think. .. She really believes in the sanctity of marriage, and that I was morally tainted, I mean when did she think people became sexually active? I know it wouldn’t have been a problem if they thought my brother was having sex. There was such a double standard, why am I labelled a slut, why do I have to worry about my reputation. Fuck that. I mean the whole Catholic church is sexist, don’t you think? The moral judgements ...really got to me. We need to step back. Women need to be empowered and they have to be allowed to grow and learn and live. The church does not allow for that. The church just acts to keep sexual double standards. How as a woman can you believe in that? (ROI #61)

A similar catalyst then, is responsible for the initiation of first doubts. An unplanned pregnancy sets the wheels of apostasy in motion. While God is not held responsible for the actual
pregnancy, parental response is once again the cause of a reactionary positioning. Yet, there is a fundamental difference in the epistemological orientation of the apostasy process. For the non-reflexive respondent of the older cohort, the acts of the father were tied to the acts of a patriarchal God; there is a reaction against both. For this more reflexive respondent, however, the reactions of the mother spark an examination of the empowerment of women and the sexual double standard seen operating in the church.

While anomic anger and irritation are still evident in this passage, they are not directed at primary targets of God, church and family. Anger is exuded towards the societal structures which house religion and shape parental attitudes. These anomic emotions then, can be seen as causing a considered deconstruction of the political structures surrounding belief. The respondent, for example, asks the rhetorical question, ‘I mean the whole Catholic church is sexist, don't you think?’ An epistemological journey which deconstructs familial faith is thus revealed. The macro structures of the religious are being considered. Rather than just reacting to a mean and cruel patriarchal God, there is evidence of reflexive consideration of the political and social structures that create and maintain this God. For this respondent, a personal catalyst starts a journey that ends in atheism for political considerations. The influence of a postmodern world is shown as feminism becomes part of the apostatic journey.

Disaffiliation for the reflexive anomic apostates is thus complex. For these apostates, the catalysts which initiate considerations of familial faith are not directly tied to a reactionary dismissal of religion; they do not axiomatically lead to spiritual suicide. Rather, they lead to some level of religious deconstruction. Catalysts for apostasy, therefore, do not need to be as profound as those reviewed; they do not need to be a pivotal event in the lifecourse. For the
more reflexive group, catalysts need only start a journey of reflection. The following passage from a reflexive anomic apostate makes the point:

I was probably... twenty-two when I really started to wonder about things. In fact, my first doubts really coincided with moving from home. All of a sudden God was not an issue. He wasn’t at the forefront of all decisions made. God was not being used as a justification for all that was happening, he was not looking over my shoulder causing me guilt and fear. For the first time in my life, ahhh... God was not heard from, he had finally shut up... It was not so much that I heard alternate views, it was more that omission of his presence that really shook me and... it was quite a revelation to be part of a world, part of a society where he did not come into play on a daily basis. I guess I was sort of amazed and really pissed off that I was made to live in fear of something my parents had constructed... Anyway, that was the start of wondering if I could do without him altogether. That was a start of a new beginning where I wanted to see what it would be like to be free from God (ROI # 65).

For this respondent, the catalyst responsible for the initiation of first doubts was as mundane as moving from home. An anomic response nonetheless ensues. The respondent states that he was, ‘... really shook...’ and was, ‘... amazed and really pissed off...’. Rather than lead to a blind dismissal of faith however, these feelings lead to the consideration of ‘constructed’ knowledges of religion. Moving from home lifted the veil of naivete created by authoritarian, traditional modes of child rearing. The respondent’s realisation that he was, ‘... part of a world, part of a society where he (God) did not come into play on a daily basis’, was the beginning of a deconstruction of previously unconsidered familial beliefs. The process of disaffiliation may be reactionary in nature, but only in that it starts a process of epistemological consideration of ‘wondering’ and of ‘wanting to see’; of questioning the notion of God in a postmodern world.

Processes of disaffiliation for reflexive anomic apostates are thus more than blind rejections of religion. A postmodern world of possibility is muddying the waters of faith. Resistance no
longer implies total religious abandonment. As a religious collective conscious opens in a postmodern world, resistance can involve critical examination of assumed knowledges. As society increases in complexity so too do the apostatic possibilities of reflexive apostates.

The following narrative of an anomic apostate from the younger cohort further points to the complexity of anomic apostasy in an increasingly postmodern world:

The road to atheism was not straightforward. When I was eighteen I got involved with a pretty cultish religious movement... we even spoke in tongues. I was pretty active for over two years and I suppose at the time it was everything I was looking for. I had meaning and purpose and I had a family and without thinking I just adopted all their beliefs... I lost most of my friends because I became a real pain in the ass about religion. I met a guy and I tried to get him to join, but he said that he didn’t want to change himself. Anyway, I eventually had to choose, but... it wasn’t him who gave me the ultimatum, it was the group. That started me thinking, and started a real resentment and anger towards them. I think that was what finally broke through the cloud around my thinking or lack of thinking. I mean... it became clear that their idea of religion and God had to be a hypocritical load of shit. I tried to go back to mainstream church, but I think it was just too late I just couldn’t stomach any of it any more (ROI #55).

The explicit mention of a distinct catalyst is clearly articulated in this passage. The ultimatum placed on the respondent by ‘the group’ is cited as a source of first doubts. This catalyst is also presented with a distinct sense of anomic anger. The respondent’s use of the phrase, ‘hypocritical load of shit’, as well as the explicit mention of ‘resentment’ and ‘anger’, fall in line with a classic Durkheimian profile of anomie.

Anomie, however, does not lead to unconsidered rejection of faith. For this respondent, the hypocritical actions of the few, begin an epistemological consideration of not only the cult, but of mainstream religiosity. The respondent recognises that there is a need to break through a, ‘... lack of thinking’. In fact, the ultimatum of ‘the group’ starts off a reactionary process of
critically examining both God and religion. It then becomes impossible for the respondent to, ‘...go back to the mainstream church...’, for it was ‘...just too late.’

A postmodern state of society can thus be seen as instrumental to processes of disaffiliation. Regardless of socialisation experiences, a postmodern world is influencing epistemological profiles of apostasy. Previously unconsidered knowledges of religion can be put up for examination and deconstruction as more ‘postmodern’ catalysts lead to critiques of larger traditional religious structures.

For the non-reflexive cohort of anomic apostates then, the reactionary nature of disaffiliation can be seen as a mirror of the socialisation processes of blind replication. Just as religious upbringing was unconsidered and unquestioned, so too are the repercussions of foregoing faith. Blindly accepted, blindly rejected characterises the epistemological orientation of disaffiliation. Religion is abandoned or dismissed without thoughtful consideration. Rejection of God is based solely on anomic responses initiated by a very emotive catalyst.

For the reflexive anomic apostates, processes of disaffiliation are more complex. The catalysts for first doubts still initiate an emotive, reactive response which ultimately results in religion’s demise. The process, however, is not without a deconstruction of the assumed knowledges of religion. Whether it be questions regarding the existence of God; the meaning of religion and spirituality or; critiques of the macro political and social structures that surround familial faith, religion is no longer taken for granted. The diversity and possibilities for faith in a postmodern world are causing cracks in the mirror which sees apostasy as a reflection of blind replication. In fact, I would argue that reflexive anomic apostates are beginning to recognise,
..that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticised and destroyed’ (Foucault, 1988:10).

THE EGOISTIC APOSTATE

For those apostates whose negotiations of the social are marked by melancholic introspection, the emergence of a postmodern world is clearly seen in socialisation narratives. As elucidated in the previous chapter, the range and diversity of parenting styles suggests that a definite transformation occurred in the transmission of familial religion over the approximate generational gap. Put simply, parents became more ‘postmodern’ over time.

Regardless of these varied parenting styles, and changes in modes of religious socialisation, the tendency for egoistic intellectualism is still the defining characteristic of the group. The intellectual and mediative nature of egoism develops in these respondents irrespective of socialisation techniques. Whether experiences are modern and authoritarian or postmodern and liberal, egoistic characteristics are standard for both cohorts. While outside influences may reflect the emergence of a postmodern world, the egoistic individual remains true to their contemplative nature.

This same pattern is reflected in the egoistic apostates’ narratives of disaffiliation. While societal factors and the circumstances surrounding the processes of disaffiliation may be affected by the advent of postmodernity, postmodern ramifications are not presented as central to the epistemological orientations of the apostatic process. Disaffiliation narratives are characterised by an underlying similarity that overrides cohort. For egoists, processes of
disaffiliation are inscribed with introspection, over-individuation and an emptiness that leads to a sense of disenchantment with God, religion and at times, the self. As Durkheim states:

A mind that questions everything... risks questioning itself and being engulfed in doubt. If it cannot discover the claims to existence of the objects of its questioning... it will deny them all reality, the mere formulation of the problem already implying an inclination to negative solutions (1993:282).

The underlying epistemological orientation of disaffiliation for the egoistic apostate is thus nicely surmised. Questioning, leads to introspective and irreconcilable doubts. As supported by the quantitative material at the start of this chapter, disenchantment with religion is causing an examination and deconstruction of faith that is part of an alienating, introspective, and lengthy apostatic journey. The following narrative from an older apostate, captures the essence of egoistic disaffiliation:

I was starting to have a really hard time, I think it was in year eight. My parents were fighting a fair bit, and um... God didn’t seem to want to help. My life at times has not been easy... I have been depressed, I have had some mighty lows and as a youth it was during these lows that I really doubted God. It’s hard to believe in anything when you do not believe in yourself and I wanted to turn to God, but he didn’t reach out. I often felt that God was not there for me... It made me wonder whether he existed at all, I used to think about that all the time. Was he there? Did he just not care about me? (ROI # 13)

Quite telling in this egoistic passage is a clearly articulated sense of disenchantment with both God and religion. The statements, ‘God did not seem to want to help...’, ‘... he didn’t reach out’, show both disenchantment with familial religion, and painful internalisation of God’s rejection of a personal relationship. Focus is placed on the self, and there is clear indication of the emptiness associated with religious doubts. The rhetorical question which concludes this
passage, ‘(d)id he just not care about me?’, eloquently articulates the alienated reflections that characterise egoism.

These emotive components then, are quite distinct from the angry reactions of anomic apostates. The resulting processes of disaffiliation are equally distinct. In fact, I argue that for these two groups, certain aspects of the disaffiliation process can be seen at opposite ends of the spectrum. Disaffiliation for anomic apostates is one of quick reactionary anger in response to a defined and clearly articulated catalyst. For egoistic apostates, however, disaffiliation is a long and introspective journey of doubt and questioning, arising from a very personalised sense of disappointment. Egoistic respondents are thoroughly immersed in a process that is reflective by nature. Thus an introspective, meditative, intellectual focus to disaffiliation accompanied by a sense of alienated loss is the hallmark of egoistic processes of disaffiliation. Irrespective of cohort and postmodern influences, this sense of disenchantment marks egoistic apostasy.

The emergence of a postmodern society can nonetheless be discerned in a number of egoistic narratives. Rather than affect the epistemological orientation of the process, however, I suggest that the divergences attributable to an emergent postmodern society are secondary, circumstantial and not unilaterally made explicit. For the range of egoistic apostates, processes of disaffiliation are marked by the primacy of egoistic attributes. Postmodern divergences present themselves only in the complexities and secondary characteristics of the apostatic journey. The introspective nature of the egoist appears to minimise the articulation of outside influences and circumstances. The focus of disaffiliation narratives is generally self directed.
Indication of any cohort differentiations due to postmodern determinants are not easily discerned.

Accordingly, disaffiliation narratives of the younger cohort often mirror those of the older generation. Melancholic introspection characterises the process. The following narrative of a younger egoistic apostate illustrates the point:

I was sort of isolated as a child, I lived in a safe cocoon of ignorance, I didn’t think that my parents really... that I really ever felt that what they did or thought was right, but I didn’t really know why. When I went to uni and met a few people, that made me question things for the first time. All the inconsistencies that go along with the church. I had never really looked at religion objectively, I don’t even think I looked at it at all. Anyway, it’s depressing. I mean you just have to look at the opulence of the church as compared to that of the poor who they say they want to help, and you, ah, realise that there may be a problem with the idea of God. I really... I had a hard time with that revelation, I mean I just think that, well that nothing makes sense. I just don’t know. (ROI #67).

This passage clearly shows a sense of disenchantment with the notion of God and religion.

The ‘inconsistencies’ of the church leave this egoistic apostate with an internalised sense of disenchantment causing an introspective consideration of familial religious structures. For this respondent, ‘... nothing makes sense’. This results in a host of unresolved doubts, leaving the respondent to say, ‘I just don’t know’.

Rather than anomic pain, the hypocrisy perceived in the church leads to a loss of religion that is quite mournful. The statement, ‘I really... I had a hard time with that...’, shows a sense of lost confusion that is difficult to resolve. Instead of an angry reactionism, this egoistic apostatic journey is one in which God and religion are thoughtfully considered to the point of alienated distraction.
This process of disaffiliation then, is reminiscent of that of the older egoistic apostate previously reviewed. The epistemological orientation is marked by similarity. Irrespective of cohort and the emergence of a postmodern societal condition, these narratives share a sense of internalised disenchantment that leads to an introspective consideration of familial faith. Postmodern influences do not appear to effect the underlying epistemological orientations of the apostatic process. In this narrative, it is only in the articulation of the catalysts for first doubts that we can begin to see the influence of an emerging postmodern world.

In the reflections of this respondent, there is mention of a trigger for the first doubts that might be seen as reflective of a postmodern state of society. Breaking from the ‘cocoon’ of home, and meeting a few people at ‘uni’ was the beginning of a conscious recognition and verbalisation of religious doubts. The influence of a postmodern world can thus be seen as diversity and plurality, not readily accessible at home, is made available in larger society.

Catalysts for introspective egoism then, may reflect postmodern societal influences. The tendency for egoistic narratives to center on the self, however, causes reflections to remain on the personal rather than societal level. Postmodern divergences are thus muddied as catalyst for processes of disaffiliation are not uniformly mentioned or explicitly tied to the disaffiliation process. Irrespective of the cause of first doubt, an introspective intellectualism and epistemological questioning of familial faith is narrated with emotive overtones of emptiness and alienation. While catalysts for disaffiliation may be tied to postmodernisation, egoistic apostasy is consistently marked by an underlying pattern of disenchantment.
Quantitative analysis, however, has shown egoistic complexity beyond this primary pattern of disenchanted introspection. Even egoistic processes of disaffiliation can take divergent paths. For example, table 4.2 reports that egoistic processes of disaffiliation may reflect a search for meaning, reactionary anomie and/or rationality and logic. Each can be a significant correlate to the sense of melancholic introspection that marks the egoistic respondent’s apostatic journey.

Egoistic intellectualism, for example, is often associated with a search for meaning and belonging. In fact, an interplay between disenchanted and a search for ‘religiosity’ was articulated by approximately one third of egoistic apostates. The following passage highlights this association:

I think that I was just finished my schooling when the notion of religion first came to the fore. My father had been drinking for quite some time, and I suppose that there were a lot of things happening in my life and I decided that I wanted to turn towards God…, so I started to go to church. I went each week for some time and I tried to become an active member of the parish. There was not too much support available for a seventeen year old so I think I ended up feeling even more lost and alienated. I felt as though God did exist but that he did not want to reach me… I think I needed to feel a sense of community but the church that I was involved with, the one I grew up with did not have that community feel, unless maybe you were old. So anyway I started to explore the entire concept, what I wanted from it, what it could offer me, and how I could change my life and after a lot of soul searching… I decided it is a lot easier to rely on yourself, there is no one else you can rely on, especially God (ROI # 25).

Egoism is clear in this passage. A sense of disenchanted with both God and the church is highlighted. In fact, for this respondent, the pain of rejection becomes highly personalised when pleas to God and the church leave the respondent, ‘… feeling even more lost and alienated’. The respondent comes to believe that, ‘God… did not want to reach me’. Emptiness leads to an egoistic internalisation of disappointment. Rather than an anomic
tendency for an angry and painful rejection of God, disappointments situated at the hands of God lead to self reflection.

The epistemological orientation of the apostatic journey is thus one of deep and reflexive questioning. There is an expressed need to ‘...explore the entire concept...’. Everything about God, religion and the religious experience is put up for examination. Correspondingly, there is a search for meaning and belonging. Considerations begin to expand beyond religion. ‘...(H)ow I could change my life...', is explicitly addressed as a significant part of the epistemological journey. For this respondent, the apostatic journey consisted of, ‘...a lot of soul searching...’. There is a deliberate attempt to look beyond familial faith. Thus for this, and many other egoistic apostates, processes of disaffiliation are marked by a search for ‘religiosity’ that is not readily available or personally meaningful through familial religion or modern Western religious structures. For egoists, ‘...the mind ... (is) engulfed in doubt’...(Durkheim, 1993:282), and faith is not lightly abandoned. A search for meaning is a natural response for a group that is largely uncomfortable with a lack of knowing.

Egoism and a search for meaning and belonging, however, is not the only correlation highlighted in table 4.2. Egoism and anomie are also associated. Durkheim explored this association in relation to suicide. He states:

'It is, indeed, almost inevitable that the egoist should have some tendency to non-regulation; for since he is detached from society, it has not sufficient hold upon him to regulate him (1993:288).

In this research, 58% of those whose epistemological approach to disaffiliation is defined as egoistic, present concurrent signs of anomie. 73% of these apostates hail from the older
cohort. The following passage highlights the tendency for egoistic apostates to manifest reactionary pain and anger in conjunction with a sense of internalised disappointment:

I was sixteen, when started to doubt the traditional church and a traditional God. There is just so much suffering in the world. How could there be a God who would allow so many people to die and, so many children to suffer?... How could we make sense of the world if there is a God who is such a strong father, yet such an absolute bastard? God made no sense. Either he is mean and vindictive or there is no God. I myself think that there is no male God. No religion that I have ever heard of really captures the essence of this world. I was completely disenchanted with religion, and with what it tries to give me... the more I looked, the more I realised that the Christian faiths were all bastions of greed and oppression. It is such a waste, on both a personal and social level. That's is why I became an atheist. (ROI #38).

‘(D)epression alternates with agitation...desire with reflective sadness’ (1993:288).

Durkheim’s portrayal of the egoistic/ anomic association captures the essence of this respondent’s apostatic journey. Egoistic disenchantment is the result of an anomic recognition of ‘...suffering in the world’. The perceived ‘...greed and oppression’ of Christianity leads to both anger and disillusioned alienation. The use of words such as ‘mean’, ‘vindictive’ and, ‘bastards’ point to anomie, while an egoistic sense of personalised alienation and emptiness are pointed to by the phrases, ‘(i)t is such a waste...’ and, ‘I was completely disenchanted...’]. This respondent thus presents a simultaneous sense of mourning and anger.

A sense of anomie is shown in the initial rejection of familial faith caused by the perceived hypocrisy in the church. I argue, however, that the underlying epistemological orientation of the process is egoistic. For this respondent, the process is an introspective journey of consideration that leads to irreconcilable religious doubts. There is a thoughtful consideration and deconstruction of religion that goes beyond an agitated rejection of faith. A personal
sense of meaning and belonging, ‘... what it tries to give me’, as well as social structures of familial religion, ‘... the bastions of greed and oppression’, are put forth for examination. For this apostate of the older cohort, egoistic intellectualism is central to the epistemological focus of disaffiliation, while anomie can be seen as an additional emotive cost of disaffiliation.

For a younger cohort of egoists, however, anomie tendencies are not as often presented in conjunction with egoism. For this group, an egoistic sense of disenchantment is most commonly associated with a rational and logical component in disaffiliation. In fact, the majority of younger egoists (79%), present processes of disaffiliation that are inscribed with some level of rational, cognitive thought. Internal disenchantment and a reflexive introspection is coupled with a rational deconstruction of familial faith. The following narrative is indicative of this egoistic/ postmodern association:

I can’t remember what exactly started me on the path, but I think that it is just all the problems in the world. Holy wars always spun me out. King Arthur and all that. I mean Holy-War isn’t that an oxymoron?? Anyway, I think I just gave up the notion of God, God first. There can be no God in this world, and then, I mean look at it. Old people handing money to preachers over the phone and people still going to war. I don't get it, never will, how can you not have some serious question of both religion and God, how can you not let it get to you? I mean I really let that worry me... once I gave up on God, well then you can start to really see religion for what it is..., it is a mess. Yeah, it may be hard, but once you think about it logically, what else can you do but let religion go? (ROI #68)

The classic Durkheimian egoistic profile is evident in this narrative. Disenchantment, internalisation, and introspection are all alluded to in this passage. Statements such as, ‘How can you not let it get to you? I mean I really let that worry me...’, show reflexive deconstruction of God and religion with a negative inclination. For this respondent, however, a certain level of rationality becomes part of an egoistic epistemological process of
disaffiliation. The respondent tells us that, ‘... once you really think about it logically, what else can you do but let religion go.’ Disenchantment then, leads to logical considerations of religion and God that can be resolved in a rational, thought out manner. The respondent claims that you just need to, ‘... think about it...’.

For this respondent then, the egoistic, emotive components of the process of disaffiliation appear to be tempered with a logical, and cognitive deconstruction of familial faith. Egoism is present, particularly at the start of the apostatic journey. This egoism, however, can be negotiated with a less emotive plea to the intellect. For younger egoists, an emerging postmodern condition may allow for examination of familial faith not solely held to melancholic, introspective musings.

Processes of disaffiliation for egoistic apostates are thus not easily standardised. An introspective consideration of familial faith, in which both God and religion are examined and deconstructed on a personal level with a relatively acute sense of disenchantment, loss, and emptiness may best characterises egoistic apostasy. From this common ground, however, the apostatic journey can take various paths; egoistic processes of disaffiliation are marked by complexity. Whether it be changing forms of apostatic catalysts or associations with anomic reactionism, a search for aspects of ‘religiosity’, or a plea to logic and rationality, the varied possibilities for disaffiliation show great intricacy; intricacy that can, in fact, be traced to cohort differentiations. Postmodern society is thus affecting both catalysts of egoistic intellectualism, as well as the composite characteristics of the apostatic journey. Cohort movement from egoism tainted with anomie, to egoism in association with logic, points to the influence of an emerging postmodern state of society.
THE POSTMODERN APOSTATE

For anomic and egoistic apostates, processes of disaffiliation have been inscribed with emotion. Anger and disgust, depression and weariness have been central to the epistemological orientations of apostasy. For postmodern apostates, however, angst caused by familial faith is not presented as central to processes of disaffiliation. As the quantitative data in tables 4.1 through 4.3 show, postmodern apostates’ disaffiliation is best described as a rational, decision-making process. Religious disaffiliation is marked by a relatively short time span, a lack of intensity, and a rational and logical deconstruction of faith. Further, an emerging postmodern world does little to differentiate the epistemological orientations of apostasy. A rational deconstruction of faith ensues regardless of a postmodern societal condition.

A lack of cohort differentiation on the level of epistemology, however, would be expected given the criteria for inclusion in the postmodern classification. These respondents have been categorised on the basis of a postmodern mindset and the acceptance of postmodern possibilities. Thus, the generational gap indicating the increased dominion of postmodernity is less telling of epistemological directions in processes of disaffiliation. The epistemological orientation of the apostatic process has been more directly determined by postmodern socialisation, than by greater postmodern society. An underlying pattern of disaffiliation then, is discernible across the range of postmodern apostatic narratives. A logical and rational approach to both God and religion is articulated by apostates of both cohorts.
The emergence of a postmodern condition, however, does present itself in the narratives of this group. Rather than impacting on the epistemological approaches to apostasy, however, postmodernisation is discernible in the transforming triggers and catalyst of disaffiliation. It is also discernible in the subtleties and negotiations of the apostatic journey. Older, ‘vanguard’ postmodern apostates are rationally negotiating familial faith, still strongly embedded in modernistic frameworks. Younger, ‘contemporary’ postmodern apostates, however, are rationally deconstructing familial faith in a society where increased reflexivity often brings modern constructions of religion up for examination. For each, the cultural milieu of the times had an influence on the possibilities and techniques for re-formations on both individual and societal levels. Foucault, for one, suggests that this would be a reasonable expectation:

The practices of the self are... not something that the individual invents himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group (Foucault, 1990:11).

**Vanguard Postmodern Apostates**

Vanguard postmodern apostates are quick to embrace more reflexive means for negotiating the social. This increased reflexivity occurs even in a society where traditional approaches to knowledge still dictate the masses. These apostates then, are at the fore in the adoption of new epistemological approaches for examining the social. Just as this group’s liberal and open minded socialisation ran contrary to mainstream socialisation, so too do processes of disaffiliation. Similarly, an examination of the catalysts for disaffiliation shows that the triggers of apostasy are not often customary in a society still embedded in modernity. The vanguard
nature of apostasy can thus be tied to catalysts that in themselves resist the dominating power relations of modernity.

Postmodern apostates’ logical deconstruction of familial faith, for example, generally followed one of three initial catalysts: diversity of religious beliefs in the home; the influence of atheistic significant others or; exposure to alternatives at university. All can be seen as catalysts which stand at the fore of an emerging postmodern world. For these respondents, the juxtaposition of such influences, in a world still embedded in modernity, leads to a logical consideration and deconstruction of familial faith.

The narrative of a respondent of the older cohort whose mother was Anglican and father atheist is an example of a vanguard and non-emotional approach to religion and religiosity:

I was about fifteen when I gave up my beliefs. It is hard to believe that something so esoteric is the truth when only one of your parents believes it... For me, the process of giving up religion wasn’t difficult. It was more a logical decision of choice. It was very easy for me to remember that there were alternatives. I just chose to follow in the footsteps of my father rather than my mother... Not too many people shared those views, but other than that there was no crisis, is was just rational (ROI #32).

In the time of this respondent’s upbringing, the familial situation of a parent with orthodox religious beliefs and a parent without belief, was quite rare in Australian society. In fact, the juxtaposition of diverse religious socialisation in the home, as compared to the traditional views of society was unusual enough to be explicitly recognised by the respondent. The respondent claims that, ‘...not too many people shared those views...’, yet this was not presented as problematic. The unconventional socialisation of this respondent is not articulated as a source of strain. Regardless of the mind set of the majority, unorthodox child
rearing seemingly leads to a rational and non-emotive critique of familial belief. Thus, in contrast to anomic and egoistic apostates, this postmodern apostate recounts tales of disaffiliation without strong negative emotive overtones. The respondent articulates none of the pain and anger of the anomic apostate, nor the confused alienated emptiness of the egoist. Religion is simply negotiated without an emotive personal cost. The respondent states that the, ‘... process of giving up religion wasn’t difficult...’, ‘...there was no crisis...’. The narrative is not presented with any sense of cognitive dissonance which needs resolution. There is little stress in the consideration and deconstruction of faith.

The epistemological orientation of disaffiliation is reflective of this non-emotive platform. Rather than an angry reaction, or a personalised introspection, the process of disaffiliation is approached with a sense of logical and rational detachment. For this respondent, the process was simply a, ‘...logical decision of choice’. Alternatives availed themselves, and were by their presence, put up for examination and deconstruction. Alternate views were simply weighed, considered and decided upon.

A similar pattern is cited for postmodern apostates of the older cohort who refer to a significant other as the source of logical examinations of religion. The following passage is indicative of the narratives that articulate partners as a primary catalyst for religious deconstruction:

I met my husband when I was twenty-six years old. He was an atheist, and a pretty vocal one at that. He was quite political and he was the one who got me to question the negative aspects of religion, my religion, and religion in general. He never... I never really felt the passion for the cause that he did, but he did get me to look at what religion is all about. From the deaths of the religious wars, to the immobilisation of thousand upon thousands who are waiting for a nonexistent God to deliver them a greater life... it all became an issue that I decided to
examine... The logical explanation is that there is no God and that religion really is more destructive than constructive (ROI #33).

This respondent presents as non-emotively examining what others may see as reactionary or depressing; ‘... the deaths of the religious wars to the immobilisation of thousand upon thousands who are waiting for a non-existent God...’. In addition, the respondent took up the examination of religion in the face of a partner who felt, ‘passion’ and was a ‘vocal’ atheist. Nonetheless, the respondent is able to examine the constructs of religion without angst. Even without ‘...passion for the cause’, religion becomes an issue worthy of examination. The macro-political and historical contexts of religion are considered without anomic anger or egoistic disenchantment. Accordingly, this vanguard postmodern apostate is left to proffer a ‘logical explanation’ for the societal manifestations of religion. This is possible even when such considerations are triggered by an impassioned significant other.

For this apostate, the catalyst for first doubt again runs counter to the expectations of a modern society. For individuals of this cohort, inter-faith marriage, let alone marriage to a ‘vocal’ atheist was uncommon. It was also an issue of parental/ community concern and disapproval. Plurality of beliefs through marriage was thus vanguard and could be seen as foreshadowing the postmodern diversity of beliefs that have come to characterise contemporary, Australian society. For this respondent, an unusual catalyst leads to an unusual dismissal of faith.

For postmodern apostates of the older cohort who had their logical and rational journey of apostasy triggered by the advent of tertiary studies, the adoption of a postmodern mindset also
develops outside traditional familial/community structures. The following narrative is characteristic of this group:

... if I had to pinpoint it, I would say that it would probably be when I first went to uni and umm... came to the realisation that, especially the things in the old testament were myths. The more science could explain for us, the less we need religion, so I understood where the need for religion came from. I no longer think we need myths to explain an unexplainable world. The process itself... has gone through many permutations... I looked at all types of beliefs not just Christianity and I ended up agnostic, then an atheist because of my lack of confidence in the validity of any particular religious doctrine because to take any one faith literally meant that one must necessarily reject the truth content of all other religions. I think that science lets us reject the concept entirely and that seems the most logical answer (ROI #9).

In this narrative we again see the non-emotive process of a logical and rational deconstruction of religion, this time triggered by the influences of university study. Religion is foregone without a plea to emotion. Rather, there is an explicit recognition of logic i.e., ‘...the most logical answer’. Religion as a premodern response to an unknowable world is now outmoded as science is offered as a replacement for the needs of the spiritual.

Faith is thus negotiated without a plea to supernatural spirituality. The epistemological approach to apostasy is simply a reformulation of the explanations of the world based on new and advanced knowledges. While this explanation may be indicative of a modern rejection of premodern religion, it nonetheless has postmodern overtones; assumed and unconsidered aspects of familial faith have been put forth for examination and deconstruction.

Tertiary study then, can trigger the apostatic journey. For this respondent, and many of the postmodern apostates who refer to university as casual for first doubts, new ideologies or alternate views cause an examination of familial faith that results in a logical and rational
dismissal of the ‘religious’. Traditional religious faith no longer goes unquestioned in a world of infinite spiritual and scientific possibilities. Tertiary education thus hastens the advent of postmodern considerations for this group.

A commonality among vanguard postmodern apostates then, is a rational journey of disaffiliation triggered by catalysts that cause apostatic considerations, not prevalent in larger society. In a modern world where uncritical acceptance of familial faith is the norm, vanguard postmodern apostates appear to find glitches in the fabric of religious socialisation that lead to a logical examination and deconstruction of the sacred.

**Contemporary Postmodern Apostates**

Processes of disaffiliation for contemporary postmodern apostates are not far divergent from the profile presented above. A rational and logical approach to apostasy continues to define the epistemological orientation of disaffiliation, while the catalysts said to initiate these processes are often the same as those indicated by the older cohort. Diversity and plurality of beliefs in the home, the influence of significant others, and the experiences offered at university are reported as causal to a non-emotional and rational deconstruction of familial religion.

An emerging postmodern societal condition, however, is still discernible in these narratives. Rather than affect varied epistemological orientations of disaffiliation, postmodern divergences are held more in transforming catalysts for apostasy. In the following narrative, for example, a contemporary postmodern apostate, cites university attendance as a source of first doubts. While this catalyst was not uncommon for vanguard postmodern apostates, the diversity and
plurality of a postmodern world can be see in the increasingly unavoidable nature of religious alternatives:

It wasn’t even really my choice, my best tutor was an atheist, and he really let us know it, like you had to think about religion just to pass his course! But it made sense... I mean once a thinking person begins the questioning process, I honestly can not see what conclusion you can come to other than there is no God. Just as I have no emotional tie to the idea that the world is flat, I have no emotional tie to the notion of God and religion, it needs to be dismissed if there is not enough evidence (ROI #56).

As with vanguard postmodern apostates, disaffiliation is a non-emotive and rational process. This contemporary postmodern apostate claims to have, ‘... no emotional tie...’ to familial faith, and is willing to continue a deconstruction of religion initiated by an atheistic tutor. For this contemporary apostate, however, alternatives to traditional religion no longer need to be sought after or even stumbled upon. In a postmodern world, the deconstruction of traditional religion becomes difficult to avoid. The respondent claims that considerations of religion were, ‘...not really my choice’; they were, in fact, presented as a prerequisite for successful tertiary studies. While the epistemological orientation of the apostatic process remains one of a rational deconstruction of God and religion, the expectation of a deconstruction appears to become the norm for entire segments within a postmodern world. As Lyotard (1984) suggests, questioning and transformation of knowledges becomes more generalised in postmodernity.

Running parallel, are the narratives of contemporary postmodern apostates who reference everyday friends as catalysts for the thoughtful contemplation and deconstruction of religion:

I was just a kid when I started to think about God... me and my friends would sometimes light up and talk about shit... it's just... it struck us that God really
makes about as much sense as Santa or the bloody Easter bunny. It still amazes me that you can believe in the most ridiculous things if you are told they are true often enough. The same people who think reincarnation is crazy think the concept of heaven and hell makes sense, like I mean...how can you have a closed mind to aliens and UFOs, yet believe in the Devil! It doesn’t make sense. Religion is no more than Christmas, and God is no more than Santa, only difference is one you grow out of and the other you don’t... I mean it doesn’t bother me, but the whole thing is a bit suss when you think about it (ROI #49).

For this respondent, the basic postmodern epistemological orientation of rational consideration is discernible. In this case, however, a sense of anomie can be seen in conjunction with rational considerations. A sense of exasperation at the nonsensical elements of faith leads to a deconstruction of religion that is seen as reasonable; after all, religion is considered to be ‘... a bit suss when you think about it’. Apostasy, however, is more than an angry response to any particular event, or an alienated and personalised sense of disenchantment with God and religion. For this respondent, the inconsistencies of familial faith lead to examinations that can be readily resolved through the logical recognition of religion as myth.

The postmodern ease with which religion is deconstructed is further alluded to by the catalyst for disaffiliation. It does not take a radical partner, unusual or diverse parents, or enlightenment at university to trigger the apostatic journey. In a postmodern world of diversity, plurality and choice, the catalyst for first doubt can be as everyday as, ‘... light(ing) up and talk(ing) about shit...’, with friends. For many contemporary youth, a deconstruction and examination of familial faith may become the norm in postmodern society. Discourses of critique are becoming more commonplace.

Divergences in processes of disaffiliation that can be attributed to an emerging postmodern condition may thus point to an epistemic transformation at the societal level. Whether it be the
‘intelligentsia’ at university or ‘everyday’ interaction with friends, deconstructing religion becomes the norm. In a postmodern world, a removal of religion from the realm of the sacred is not problematic.

The following narrative further draws out this point. For this contemporary postmodern apostate, feminist deconstructions of a patriarchal world, act to undermine familial faith:

It is all a big patriarchy. Just look at its rules on birth control and abortion. I think it would be difficult to not give up beliefs if you are a woman... I think one of the niggling inconsistencies within the church and within my family is sexism and patriarchy. My father respects my mother, but only in her role and... he does not consider her his equal. He is the patriarch and the system works well as long as my mother doesn’t question it, I mean he isn’t a bad husband, that is just the way it was and Catholic school was the same, the boys were called on in class more, boys had the opportunity for sport, boys were encouraged, not out of a desire to be unfair but it was just the history and tradition. Today the church still marginalises women and I harbour no resentment, but at the same time I can not believe in a system that marginalises me and my worth, it is as simple as that(ROI #79).

For this respondent, a rational consideration of familial faith is inscribed with a level of anomie and egoism. A sense of exasperation at a hypocritical church, and concern over the marginalisation of personal worth, can be seen in conjunction with a well considered and rational approach to apostasy. While ‘...harbour(ing) no resentment...’, the hypocrisies of the church make Christianity a ‘system’ that can not be trusted. Rather than engage in a reactionary dismissal or egoistic doubts, however, mistrust leads to logical, critical examination. Political and social values that run contrary to familial faith force a deconstruction of that faith.
In this passage, the influence of a postmodern society can be seen as feminist discourses are called upon as means for justifying religious disaffiliation. Similar to the narrative for the reflexive female anomic respondent on p. 180, feminism becomes part of the apostatic journey, and causes a consideration of the political and social structures that support familial belief. Thus, ‘... if you are a woman...’, a deconstruction of religion is increasingly portrayed as unavoidable and necessary.

Postmodern apostates of both cohorts then, embark on an apostatic journey that is distinguished by an epistemological profile of rational, decision making. Whether completely logical and non-emotive, or tinged with a sense of anomie and egoism, postmodern apostates commence a journey of consideration that results in a rational and reasonable dismissal of familial faith. A less emotive subjective positioning appears easier to adopt for a group whose socialisation was not shown to be overly dogmatic. For this group, more postmodern techniques for resisting modern constructions of religion no longer see angst as central to apostasy.

The emergence of a postmodern societal condition, however, can still be seen even for those whose negotiations of faith are delineated by a postmodern mindset. The deconstruction of familial faith is no longer an aberration... it is becoming the norm. Religion appears to be quite easily removed from its sacred pedestal. Considerations of religion have moved into the realm of the day to day, and critical examinations of the familial faith appear to be part of a more critical postmodern approach to knowledge.
Concluding Remarks

A meaningful delineation of disaffiliation can thus proceed by an examination of apostate type. In fact, the direction of the apostatic process can often be seen as an offshoot of socialisation experiences. Thus, the anomic tendency for blind acceptance of socialisation is mirrored in the reactionary rejection of familial faith. Similarly, the introspective considerations that plague the mind of the young egoist are reflected in the irreconcilable doubts and detachment that mark processes of disaffiliation. Finally, the non-traditional and liberal socialisation of postmodern apostates, can be seen as directly correlated to the rational, logical and non-emotive negotiations of the 'religious' in later life. Disaffiliation then, is a complex and multifarious phenomenon that is directed in part by modern techniques and goals of socialisation. Processes of disaffiliation for the modern apostate types can be seen as a rejection or reaction to aspects of socialisation. For the postmodern contingent, however, deconstructions of familial faith can actually be a perpetuation of the socialisation objectives of critical thought instilled in childhood.

The links between a postmodern epistemic shift in the transmission of familial faith and the epistemological approaches to disaffiliation, thus necessitates the rethinking of apostasy as a 'failure' of socialisation. An examination of cohort delineation within types further alludes to the necessity for rethinking the negativity associated with apostasy. While apostate types marked by anomic reactionism, egoistic intellectualism and postmodern reason, all define epistemological divides in the apostatic journey, cohort divergence within types points to an emerging societal condition in which reflexivity is increasingly accepted and encouraged. Postmodernity has put a changing face on the apostatic process. Deconstructions of faith no
longer need to culminate in an emotive rejection of all aspects of religiosity. An opening collective conscience allows faith to be negotiated. The diversity, plurality and possibilities associated with a postmodern world, coupled with the critical examinations of previously sacred realms, leave apostasy as a potential signifier of a cognitive and intellectual shift in the ways and means of processing the social; a shift that can be argued as both positive and emancipatory.

Chapter five continues an exploration of this shift as it occurs throughout re-formations of the post apostatic self. It ask whether atheism is the culmination of the apostatic journey, and explores whether post apostatic re-formations can point to lasting postmodern epistemological transition in the processing of social knowledges.
Chapter Five

APOSTASY* RE-FORMATION OF THE SELF

This chapter is an exploration of re-formation. It is an attempt to understand the development of the post apostatic self and the relationship of this new form of self to a society in transition. From new labels of identity, to post apostatic understandings of the world, this chapter examines how apostates negotiate a self and a society no longer impinged upon, or supported by, modern constructions of religion. It asks, what are the techniques of post apostatic re-formation; how is a world view no longer influenced by Christianity negotiated?

Apostasy literature rarely explores issues of re-formation. The foregoing of familial faith is traditionally seen as the conclusion of apostasy. Empirically based apostasy literature has been limited to investigations that centre on demographics and determinants of disaffiliation. Investigations do not tend to go beyond disaffiliation. Atheism or ticking ‘none’ in a survey’s demographic religious information box, is considered the end of the apostatic journey. The re-formation and renegotiation of the post apostatic self is not explored. Survey research does not allow for investigations of this nature, while the sociological focus of apostasy research has yet to raise the issues.

I argue that a shift to atheism is not the culmination of apostasy. Disaffiliation is better understood as a turning point in renegotiations of the self. Processes of disaffiliation represent only the first half of the apostatic journey. Apostates are often employing new ways of perceiving both the world and the self. They are individuals reformulating epistemological
orientations to knowing in a world of increasing possibilities. Thus, how the self comes to renegotiate post apostatic understandings is a significant and telling part of the apostatic journey. Understanding the processes that reform the self is essential in uncovering the agency of the individual to transform the dominating power relationships that have been instrumental to self creation.

Agency, however, is not a popular theme in apostasy literature. Transformation of the self, at the control of the self, is not a topic largely considered. In fact, the literature that addresses apostasy as a lifecourse transition, appears to be predicated on the Freudian assumptions that the self is established early in life and remains relatively stable throughout the lifecourse. Authors such as Ebaugh thus concentrate on the changing of ‘roles’, rather than re-formation of the self. She, for example, states that individuals whose lives have undergone significant transition,

...are in the process of learning new sets of role prescriptions. In one sense this is the process of role socialisation, of internalising the norms and expectations associated with a given social role... (E)xes are (also) unlearning normative expectations of previous roles at the same time they are learning ones. This constitutes a process of resocialisation to the extent that old sets of norms are given up and replaced by new sets of expectation (1988:4).

New norms and expectations are thus adopted by the ‘ex’. Ebaugh’s thesis on transition, however, significantly limits the agency of the individual in controlling change. Change appears to be limited to resisting particular sources of power, rather than techniques of power. Thus even ‘exes’ who have cast out aspects of their past, are presented as somewhat passive pawns. ‘Exes’ are simply subjected to new forces of socialisation that alter the self, but still limit the agency of the individual. Accordingly, the techniques and processes used to negotiate
change, transition and re-formation are not examined beyond changes in socialising agents. Questions that ask whether it is possible to reform the self without subjection to the socialisation forces of alternatives, are not often raised.

I argue, however, that such questions are central to investigations that seek to uncover epistemic transformations in the processing of knowledge. Investigations in the previous chapters have shown that the ways and means by which the religious subject is formed have shifted in an emerging postmodern society. Modes of socialisation have undergone a transformation in recent years. There has been a shift away from authoritarian modes of socialisation seen as replication, to socialisation as encouraged reflexivity. This is reflected in the ability of the subject to cognitively and emotionally negotiate their socialisation experiences. These negotiations vary in accordance with the diverse and changing processes that shape the individual.

Disaffiliation also varies by both apostate type and cohort, and reflects both the varied epistemological approaches to knowledge uncovered in negotiations of socialisation, and the complexity of a society in the midst of transition. An epistemic shift in practices of socialisation and processes of disaffiliation are thus occurring in a society whose framework is stretching beyond modernity towards a postmodern condition.

Understanding the varied means for renegotiating the post apostatic self during this transition, is highly germane to an investigation of epistemic change that may signify more than resistance to certain power structures. Investigations of the agency of the individual in self re-formation can question whether the individual is doomed to be an object of
subjection. Investigations of post apostatic re-formations help to uncover whether apostasy in a postmodernising world points to resistance to certain techniques of power, rather than just particular sources of power. In a postmodern world, there may be agency of the individual for an emotionally balanced post apostatic negotiation of the self not reliant on the socialisation techniques of modernity or traditional aspects of religiosity.

Given the shift to a postmodern age, the questions then become; can, and how does one rethink and reform major premises of knowledge traditionally based on the power relationships as defined in modernity? How does one begin to negotiate new terrains that show the possibilities of the future while remaining embedded in personal and social history? What as Foucault states, can be the evolution of,

...technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality (1988:18).

Are there means beyond subjection, which allow us to reform the self, and are these re-formations tied to an emergent postmodern form of society? Foucault tells us that, (a)ll of us are living and thinking subjects (1988:14). The question is thus whether a more postmodern form of society encourages ‘thinking’ and reflexivity beyond the repressive constraints of modernity.

Crucial to this chapter then, is an investigation of the re-formation of the self, and transformations in ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988:18). With these
investigations, apostasy can become a useful signifier of an individual's agency in negotiating the processes that form and shape the self. Apostasy can signify whether the emergence of a postmodern world is accompanied by an epistemological shift in how we think about both the self and society. Uncovering how the apostate negotiates new and emergent realms of the social and moral world without reference to traditional religious structures, and how 'truth', previously premised on Christianity in modernity is renegotiated in light of postmodern possibilities, can be instrumental to understanding the significance of apostasy in a postmodern world.

**Apostasy Typology**

Following the pattern for the previous two chapters, investigations of self re-formation and post apostatic societal negotiations are explored by apostate type. Cohort delineations within type are examined in order to uncover how the postmodern epistemic shift evident in religious socialisation and apostasy, might be reflected in a respondent's post apostatic negotiations of the self and the social. Has there been a postmodern transformation in Foucauldian 'technologies of the self', and can such transformations be discerned in post apostatic narratives?

The quantitative data centring on post apostatic identity and belief are contained in tables 5.1 and 5.2. As would be expected, distinct processes of apostasy with their varied epistemological orientations, lead to equally varied orientations post apostasy. Divergences generally fall in line with both the defining characteristics of each apostate class and the narratives as presented thus far:
**Table 5.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atheist</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agnostic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chi² test of significance, p < .05
All numbers are expressed as percentages

The data in table 5.1 shows labels of identity to be divergent by type. While the label atheist is the most commonly referenced for all groups, both anomic and postmodern apostates refer to the term with overwhelming consistency; the use of agnostic or other labels is an unusual occurrence. For egoistic apostates, however, alternate labels of post apostatic identity are not uncommon. Thirty-eight percent of egoistic apostates use labels other than atheist; a figure that falls in line with the equivocal contemplation that characterises egoism, and the ongoing nature of the egoistic apostatic journey.

Cognitive negotiations of new positionings as shown in table 5.2, further allude to the defining characteristics of apostate types:
Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Beliefs</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Beliefs</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way Anova (LSD)  \( p < .05 \)

Table 5.2 presents data on negotiations of current identity and beliefs. Each apostate type is shown to be distinct in its negotiations of the post apostatic self. Anomic apostates, for example, are both comfortable and committed to new labels of identity (.89 and .83 respectively). In contrast, egoistic apostates express a level of unease at new identifications, and lower levels of commitment to the atheistic stance. I argue that such equivocation is not out of character for this class of apostate.

Postmodern apostates are distinct again. As for anomic apostates, the postmodern contingent find new identities largely unproblematic. High comfort levels, however, are not unilaterally accompanied by high levels of commitment. Commitment to new identity is, in fact, lower than the figure seen for egoistic apostates. I would suggest that high comfort/low commitment levels point to a sense of satisfaction with new beliefs that does not close off future spiritual/religious possibilities.
An analysis of the respondent’s credibility ratings for realms of religious beliefs further confirms varied epistemological approaches to knowledge. For each apostate type, credibility of mainstream religiosity is ranked very low. While egoistic apostates are slightly more equivocal on the suspect nature of traditional beliefs, differences are not significant. This overriding lack of credibility is not surprising given the apostatic criteria in this study. By definition, all apostates would have serious reservations regarding mainstream religiosity.

Credibility ratings for alternate religious beliefs, however, are more telling of divergent epistemological orientations in post apostatic re-formations. Anomic apostates’, for example, find alternate beliefs significantly less credible than egoistic and postmodern apostates. Anomic tendencies do not appear to lend themselves to the acceptance of alternate spirituality. Egoistic intellectualism and postmodern open mindedness, on the other hand, are less likely to preclude alternate opportunities. Thus, negotiations of the post apostatic self continue to reflect previously identified epistemological orientations.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 attempt to capture these distinctions as apostates begin a post apostatic negotiation of the world that goes beyond deconstructions of familial faith, and new understandings of the self. This data attempts to understand how constructed knowledges of Western morality and social order, traditionally underpinned by Christianity, are negotiated post apostasy. In many ways the respondents’ society is still embedded in Christian foundations, while apostates themselves were socialised with Christian beliefs. The negotiation of the social world is thus a complex exercise in the reformulation of an apostates’ entire underpinning of meaning.
The renegotiation of morality is addressed in table 5.3, while table 5.4 reports on post apostatic understanding of social order:

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounding Morality</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man Made</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Spirit</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural Spirit</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instinct</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconsidered</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way Anova (LSD)  p < .05

The data in table 5.3 is derived directly from narrative text, and reports on the apostates' varied means 'grounding morality.' Responses are diverse and difficult to reduce. Certain patterns indicative of apostate types, however, can be detected. For example, the most conspicuous figure in table 5.3 for anomic apostates, points to the high percentage of respondents who state that post apostatic understandings of morality have never been considered. Twenty-five percent of anomic apostates claim to have never thought about the issue of post apostatic morality and could not respond any further to the query. This lack of deliberation is in clear contrast to both the egoistic and postmodern apostates who consistently claim to have considered questions of post apostatic morality. This finding
thus reflects the epistemological orientation that prevails throughout the anomic apostatic journey; a lack of reflexive consideration.

Also notable for anomic apostates is a lack of reference to spirituality as a source of morality. Not one anomic apostate claimed that there was a spiritual force that guides the moral actions of individuals. This finding reflects the unconsidered rejections of both traditional and alternate religious beliefs as shown in table 5.2; unilateral dismissal of abstract concepts of spirituality do not come as a surprise. The responses that were cited as a source for morality for anomic apostates were quite divergent. Twenty-one percent of anomic apostates referenced the human spirit, or an inherent respect for within humanity as the source for morality. A third, however, were more cynical, stating that morality is a man made construction; man creates morals in order to ensure power. This cynical nature is also reflected by the 13% of anomic apostates who question the very existence of any sense of morality.

For egoistic apostates, the grounding of morality has a slightly different profile. The most conspicuous figure in table 5.3 points to egoistic apostates, who unlike anomic counterparts, had previously considered issues of post apostatic morality, yet were unable to proffer a response. While issues of morality had been thoughtfully considered, many egoistic respondents had yet to negotiate a satisfactory response to this quandary; 25% of egoistic apostates did not feel able to ponder the source of morality.

For those egoistic apostates who were able to provide a response, the most commonly referenced source for post apostatic morality was supernatural spirituality (25%).
Although not usually a Christian God, a fair proportion believe that there is a force which acts upon our moral being. Morality as a construction of man was referenced by 21% of respondents, while 17% feel that there is a sense of humanity that guides our actions.

Finally, for postmodern apostates, the most striking findings in table 5.3 are those that point to an ability to provide an answer for this question. Postmodern apostates show very little of the anomic respondents’ lack of reflection, or the egoistic apostates’ inability to answer. For postmodern apostates, issues of post apostatic morality are not presented as unconsidered or problematic. Responses are invariably offered, and reflect a range of orientations. The human spirit, referenced by 36% of postmodern apostates, is the single most mentioned factor associated with morality. Morality as a construction of man is referred to by 28% of postmodern respondents, while supernatural spirituality and a natural instinctual drive behind morality are each referenced by 13% of the postmodern contingent.

A similar profile can be found in an examination of the respondents’ conceptions of post apostatic social order:
Table 5.4 Mean Scores and Significance for Grounding of Social Order by Apostate Type *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounding Social Order</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>An-Eg</th>
<th>An-PM</th>
<th>Eg-PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man Made</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Spirit</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural Spirit</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instinct</td>
<td>.17</td>
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<td>.16</td>
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<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unconsidered</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One Way Anova (LSD)  p < .05

Table 5.4 points to post apostatic reformulations of the constructed knowledges that have traditionally shaped understandings of order in the social world. Patterns similar to those presented for morality are evident for the three classes of apostates.

Anomic respondents, for example, are the only class of apostate who have not considered post apostatic social order, one of five anomic apostates had never thought about the issue and were unwilling to provide an ‘off the cuff’ response. For those anomic apostates who did reply, 38% cite that social order is a man made construction, while 21% reference the human spirit as the source for order. Finally, a call to an instinctual drive for social order was referenced by 17% of anomic respondents.

Amongst egoistic apostates, 21% had considered the question, but were nonetheless, unable to provide a response. Of those who did respond, 8% questioned that order existed, while the remaining respondents were evenly distributed among those who
believe that social order is a man made construction, those who cite the human spirit and, those who claim that order is created and dictated by a supernatural force.

Finally, postmodern apostates again show little egoistic equivocation or anomic non-reflection. Answering the query seems to follow the pattern of rationality that consistently marks postmodern respondents' apostatic journeys. Post apostatic social order has thus been thoughtfully considered with 41% of postmodern apostates stating that order is simply man made, while 25% refer to order derived from a spirit of humanity. A supernatural force and the role of instinct in the construction of order are also mentioned by 13% and 16% of respondents respectively.

The grounding of morality and social order is thus complex, and not unilaterally considered or resolved by all respondents. The data by type, however, does fall in line with the profiles of the apostatic journey presented thus far. Accordingly, anomic apostates are most likely to sidestep any consideration of grand philosophical issues. When reflections are made, they are likely to be cynical in nature. For egoistic apostates, well considered questions are not easily resolved. Many egoistic respondents have yet to come to grips with post apostatic morality and social order, while others reference a range of responses. Postmodern apostates, on the other hand, present as having both considered and resolved the issues with reference to a variety of possibilities and alternatives. Postmodern apostates appear to unproblematically negotiate post apostatic morality and social order utilising the diversity of the postmodern world.
The quantitative data thereby provides a rough sketch of the varied possibilities for post apostatic negotiations of both the self and the social world. Identity and meaning are being reformulated, and the processes that accomplish this vary by apostate type. From the reactionary unconsidered positioning of anomic apostates, to the intellectual introspection of egoists, to the well considered negotiations of postmodern apostates, the quantitative material in this analysis suggests that the re-formation of self follows patterns first discernible in negotiations of childhood socialisation and more clearly defined throughout processes of disaffiliation. Epistemological orientations to knowledge seen throughout processes of apostasy, continue in post apostatic negotiations.

These figures, however, do not allow for a nuanced examination of post apostatic re-formations; the difficulties and triumphs associated with re-formations are not expressed in the quantitative data. The remainder of this chapter thus focuses on qualitative narrative analysis, in order to draw out the subtleties of the re-formation process. Particular attention is given to cohort differentiations within each class, in an attempt to discern how the epistemic shift that bridges the gap between a modern and postmodern world affects each class and cohort of apostate.

**THE ANOMIC APOSTATE**

Quantitative data on current belief structures in tables 5.1 through 5.4, suggest that the anomic apostate who best exemplifies the group’s commonalities, is a committed atheist who gives very little credibility to mainstream or alternative religious beliefs, and is quite comfortable with a new atheistic identity. While the anomic apostate is both ‘committed’
and 'comfortable' in post apostatic positioning, this class of apostate often leaves grand philosophical questions unconsidered, unaddressed, or approaches such quandaries with an off handed cynicism.

This base profile, however, is not offered to suggest that the postmodern epistemic shift uncovered and traced throughout the apostatic journey has become less consequential in the re-formation of the self. On the contrary, the two previously identified strands of non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates, principally divided by cohort, continue to differentiate themselves in post apostatic re-formations of the self, and post apostatic negotiations of society.

Non-reflexive anomic apostates thus continue a pattern of unconsidered reactive anger. Reflexive anomic apostates, on the other hand, are able to temper anomic tendencies with more thoughtful contemplation. In short, non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates continue to differentiate themselves on both cognitive and emotional levels. The re-formations of the self and understandings of society are approached from varied positionings.

**Non-Reflexive Anomic Apostates**

The epistemological orientations of non-reflexive anomic apostates have been shown to be reactionary; processes of disaffiliation are generally marked by unconsidered anomic anger. The quantitative material in tables 5.1 and 5.2 point to a continuation of this pattern as non-reflexive anomic apostates claim a sense of comfort and commitment to atheism while reporting little regard for any aspects of religion and spirituality. These
reflections are often narrated with a sense of unconsidered anomic reactionism. The following passage is characteristic of non-reflexive anomic apostates’ self re-formations:

I am definitely an atheist and I am happy to call myself that. I would rather... um... carry the label of a nonbeliever, than the label of a Christian. I have no respect for religions, and what they stand for... I have no belief in anything to do with God or the supernatural. There is no afterlife, there is no anything. If... I know there is nothing out there, because if there was, then he would definitely be running things a damn sight better. If he is there then what he allows is pretty fucked... who needs him (ROI #16).

A sense of anomic anger reminiscent of the non-reflexive anomic apostates’ reflections of disaffiliation is clear in this passage. The phrase ‘pretty fucked’ and adjectives such as ‘definitely’ and ‘damn’ show the reactionary anger that characterises the group, and an unwavering stance in post apostatic beliefs. The label ‘atheist’ is unequivocally accepted and generally not problematic, for it is a response to the problematic nature of religion itself.

The current beliefs of this atheist are also made clear and unequivocal. This respondent states that ‘...there is no anything’, and even if there was a God, ‘...who needs him’. The respondent has engaged in a point blank rejection of God and all things spiritual and feels no need to enter into considerations of spirituality. This respondent has turned his back on any and all possibilities. The current belief structures of this breed of apostate thus point to a continuation of the reactionary processes of disaffiliation previously reviewed. Issues of identity and meaning are generally resolved, but not well considered.

The following narrative also alludes to the characteristic profile of an angry, reactionary and unconsidered stance regarding both identity and beliefs:
Well, I don’t believe in God, so I guess atheist is the proper term, but I
don’t... I just say I don’t believe. Who cares what you call yourself, I just
want to get away from all of that... I just want nothing at all to do with God.
I would reject any and all things spiritual. I have nothing supernatural in my
life and never will. It is a load of bull... (ROI #2).

Through its use of emotive language, i.e. ‘nothing at all’ and, ‘a load of bull’, this passage
shows the same angry reactionism as the previous non-reflexive anomic respondent. For
this apostate, however, non-consideration goes so far as to limit the ability to choose a
new identity, ‘(w)ho cares what you call yourself.’ While it is easy to classify this
respondent as an atheist, the respondent himself has not considered his post apostatic
status.

In regards to current beliefs, this respondent is also unequivocal. He claims, ‘I have
nothing spiritual in my life and never will’. This statement, however, does not preclude
the existence of God. In fact, the respondent sates, ‘I just want nothing at all to do with
God’. More than a denial of God’s existence, this statement actually points to belief in
existence, yet rejection. Considerations of religion’s validity or the ontological
prepositions of God, need not be engaged. This respondent, like many other non-
reflexive anomic apostates, simply chooses not to follow a God; a God, who by the
respondent’s own reflections, has not necessarily faced questions of existence. Re-
formations are thus less concerned with rescripting ‘power’ and transforming the self,
than with the rejection and denial of the unbalanced power relations with God that tend
towards domination. Epistemological considerations of post apostatic beliefs and re-
formations of the self, are severely restricted.
For non-reflexive anomic apostates, societal issues such as the grounding of morality and social order also read as unconsidered anomic reactionism. The responses provided are not generally thought out, and a fair proportion of respondents were unable to provide an off the cuff response:

Morality? I don’t really know... That’s a strange question. I only know that my morals were told to me by the church. I don't know what there is without religion or why... Social order, I haven’t really thought about it... I’m not sure what you mean (ROI #29).

This narrative clearly points to a respondent who was caught off guard. Neither egoistic intellectualism nor postmodern rationality, plays a part in post apostatic considerations of societal workings. The questions seem ‘strange’ to a respondent whose non-reflexive orientation had never brought such issues to the fore. Re-formation and negotiations of understanding are, therefore, minimised. Given that the entire process of disaffiliation is a reactionary response and a turning of one’s back to God and religion, a lack of reflection regarding post apostatic meaning should not be surprising. For this respondent, religion, even its deconstruction and renegotiation, is actively avoided.

For those respondents who did manage an impromptu response to these questions, a lack of forethought is still clearly evident. Take for example, the narrative of a non-reflexive anomic respondent who takes a no nonsense approach to the issue:

I ground morality and social order in.... I’m not sure. I think it would probably be in getting the job done and taking care of your own. ... If you just worry about yourself and your own, everything would be right. You do not need a lot of high fullutin’ answers. Just get on with it, cause, that is all the social order and morality that we need (ROI #18).
As with the previous respondent, it is clear that issues of morality and social order have not been thoughtfully considered; the reactionary apostatic journey did not lend itself to the eventual consideration of post apostatic positioning. Thus, before the respondent provides a response, the initial statement articulated is, 'I'm not sure'.

The tone and content of the eventuating response, however, is still suggestive of anomic orientations. The respondent takes a straightforward, common sense approach to the issue, that does not hinge upon any references to the supernatural. For this respondent, grand philosophical issues were not previously brought forth for examination. When such issues are referred to, they are answered quite directly and non problematically. Answers are as simple as, '... getting the job done and taking care of your own'. There is no sense of bewilderment, and thus no need to actively contemplate such issues. Traditional religion with its, ‘high fullutin’ answers’, is thereby dismissed with a quite cynical inclination.

This sense of cynicism is further alluded to in the following passage:

What morality and social order? I do not see it. We live in a world devoid of morals and I think that that is more proof that there is no supreme being, cause if there was... well don’t you think things would be different. No... people seem to do things with themselves in mind first and I think that is what is wrong with this world (ROI #39).

For this non-reflexive anomic apostate, the denial of all things religious and spiritual seems to extend to major societal issues. Such is the cynicism of this respondent that the reactionary foregoing of faith leads to a reactionary denial of morality and social order. This respondent simply does not, ‘... see it’. The respondent might be quick to tell us
what is wrong with society, but there is still a certain denial and rejection of the issues that is reminiscent of rejections of God and religion. The respondent has turned his back to considerations of social order and morality.

Following the patterns uncovered in the analysis of the negotiations of socialisation and in the processes of disaffiliation, non-reflexive anomic apostates continue a reactionary stance in regards to post apostatic positioning. On the individual level, God and religion are thoroughly rejected and all things spiritual are denied. On the societal level, grand philosophical issues are neither examined nor thoughtfully considered. The epistemological orientation of this class of apostate does not lend itself to deconstructions and re- formations of any sort.

The reflexivity associated with a postmodern society then, does not make an appearance in post apostatic negotiations of non-reflexive anomic apostates. The choice, diversity, and critical examinations associated with postmodern possibilities are not part of the epistemological journey. For this group, reactions to familial faith stem from modern, repressive experiences of socialisation and religion that do not lend themselves to a more thoughtful re-formation/ renegotiation of the post apostatic self. Spiritual suicide is the common response.

**Reflexive Anomic Apostates**

There do exist, however, those anomic apostates strongly correlated with the younger cohort, who do engage in reflexive considerations of familial faith. Previous analysis has shown that the emergence of a postmodern world causes reactionary responses to religion
and God to continue towards some level of thoughtful consideration; deconstruction of
the systemic positioning of religion is not uncommon. The epistemological orientation
allows for some degree of reflexive contemplation. This pattern is continued in re-
formations of the self and post apostatic understandings of society.

While a committed and comfortable fall back to atheism remains the most common
positioning for post apostatic religious identity, the narratives of reflexive anomic
apostates begin to show a level of thoughtful consideration regarding meaning and
spirituality. The following narrative is indicative of this level of deconstruction:

Atheist. I do not believe in God any more. There is no God. How can there
be? Step outside religion and look at it with an ounce of objectivity and it is
easy to see how utterly ridiculous the whole thing is. I mean it is a juvenile
conception. I still can’t figure out why we need it, or why it is that some
people are duped by it. It amazes me. I figure there must be a lot of really
weak individuals out there (ROI #61).

For this reflexive anomic apostate, the defining characteristics of the group still present;
angry reactionism is discernible in the passage. Adjectives such as, ‘utterly’, ‘juvenile’,
and ‘really weak’ point to an irritated disgust with notions of God and religion. These
notions are then dismissed with a statement as simple as, ‘There is no God’. The label
atheist is thus easily adopted.

In contrast to non-reflexive anomic apostates, this reactionary stance does not necessarily
culminate in a sweeping dismissal of God and religion devoid of any epistemological
consideration. Rather than a disdainful rejection of unconsidered faith, this reflexive
anomic apostate begins a deconstruction and negotiation of the religious. The respondent
recognises a need to, ‘...look at it (religion) with an ounce of objectivity...' and attempts to, ‘...figure out...' why there exists a need for spirituality and religion.

The following narrative of a reflexive anomic apostate further elucidates this reactionary response as it leads to epistemological considerations of post apostatic positionings:

I do not believe in God any more, or the church for that matter, so I guess I am an atheist... and it did take some time, but I did come to the realisation that it was all constructed. There is no great truth content to religion, and it is all part of ... um... a great sham designed to control people... I do not believe in anything remotely religious or spiritual, I do not believe in an afterlife. I just believe in myself and those around me. Religion is just too full of hypocrisy for me to give it any credibility (ROI #44).

Following the pattern for the previous reflexive anomic apostate, the label atheist is adopted, and an angry reactionism presents. Religion is referenced as a ‘great sham’, and ‘full of hypocrisy’, pointing to a sense of anomic exasperation that both eases the transition and strengthens the commitment to the atheist label.

Once again this initial reaction against familial faith leads to more general considerations of the systemic positioning of religion and spirituality. Before, ‘... anything remotely religious or spiritual...' is unilaterally dismissed, this reflexive anomic apostate enters into a limited deconstruction of religious and spiritual prepositions. There is recognition of religion as ‘constructed’, with, ‘... no great truth content...’. The respondent, in fact, narrates a quite Marxist recognition of religion as, ‘... a great sham designed to control people.'
As indicated by the representative narratives of the reflexive anomic apostates, negotiations of identity still resonate characteristics of anomic reactionism, leading to the dismissal of all things religious and spiritual. The dismissal, however, is no longer an incontestable rejection, vacuous of epistemological considerations. Cohort delineations and the emergence of postmodern society thus present in the tendency for reactions of the reflexive anomic apostates to lead to both deconstructions and re-formations.

A similar pattern can be seen in the reflexive anomic apostate’s articulations of societal negotiations. The narratives that discuss the grounding of morality and social order point to the respondent’s insouciant acceptance of this area of inquiry. The issues did not seem as far afield for reflexive anomic apostates as they did for their non-reflexive counterparts; very few found the queries to be ‘strange’. Such issues had either been previously considered, or could be responded to readily. The following narratives show the variety of responses proffered by this more reflexive group:

Social order is about people trying to one up other people, while other people try to do the right thing. I’m not sure but I think that order comes from the chaos of a mix of people trying to survive, any time we have society there is social order, just like the wolf packs, it comes from power. Morality is also instinctual, man just created religion so we could better control people’s behaviours (ROI #65).

For this reflexive anomic apostate, providing an answer was not problematic. There is little hesitation in the response, and while a certain sense of cynicism does present, it appears that issues have been previously considered. Thus, the respondent continues a journey of consideration sparked by a reaction to familial faith. In a postmodern world, the range of possibilities and more critical approaches to knowledge affects even
reactionary anomic apostates. Accordingly, this respondent, tells us that social order comes, ‘... from the chaos... of people trying to survive’, and from ‘power’. Morality, on the other hand, is referenced as, ‘instinctual’, yet co-opted by religion.

The following passage also shows thoughtful consideration of societal issues as they relate to traditional faith. As with the previous passage, there is both an ease in the ability to respond and a sense of anomic cynicism. For this female respondent, however, cynicism is tied to feminist deconstructions of society:

I think that the Catholic church has a lot to answer for. I think that this nation and nations like your America, run as a patriarchy, and I do not know if the church reflects that or helps to create it, but... I think it certainly it has a lot to answer for in creating an inequitable social order... I think that morality comes from assigning rules, possibly religious ones, to what we all want and see as fair. I think there are basic guidelines of respect, and morality just puts a religious spin on it (ROI #61).

In this passage, anomic reactionism combined with a clearly articulated response, point to a reflexive anomic apostate whose reactionary epistemological journey allows for consideration of major philosophical issues. The respondent claims that an inequitable social order emerges from patriarchal systems that leave the church with ‘... a lot to answer for...’. Morality, on the other hand, is dictated by, ‘... basic guidelines of respect...’, that are co-opted, nonetheless, by both society and religion. The emergence of postmodern society thus shows itself as feminism allows for the deconstruction of traditional knowledges of understanding.
A final reflexive anomic narrative points to post apostatic negotiations that have shifted from anomic reactionism, to a less angry and cynical post apostatic positioning. For this respondent, in a world devoid of religion, there is still faith in humanity:

I think that it comes from trying to do your best and get by. I don't think people have a strong desire to hurt other people. I think they just try to do the best they can... We all have to live together, there is very little choice in that and morality and social order comes from the necessity when we try to live harmoniously... If you treat others with the kind of dignity and respect you would like to receive yourself, there would be no need for a set of mandates and dictates handed down by the church. It would just all come together (ROI #73).

Once again we find the ability of this reflexive anomic apostate to offer a thought-out response in clear contrast to non-reflexive counterparts. The respondent's narrative, however, is distinct from the non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates reviewed, in that it shows little of the cynicism or angry reactionism expected from this class of apostate; a cynicism and angry reactionism that did present in this particular respondent's articulation of disaffiliation.

Contrary to expectation then, this reflexive anomic apostate of the younger cohort claims that morality and social order derive from, ‘...trying to do your best...’ and trying, ‘...to live harmoniously...’. The church needs to stand aside, so that morality and order can simply, ‘come together’. This anomic apostate’s harsh stance on religion is somewhat mediated by the belief in ‘dignity and respect’. The anomic characteristics that marked this class of apostates’ processes of disaffiliation are thus eased in post apostatic negotiations.
The emergence of a postmodern condition could therefore be seen as influencing the reflexive anomic apostates' post apostatic negotiations. There is evidence of an epistemological shift from non-considered reactions of non-reflexive anomic apostates, to considered and deconstructed notions that underpin the social knowledges of reflexive anomic apostates. Non-reflexive apostates thus continue a trajectory of blindly accepted socialisation and blindly rejected faith, through to unconsidered, unacknowledged understandings of a world without religious foundation. For reflexive anomic apostates, however, the deconstruction of familial faith triggered in the apostatic journey, leaves this class of apostate more open to reforming the self and negotiating knowledges of society from a post apostatic platform. The Foucauldian task of 'thinking differently' (Foucault in Miller, 1993:326) has begun.

THE EGOISTIC APOSTATE

For egoistic apostates, thinking differently has been a hallmark of the apostatic journey. For Durkheim, this might be explained as the fragmentation of modernity leads to egoistic introspection. Foucault, however, might suggest that the egoistic state is likely to derive directly from the task of thinking differently. He tells us that this task is liable to see one,

(p)lunited into an ordeal of self doubt, one could never be sure that one had, finally gotten free of one's despised self - or found the new self one was looking for... "Such is the irony in those efforts one makes to alter one's way of looking, to transform the horizon of what one knows, and to try wandering a little" (Foucault paraphrased and quoted in Miller, 1993:326).

The egoist is thus left to negotiate the world with emotive introspective 'wanderings'.
As elucidated by the previous chapters, these ‘wanderings’ have shown postmodern consequences in both religious socialisation and processes of disaffiliation. As brought forth by cohort delineations, the emergence of postmodern society incontestably shows itself in the changing face of child rearing strategies. It has, as well, transformed elements of disaffiliation via both the changing forms of apostatic catalysts and the secondary postmodern characteristics of the epistemological journey.

Regardless of these cohort differentiations and divergent socialisation experiences, however, postmodern influences are not always articulated or presented as primary. The commonalities that define this class of apostate, remain egoistic intellectualism and a confused introspection; it is these characteristics that consistently mark the underlying and primary epistemological orientations of the apostatic journey. Despite the tendency for more postmodern child rearing practices and postmodern catalysts for processes of disaffiliation, the egoistic apostate develops a very characteristic introspective approach towards the negotiation of familial faith and its eventual abandonment.

The same cohort similitude in negotiations of post apostatic re-formations can be found on both the individual level in the negotiations of identity and belief, and on the societal level in the reformulation of understandings of the social world. As suggested by the quantitative data in tables 5.1 through 5.4 and further brought forth by narrative investigation, egoistic respondents’ negotiations of post apostatic positioning is inscribed with a level of introspection and at times, confused disenchantment. This underlying similarity brackets the group and defines them throughout the full apostatic cycle. The
overriding introspective characteristics thus make it difficult to divide this classification by cohort.

The following narratives articulating negotiations of identity and belief, show both underlying similarities and secondary postmodern divergences as they present for egoistic apostates. The first narrative is from a respondent of the older cohort who relates a preference for the label atheist while showing scepticism towards religion and spirituality. The passage is indicative of egoism:

I am now an atheist, but it was a long time coming. I finally feel somewhat at ease with that, cause I guess I no longer feel as guilty... I think I gave up faith in religion, all religions, quite a while before I would call myself an atheist. It is hard to not believe in anything supernatural, no Gods, spirituality or anything, but... I just have learned that the only things you can believe in are what you can see, feel, touch and hear, everything else will let you down (ROI #4).

The label atheist is thereby adopted. In clear contrast to the anomic apostates, however, the acceptance of the label is neither unequivocal nor unconsidered. Rather, it is only after a, ‘...long time coming’, and after the resolution of guilt, that the respondent begins to feel at ‘ease’ with atheistic post apostatic identity.

The same can be said for this respondent’s negotiations of faith. The egoistic apostate tells us that, ‘(i)t is hard to not believe in anything supernatural...’. In contrast to the unconsidered rejection of anomic apostates then, this egoistic respondent acknowledges the allure of religion and spirituality. A level of credibility is even alluded to, as the respondent relates that a lack of belief in anything, ‘...is hard’. It is only with
introspective consideration that this respondent comes to the realisation that only sensory data is real.

The anomic/egoistic distinction seen in the quantitative data of tables 5.1 and 5.2 is thus further drawn out in narrative analysis. The emotive tone and the epistemological orientations of self re-formations are distinct. Rather than a reactive dearth of consideration, egoistic respondents' post apostatic beliefs and new labels of identity are earnestly reflected and disconcertedly negotiated. The main characteristic of egoistic apostates' negotiations of the self remains the introspective intellectualism that has been constant across the cohort divide.

As might therefore be expected, the narrative of an egoist from the younger cohort, who also articulates a preference for the post apostatic label of atheist and shows reservations regarding religiosity and spirituality, presents a degree of similarity to the narrative just reviewed. Defining characteristics remain stable:

I do not think that I believe in God any more or spirits, so atheist. But, I'm not quite sure. I don't know if God exists, but I do not belong to a church and probably never will. I do not think that there is a God, but it is still hard to give up those beliefs... I ... I just wanted to get more out of God then I have been and I have grave doubts about the whole concept (ROI #42).

This respondent also adopts the label atheist, but again without the conviction and certitude of anomic apostates. For this respondent, the label atheist does not stand for clear and committed post apostatic positioning. Rather, it is a label used to best describe confused and alienated beliefs. The respondent states, '...so atheist. But I'm not quite sure.' Equivocation is thus clear. In swift succession this egoistic apostate states, 'I do
not think...', 'I don't know...', 'I have grave doubts...', yet claims that it is, '...still hard to give up... beliefs.' Egoistic intellectualism is shown by the deep and reflexive considerations alluded to in the passage, and in the emotive tone of an introspective and confused positioning. The characteristics that define the negotiations and epistemological orientations of disaffiliation, are thus extended into the negotiations of post apostatic identity and belief.

The narrative, in fact, is similar to that of the egoistic apostate from the older cohort. Both declare atheism as the label for new identity and both show egoistic intellectualism as the most clearly defined characteristic of post apostatic negotiations. As found in the narratives articulating the processes of disaffiliation, the introspective nature of the egoist can both override and mask potential postmodern cohort differentiations.

These differentiations, however, can be discerned in a proportion of egoistic apostates’ narratives. Take for example the narrative of an egoistic apostate from the older cohort who does not specifically reference the label agnostic, yet clearly shows that beliefs regarding God have not been resolved:

I am not sure about God now and um... I do not think that he exists, but my father instilled in me a bit of fear. If I am wrong about there not being a God, I may be taking a huge risk and, I hate that, I really hate that being over my head. Isn’t it easier to believe..., yeah..., but I suppose if it is false belief it won’t really save you anyway. I just can not see the truth of it. I can not get around faith. Maybe I need a personal encounter with God... Spirituality... who knows (ROI #37).

This respondent shows classical signs of the doubt that tends to engulf the mind of the egoist. Clear is the confusion and introspection that causes post apostatic identity and
beliefs to be left open. No label is used by this respondent to name the confused sense of contradictory beliefs that have marked this particular apostatic journey for the better part of 30 years. Thus, regarding God, the respondent states, ‘I am not sure...’, while issues of spirituality are suggested as too unwieldy to even be addressed.

In addition to this sense of confusion, equivocation and introspection, there is further entanglement of emotive reaction against the beliefs of the father. For this respondent, and for several others from the older cohort, introspective re-formations are entwined with some aspects of reaction. The use of the words ‘hate’, ‘fear’ and ‘risk’ show a certain sense of anomie, as it presents for a respondent who feels that the stakes for renegotiating familial faith are high. Post apostatic positionings are thereby difficult to resolve.

While the foregoing of familial faith towards irreconcilable doubts is characteristic of egoistic apostates from both cohorts, a proportion of generally older respondents continue to have the epistemological dimensions of the apostatic journey impressed by a sense of reaction. Compare this to the narrative of an egoistic apostate from the younger cohort, whose epistemological orientations in self re-formations show both a classical profile of egoism, as well as a sense of postmodern rationality:

Oh, I don't really know what I would call myself. I'm not too keen on Christianity and religion in general. It is just so big headed of me to think that there was something, that I could even fathom it. I mean there is no guarantee that what is out there... that my human mind could even begin to grapple with it. For example, if there is a sixth sense out there, there is no possible way I could understand it... cause it was never experienced. That is how I feel about God, religion and spirituality. I don't even want to guess, because I don't want to embarrass myself by trying to wrap my tiny little mind around anything and that is why I do not believe... (ROI #71).
For this respondent, both identity and meaning have clearly been considered, deconstructed and negotiated. While post apostatic positioning may remain unresolved, this lack of resolution is not indicative of anomic dismissal or even an emotive sense of confusion. For a respondent whose apostatic journey was clearly marked by egoistic intellectualism and alienated confusion, post apostatic re-formations of the self have been less emotively resolved.

Accordingly, the respondent believes that, ‘to fathom’, or ‘grapple with’ faith may be, ‘big headed’. The epistemological orientation behind the difficulties of resolution, alludes more to a rational thought out consideration of faith than a confused and alienated positioning. The respondent has negotiated belief via a postmodern recognition of the infinite and possibly incomprehensible potentialities of a postmodern world.

The emergence of a postmodern society also shows itself in the narratives of those egoistic respondents of the younger cohort who cite ‘alternate’ labels for post apostatic identity. In a new age, there are ever increasing opportunities for identity and belief. The following narrative is indicative:

...I now belong to what some people would call a cult. I don’t consider it one... I am a witch and ah... It is a very strong and powerful group which validates your own spirituality. It is much more meaningful than male dominated religions which I think are really shallow. To me it makes much more sense that any of the mainstream religious stuff. Spirituality and witchcraft simply concentrates on the self (ROI #59).

For this egoistic respondent, post apostatic negotiations of self have culminated in the acceptance of the label ‘witch’. The respondent adopts alternate beliefs that are seen as
‘more meaningful’ than the ‘shallow’ beliefs of the religious, ‘mainstream’. Conventional religious structures receive little credibility, while spirituality is adopted devoid of ‘modern’ religious ideologies.

Certainly, this respondent who too experienced a process of disaffiliation characterised by classic egoism, has continued a journey that centres on introspective consideration. For this younger egoistic respondent, however, re-formation of the self has allowed for the resolution of emotive egoistic tendencies. The possibilities within a postmodern world have been embraced and accepted by a respondent who feels comfortable with new age beliefs.

For the full range of egoistic apostates then, the commonality that demarcates the group is the tendency for post apostatic identity and belief to be thoughtfully considered. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents from both generations continue to present a sense of alienated confusion and introspective doubts that plagued processes of disaffiliation.

Egoistic post apostatic re-formations of self are nonetheless complex. There are respondents who show preference for the label atheist, while others have yet to resolve familial faith and are more appropriately categorised agnostic. Others, particularly those from the younger cohort, are able to adopt alternate postmodern labels without classical emotive signs of egoism. The emergence of postmodernity thus shows itself as its possibilities abate the emotive overtones of egoism via post apostatic channels.
For egoistic apostates, this quite intricate and complex pattern of post apostatic re-formations continues on the societal level. Pinning down and standardising the issues surrounding the grounding of morality and social order is not possible. One must speak of both commonalities and divergences as they present across the range of responses for both cohorts.

As expected, the commonalities in these narratives would centre around a tendency for introspective examinations of both morality and social order. This is borne out in narrative investigation. While the quantitative data in tables 5.3 and 5.4 report on a variety of responses, the common thread in narrative text is an epistemological dimension of consideration. Regardless of eventuating response, issues of morality and social order are unilaterally considered and thoughtfully deconstructed by both cohorts.

The narratives that point to a consideration of grand philosophical issues, but show no resolution to the problems presented are an example. Regardless of cohort, these narratives resonate similar introspective considerations of an unresolvable quandary. A representative passage from the older cohort is presented:

I could not answer that one, I have no idea. What makes anyone do anything at any given time. You know, there seems to be no inherent order, no rules that transcend it all. If there were, the world would be a more peaceful place... I wish I knew the answer to that 'cause it is a great source of concern to me that I really have no idea why I should try to do anything or aspire to do anything in my life. I feel as though I am without a purpose... (ROI #20).

Issues surrounding both morality and social order thus go without firm determination.

The respondent clearly states that she has, ‘...no idea’, and is unable to resolve such
issues. Unlike anomic apostates who were caught quite off guard, however, this egoistic respondent alludes to a lack of resolution that is not tied to a lack of forethought. On the contrary, this respondent finds the issues, "...a great source of concern...", indicating a deep consideration of the traditional knowledges of understanding.

Also lucid in this narrative are the emotive overtones of egoism that have consistently marked processes of disaffiliation for this class of apostate. The respondent intimates an egoistic sense of emptiness, and melancholic detachment. She states, "...I really have no idea why I should try to do anything...", and goes on to reveal fears that she is, "...without a purpose".

While this respondent hails from the older cohort, the narrative is indicative of those egoistic apostates from both cohorts who are unable to resolve well considered grand philosophical issues. For those respondents who continue to manifest the classical Durkheimian characteristics of egoism throughout post apostatic re-formations, the emergence of postmodern society shows little influence in the cognitive and emotive negotiations of a post religious world.

The same dearth of postmodern dominion can be seen in the narratives of those egoistic apostates who reference human spirituality as a source for morality and social order in a world devoid of God. The narrative of an egoistic apostate from the younger cohort is indicative of the cross section of egoistic respondents who speak of a 'human bond' in a post religious world:
Um... I guess I would ground them (morality and social order) in you and me. I ground it in the tie and bonding that you and I have regardless of what any religious body says... I think that there is a silent bond between man... I think that if we just let go of what we created I think that we would find that the world and that people could actually sort themselves out (ROI #57).

In this respondent’s narrative, the egoistic tendency for reflexive consideration is evident. The respondent has reflected on traditional knowledges and is able to provide a response that is as simple as, ‘...you and me’. Regardless of, ‘...any religious body...’, and ‘...what we created’, deconstructions of the social world have left this egoistic apostate with a certain faith in both humanity and society; they can both, ‘...sort themselves out’.

The emotive egoistic tendencies of introspective melancholic detachment that were evident throughout this respondent’s process of disaffiliation, appear to be moderated in the negotiation of a post apostatic social world. The abandonment of familial faith and the deconstruction of traditional religion, have led the apostate away from the tendency for negative solutions.

Well thought out and resolved societal negotiations may thus ease negative egoistic inclinations. This scenario finds itself applicable to both cohorts of egoistic apostate. In equal proportions both cohorts reference a spirit of humanity as a source for morality and social order. The emergence of postmodern societal condition appears to have little influence on this group.

Cohort differentiation, however, does show itself in the narratives of egoistic respondent. who reference power and man made structures as primary sources of Western morality
and social order. These narratives, predominantly from respondents of the older cohort, are touched by cynicism and have epistemological dimensions that hint at anomie reactionism. They thus follow a pattern previously traced in egoistic disaffiliation. The following narrative from a respondent of the older cohort makes the point:

I would ground morality... I would think that that is a very difficult question. I think that there is some good in people and that most people respect human life but the rules of order and morality in society seem to come from those in power being able to manipulate things in order to maintain power. For example, look at gun control in the USA, any outsider can see that the situation is out of control, yet because of the political power of the NRA and emotional constitutionalists, children die every day. There is something inherently wrong with that... it is so... disheartening. If there was more to social order than man manipulating man, wouldn’t it be quite natural for us to protect our children. Power and morality are somehow sinisterly entwined (ROI #18).

This narrative is indicative of the complexities of egoistic societal negotiations. As with the common bond throughout all egoistic narratives, the issues presented show thoughtful consideration. For this respondent, morality and social order have been thoroughly examined. Thus, while the respondent initially states that this is a ‘... very difficult question...’, this is followed by an answer that deconstructs both human nature and politics. The respondent tells us that, ‘...most people respect human life...’, but that, ‘...man manipulating man...’, has the foremost accountability for the structure of contemporary society. The respondent most eloquently sums this up by stating that, ‘(p)ower and morality are somehow sinisterly intertwined’. Furthermore, this narrative can be seen as a complex negotiation of deconstructed familial faith in which both the meditative alienated reflections of egoism, and the angry reactionism of anomie, present. The respondent thus speaks of both the ‘disheartening’ crimes against children and, the ‘sinister’ nature of power.
This narrative is representative of those egoistic apostates who show anomic reactionism as supplementary to egoistic introspection. Correspondingly, correlations to both the older cohort and the cross classification of egoistic-anomic would be expected, and are in fact, evidenced. The same can be said for egoistic negotiations of the social world that hinge on the acceptance of alternate postmodern spirituality. For these respondents, egoistic re-formations are positively correlated to both the younger cohort of egoists and those cross classified egoistic-postmodern.

Accordingly, spiritual possibilities for the grounding of morality and social order show the influence of postmodernity. The following narrative is indicative of those egoistic apostates, generally from the younger cohort and often classified as egoistic-postmodern, who reference a supernatural spirit as the creator and controller of the social world:

I ground both things (morality and social order) in our essence, our spirit. The higher order is the connection that binds us all. We are all one, so we must be cosmically bonded and in order to survive we must respect all parts of the whole... Our job on this planet is to get all people to realise that they are one in the same. Once this connection is made we can start to run smoothly with ah... love, forgiveness and some respect (ROI #80).

The narrative for this respondent reflects the thoughtful considerations that define egoism. Similar to the narratives that resolve post apostatic positioning via humanity, however,tl. classic emotive components of egoism are not presented. There is little sign of the alienated confusion or melancholic detachment that plagues egoistic apostates' narrative of disaffiliation.
Contrarily, there is an almost optimistic and hopeful tone to this passage. The respondent speaks of a human race that is, ‘...cosmically bonded’, and of a world that can eventually run with, ‘love’, ‘forgiveness’ and, ‘respect’. For this respondent, post apostatic re-formations in a world devoid of traditional faith, act to discharge the negative, emotive, egoistic inclinations that were distinct in the process of disaffiliation.

For this and other egoistic apostates who reference supernatural spirituality as accountable for morality and social order, the postmodern world with its diversity and open acceptance of alternate beliefs, allows for renegotiations that are both comfortable and hopeful. Thoughtful considerations of the knowledges traditionally premised on the religious, have been successfully and positively reformulated due in part, to the diversity of postmodernity.

Complexity is thus the hallmark of the egoistic apostates’ societal negotiations and re-formations. While the thread of commonality is the consideration given to grand philosophical issues, the negative emotive overtones that clearly characterised the egoistic respondents’ processes of disaffiliation, have varied in accordance with the ability of the respondents to negotiate satisfactory understandings of the self and the social world.

Whether negotiations are based on humanity, spirituality, or man made constructions, the challenge for the egoist is to have post apostatic re-formations resolve the emotive egoistic tendencies which beset both the negotiations of socialisation and the processes of disaffiliation. Certainly, for those egoistic apostates who have left such issues unresolved, the egoistic characteristics of alienated confusion continue to distinguish the apostatic
profile; these apostates continue to pay the price of self doubt as a repercussion of modernity. For others, however, resolution of egoistic inclinations rests upon the ability of the apostate to move beyond the difficulties encountered with traditional religion. Postmodernity can thus present in the diversity of options and orientations available for post apostatic re-formations, far removed from the alienating traditions of familial faith.

THE POSTMODERN APOSTATE

For postmodern apostates, negotiations of both socialisation and disaffiliation have shown techniques that allow for examination and deconstructions, without the emotive toll or sacrifice encountered by anomic and egoistic apostates. Post apostatic re-formations reflect this pattern of negotiation with minimal angst. The postmodern contingent thus continues characteristic non-emotive epistemological orientations for negotiations of both individual and societal levels of understanding. Complexity, however, is nonetheless seen in the wide ranging diversity of responses referenced by this group.

On the individual level of re-formations, tables 5.1 and 5.2 show figures that are not necessarily distinct and conclusive. An examination of the narratives surrounding these quantitative figures, however, suggests that negotiations of self continue in the tradition of rational and logical deconstructions common to the postmodern apostates’ negotiations of socialisation and processes of disaffiliation.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 that tell of post apostatic societal negotiations of morality and social order, also follow this pattern. The figures point to a diversity of possibilities in the
means of renegotiating the social world. In themselves they do not stand as fully distinct from the responses provided by the other apostate types. Narrative analysis, however, alludes to divergent means and techniques for negotiating these post apostatic possibilities. While anomic apostates use a base of angry reaction for either blind rejection or limited deconstructions of the social, and egoistic apostates reformulate societal understandings with introspection from an often emotive and alienated background, the postmodern apostate continues a process of logical and rational reformations, very rarely cited as exacting any emotive cost.

While the classification criteria for postmodern apostates acts to limit postmodern divergences, the emergence of a postmodern society has acted to delineate even this group of respondents. The examination of a society in varying stages of transition, allows for the distinction of two categories of postmodern apostates; vanguard and contemporary. As for processes of disaffiliation, the resulting post apostatic reformations are distinct and warrant independent investigation.

**Vanguard Postmodern Apostates**

Postmodern apostates of the older cohort have distinguished themselves from their egoistic and anomic contemporaries in their ability to foreshadow and embrace new epistemological orientations for deconstructing traditional knowledges. Whether it be the recognition and appreciation of postmodern socialisation, or the tendency for rational deconstructions of faith generally left unquestioned by larger society, postmodern apostates of the older cohort, are quite vanguard in the epistemological approaches called upon to deconstruct conventional platforms of knowing.
This pattern continues in re-formations of the self. The ability of the postmodern apostate of the older cohort to rationally and logically negotiate post apostatic possibilities, in a time when identity and meanings were generally dictated by tradition, can clearly be seen in the narratives that explore the individual level of re-formations. Take for example the narrative of a truly vanguard postmodern respondent who speaks of identity and meaning from a post apostatic positioning:

I think most people would call me an atheist... I have no problem with that. It used to be something I avoided saying because... ah... people used to look at you as though you had two bloody heads. Many people just could not understand giving up God, and thought it not only strange but worse than strange... even somehow sinister... I do not believe in anything supernatural. I firmly believe that there are logical explanations for everything, even the things I may never figure out... religion is a social construction (ROI #32).

The passage neatly sums up the vanguard nature of being a postmodern atheist in a society still embraced by modernity. For this apostate, the expectations of a conventional religious society impinged on the ability to affirm new atheistic identity. While the respondent has ‘no problem’ with the label atheist, the term is publicly avoided. Too many members of the respondent’s society thought atheism was ‘strange’, ‘sinister’, causing them, ‘...to look at you as though you had two bloody heads’.

A logical approach to post apostatic identity is nonetheless undertaken. The prevailing epistemological orientation for re-formations of the self, indicative of the full range of postmodern apostates’ narratives, is thus shown. The same can be said for this respondent’s post apostatic negotiations of meaning. Logical examination of possibilities has led this respondent to a lack of faith in anything supernatural. There are simply, ‘...logical explanations...’, and even though the respondent claims that there are things he,
‘...may never figure out...’, there is a sense of rational acceptance of this limitation. The narrative resonates little anomic anger or egoistic disenchantment.

The following narrative of a postmodern apostate from the older cohort further makes the point:

Unlike the rest of my family I am an atheist. I do not believe in any of the mainstream Christian religions and do not know enough about alternate religions to pass any judgement, I do not believe in the God of my childhood, with the beard in the sky, nor do I believe in Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In some sense I suppose that there is a spirituality and an essence in the world and I do think that there is more to this existence then just the time we put into this life. I think that some of the Eastern religions have more to offer, but my knowledge of them is limited (ROI #28).

This respondent adopts the term atheist and clearly articulates a rejection of the traditional religious beliefs that still prevail in the respondent’s immediate familial structures. Unlike the reactionism of anomic apostates or the alienation of the egoists, this juxtaposition does not seem to cause emotive concern. On the contrary, this postmodern apostate appears quite at ease with post apostatic atheist identity. Negotiation of this new positioning is approached with a familiar air of rationality.

The same pattern of rational thought can be seen in the re-formation of belief and meaning. Thoughtful consideration is clearly the hallmark of this respondent’s negotiations of post apostatic belief. Both the ability of the respondent to avoid passing judgement when knowledges are ‘limited’, and the allusion to well considered spiritual alternatives, points to an openmess to possibilities, perhaps not explored, yet not unthinkingly rejected.
For vanguard postmodern apostates, the epistemological orientations adopted throughout the apostatic journey continue even without a broad base of societal support. Regardless of the respondent's acceptance of postmodern possibilities for post apostatic reformations of identity, the prevailing epistemological orientation continues its journey of logical and rational considerations. This occurs even in the face of a society still enmeshed in the trappings of modernity.

Vanguard postmodern apostates' negotiations of the social world also fall prey to logical and rational considerations. Regardless of the sources cited for grounding morality and social order, the narratives reviewed are neither off the cuff reactions to unconsidered possibilities nor alienated responses to an unanswerable query. Rather, the narratives of vanguard postmodern apostates show that issues have been considered with an air of intellectual detachment, devoid of negative emotive overtones. The following narrative of a postmodern apostate from the older cohort is a case in point:

It (social order) comes from the manipulation of power, or more accurately the manipulation of people by those with the power. Law and order which were to benefit all, seem to be... to be... used by those who can profit from them; men are mongrels. Morality... who knows. I think we all have a built in respect for human life, but to some extent I believe that our morals are false. We have morals because we are told to, because that is what is expected of us. I'm not sure if we take away society... I'm not sure if a concept of morality could even be spoken of... (ROI #9).

For this respondent, the grounding of morality and social order present as having been rationally undertaken. Considerations have led to Marxist conclusions centring around 'power' and 'manipulation' as accountable for societal workings. The narrative, however, was not articulated with a sense of anomic anger. In fact the tone of the passage was that
of a non-reactive and non-emotional articulation of well considered societal facts. The respondent was simply reporting on the world the way he sees it. Thus, the epistemological orientation of rational consideration marks the re-formation of the understandings of societal workings.

For those postmodern apostates of the older cohort who reference a significantly divergent source of morality and social order, namely the human spirit, this tendency for well considered examinations remains stable:

> Just because one does not have religion, doesn’t mean that they are not moral. Morality comes from the goodness of one’s heart. It comes from how we are taught to feel towards one another. I don’t think that we need a God to help us figure out how to be kind, how to be moral. ...Social order can just fall into place. Those who are... those with the strength, rise to the top, and help maintain order for the rest of us (ROI #30).

The grounding of morality and social order is referenced quite divergently for this postmodern apostate. For this respondent, the human spirit or the, ‘...goodness of one’s heart...’ allows for morality. Contrastingly, social order is said to arise from, ‘(i)hose, with the strength...’. Rather than a Marxist fall back to power and manipulation, however, this respondent goes on to state that those who rise to the top, ‘...help maintain order for the rest of us...’. There is a Foucauldian recognition of the enabling aspects of power, which makes this passage clearly distinct from the narrative of the previous postmodern respondent.

Similarity, however, exists in the rational, considered nature of the response. Neither of these vanguard postmodern apostates were caught off guard, or unable to answer the
questions. The issues had been previously considered and in fact, resolved. While the answers may be quite divergent, the postmodern tendency for logical considerations is stable.

The final narrative presented for vanguard postmodern apostates is one that cites a supernatural spirit as a source for morality and social order in a world devoid of a traditional Christian God:

I think that there is a moral force in the universe... and... I do think that there is some sort of meaning system. I think that there is a morality that we do not understand. While I think that it may be man who creates social order, I also think that it may be some higher power that imperfectly controls our moral fibre, or at least sets morals ground rules... that we choose to possibly ignore(ROI #34).

Clearly, grand philosophical issues have been considered by this respondent. The respondent tells us that social order is created by ‘man’, while morality is at the mercy of a, ‘moral force’ and a, ‘higher power’. These understandings of the social world appear to be non-problematic, as this respondent unemotionally replies to a previously considered question. While the respondent may not have figured out the exact nature of the, ‘meaning system’, the issues present as having been satisfactorily resolved.

For vanguard postmodern apostates, post apostatic identity, systems of meaning, and understandings of the social world can be quite disparate and diverse. A certain unwavering commonality regarding the epistemological orientations to knowledge, however, continues to mark the post apostatic negotiations; rationality and logic present throughout the full cycle of the apostatic journey. Even the opposition of a society yet
embraced by traditional religious structures, does not limit the ability of vanguard postmodern apostates to successfully and rationally negotiate the world from a post apostatic platform. Technologies of the self may be shifting away from the dominating forms of regulation seen in modernity, towards a means for negotiating the self less reliant on punitive forms of self renunciation. Re-formations devoid of anomic/egoistic costs are being achieved.

**Contemporary Postmodern Apostates**

The profile for postmodern apostates from the younger cohort follows this same pattern. For these respondents, post apostatic re-formations are approached with a similar air of intellectual and logical consideration and a level of rationality that does not appear to produce angst. A comparison of the narratives of vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates, however, do show two main sources of divergence.

The first point of variance can be seen within postmodern apostates' responses to the transforming nature of society. As Western society becomes more postmodern, the range of post apostatic possibilities for identity, meaning, and negotiations of the social world becomes both increasingly available and collectively supported. The second point of divergence has to do with the mean age of each postmodern cohort. The average age of vanguard postmodern apostates at the time of interview was fifty-eight, while the mean age of contemporary postmodern apostates was only twenty-two. As might therefore be expected, the narratives of re-formation vary significantly in accord with the time frame available for post apostatic negotiations. Many of the contemporary postmodern apostates disaffiliated within close proximity to being interviewed. Thus, while the
postmodern world provides ever increasing options for re-formations, the ability to explore, negotiate and adopt such re-formations can be somewhat limited for the contemporary group.

The following narrative which shows the negotiations of identity and belief for a quite young postmodern apostate elucidates the point:

I am now an atheist. I do not believe in the church and I do not believe in God. It makes no sense, and it is hard for me to respect those who have not taken the time to really think about their faith. Intellectually atheism is the only conclusion that one can come to. I give religion little if any credibility... Spirituality? Well, I guess it is an option... (ROI #69).

The narrative certainly shows points of commonality with those of the older cohort. Issues regrading religion are rationally considered, and approached from a relatively non-emotive platform. The respondent claims that, ‘(i)ntellectually atheism is the only conclusion...’ The focus of the narrative, however, is centred more on the deconstruction of familial faith and traditional religion, than on the construction of new identity and belief systems. Accordingly, spirituality is virtually unconsidered, but nonetheless a possibility. As the respondent states, ‘...it is an option...’ Negotiations, therefore, may not be finalised.

The narrative from an additional contemporary postmodern apostate further illustrates the impact of youth on the re-formations of the self:

I am what I would call an open minded atheist. I do not believe in the Catholic church, and I do not know much about Judaism, although as part of my heritage I would like to explore it in the future, I would like to know that side of my history. As a faith, I do not know much about it... I am an atheist,
but I feel as though I am in waiting, waiting for faith to come over me, waiting for a religion or a system of meaning... One that I would feel comfortable embracing (ROI #51).

While this apostate identifies with the label atheist, the disclaimer of begin ‘open minded’ is explicitly articulated. The respondent has unemotionally deconstructed familial faith in the form of Catholicism handed down by the mother, and has intellectually reserved judgment on the Jewish faith of the father. The narrative thus contains a sense of postmodern rationality and logic.

Negotiations of post apostatic identity, however, are not complete. The respondent is ‘...waiting, waiting for faith to come over me’. The apostatic journey may have resulted in the deconstruction of familial faith, but it has not yet led to active re-formations of the self; re-formations that will act to establish post apostatic identity. Unlike those egoistic apostates who remain in a state of detached flux, there is a sense that negotiations of some sort will be forthcoming, and that the current respite of positioning is not particularly alienating. The apostatic cycle has yet to come full circle.

The narratives that articulate the grounding of morality and social order also point to the underlying epistemological orientation of rationality and well considered examinations of the post-religious world. Societal negotiations from a post apostatic platform are thoughtfully considered. These negotiations, however, somewhat like the negotiations on the individual level, can at times show the unsettled nature of youth. Additionally, an evolving world order shows itself as references for the grounding of morality and social
order begin to take on postmodern dimensions. The narrative of a postmodern apostate who was nineteen at the time of interview serves as an example:

After I gave up religion, I was involved with Scientology, but I even have my doubts now about what they say. I mean I don’t have it all figured out, but I don’t think that it is too complicated... I just think that for there to be any society there needs to be social order, it is part and parcel of it, helpful or harmful, it’s just what happens... I wouldn’t mind thinking that there is a lot to morality, but as far as I can tell, morality is the rules of social order with a dash of guilt and responsibility (ROI #64).

As has been the case throughout all aspects of the postmodern respondent’s apostatic journey, reasonable and intellectual consideration of issues is thoughtfully undertaken. While this respondent may not, ‘...have it all figured out...’, it is clear that the issues have not caught the respondent off guard or caused emotive pain. Rather this respondent is simply renegotiating the possibilities that exist in a post-religious world.

Unlike many of the postmodern apostates of the older cohort, however, this younger respondent is still in the throes of societal negotiations. From ‘Scientology’ to more simplistic answers, the respondent is still wading through the plethora of options available in the postmodern world. The narrative from a young postmodern university student further makes the point:

Well, I am studying biology at University and that has really helped me to start to think about these things from a secular light. So... I guess, um... I would think that social order comes from us being animals. If you look, all advanced social animals have order, and power and domination come into it. I think it is instinctual to have an order... I think morality comes from us being intelligent enough to put a spin on our instincts, and... I guess our ability to use both empathy and guilt as a means of control (ROI #74).
Again, rational consideration of grand philosophical issues is clear. The respondent has begun to examine society from a 'secular' positioning. The advent of university study has proved instrumental in that endeavour. The respondent, however, by her own admission is in the beginnings of such considerations. Thus, re-formations of traditional structures of meaning are still likely to be further negotiated.

While the underlying epistemological orientation remains stable, the younger age of these contemporary postmodern respondents points to varying stages within the apostatic cycle. Not all contemporary postmodern apostates, however, remain in the process of post apostatic negotiations. For respondents such as the narrator of the following passage, the re-formations regarding the social world are presented as finalised and complete. Postmodern divergence for this apostate, however, is contained in the shape and form of the source cited for morality and social order:

They (social order and morality) have nothing to do with Christian God, unless the Gods are behind the ruling of the stars. But very much it all goes back to astrology, it has the most credibility and the longest history of something spiritual. We are here for a purpose, and the stars and the planets dictate that purpose and that purpose is enlightenment, and enlightenment can only be gained by... by trying to do the right thing (ROI #70).

Most striking in a review of this narrative is the ease with which the respondent speaks of quite alternate negotiations of the social world. The respondent shows no signs of discomfort at purporting a belief system that many would say is peculiar. For this contemporary postmodern respondent, the negotiations that led to such understandings of the social world are premised as logical; the respondent refers to the 'credibility' and 'history' that underpins his beliefs. Negotiations are presented as rational.
The emergence of a postmodern world thus presents itself in this narrative, as well as in the narratives of other contemporary postmodern apostates who find comfort in alternate beliefs; beliefs that could have caused ostracism in times gone past. The postmodern world has eased and reshaped the collective conscious allowing for a diverse range of possibilities that can be adopted without cognitive or emotive strain.

The hallmark of the range of negotiations by postmodern apostates is thus shown to be the tendency for non-emotive, rational and logical considerations. The apostatic journey has been a non-traumatic exercise in deconstructing and reconstructing notions of familial faith, the self and the social. 'Technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988:18) do not present as particularly repressive, while familial identity, meaning, and the foundations of the social world, are not presented as sacred. All are up for rational post apostatic consideration as traditional beliefs begin to outlive their utility and credibility. While many of the older cohort have completed this cycle of re-formation, many contemporary postmodern apostates still present as within the process. The logical nature of these younger apostates, however, leads one to believe that negotiations will be both forthcoming and non-problematic.

Cohort divergences also present through the increasing dominion of the postmodern world. For contemporary postmodern apostates, traditional structures of faith and understanding can be logically renegotiated with quite alternate possibilities. The diversity of a postmodern world allows for renegotiations to take on varied forms, yet remain part of a rational experience. As the diversity and complexities of a postmodern world become more intricate, so too may post apostatic negotiations; negotiations that
reflect transforming epistemological approaches to knowledge rather than modernistic emotive resistance.

Concluding Remarks

Post apostatic re-formations continue to show differentiation based on the divergent epistemological orientations of the varying apostate types. Cognitive and intellectual techniques for processing new possibilities can be traced through the means of negotiating and deconstructing familial faith. Anomic reactionism, egotistic introspection, and postmodern rationality define the varying approaches to post apostatic negotiations.

The emotive components of these re-formations, however, no longer present as systematically or predictably as they did during negotiations of familial faith and processes of disaffiliation. While postmodern apostates have distinguished themselves by non-emotive deconstruction of traditional knowledges, anomic and egoistic apostates have distinguished themselves by angry exasperation and alienated disenchantment, respectively. During post apostatic negotiations, however, the negative Durkheimian emotions at the fore during processes of disaffiliation, have the potential to be eased via the abandonment of familial faith. Anomic anger can potentially become less evident as new positionings and understandings are either dismissed or less emotively considered. Similarly, while a portion of egoistic apostates continue to present core qualities of melancholic disenchantment and alienated confusion, others show a sense of hope as the cloud of familial faith is lifted.
Thus for a contingent of anomic and egoistic apostates, emotive personality traits taint all negotiations. For others, however, post apostatic re-formations ease the negative emotive pathos consequential to experiences of familial faith. Further, this tendency for emotive mediation in both anomic and egoistic apostates can be traced to cohort delineations. While associations are not iron clad, successful post apostatic negotiations are positively correlated with the younger cohort of respondents.

As Foucault states, '... the way people act or react is linked to a way of thinking, and of course thinking is related to tradition' (1988:14). The possibilities and potentialities as associated with a new world order thus allow for both the examination of previously sacred realms, and support structures for alternate beliefs. Commensurately, protection against alienation and anomie increases as the collective conscious broadens, both accepting and supporting alternate possibilities. In short, the emergence of a postmodern society with all its possibilities and new orientations to knowledge, allows for a less emotional renegotiation of 'religiosity'. Such negotiations no longer reflect the dominating techniques of power associated with traditional religious structures. Re-formations devoid of self renunciation are becoming possible.

While many apostates still ground themselves in post apostatic belief structures that provide aspects of traditional 'religiosity', they now do so without the accoutrements of formal Christianity in modernity. Chapter Six explores deconstructed religiosity and its relation to atheism in an increasingly postmodern world. Is there a post apostatic need for religious replacements? If so: why; what form do they take; and how are they negotiated by the individual?
Chapter Six

POST APOSTATIC ‘RELIGIOSITY’: THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FAITH IN A POSTMODERN WORLD

... for a whole series of reasons, the idea of a morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence (Foucault, 1990:49).

In this work, I have traced the socialisation experiences, disaffiliation processes, and post apostatic re-formations of eighty apostates of two cohorts. In these investigations, a fundamental point of commonality, across both cohort and type, is an assured rejection of modern Christianity. Familial faith has been resisted and negotiated by the range of apostates, and post apostatic re-formations are completely devoid of modern Western religious structures.

Investigations of the post apostatic self in chapter five, however, suggest that for most categories of apostate, there is the potential for some level of post apostatic religiosity. While issues of identity and meaning may be negotiated without a return to traditional religion, I argue that aspects of a deconstructed religiosity often present. A significant proportion of apostates adopt systems of belief that are underpinned by the primary religious functions of identity, meaning, and belonging. Thus, while identity is no longer embedded in the sacred, non-religious sources for identity can still be approached with a sacred air. Similarly, understandings of the social world may not be premised on the supernatural. Yet if one adopts Greely’s (1973) notion of religion as inclusive of all symbolic systems, many apostates
would find themselves yet enmeshed in the realm of the sacred. For Durkheim, this would be a natural expectation. He states,

...the believer is not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends and from which he receives all that is best in himself: this power exists, it is society (1965, 257).

Apostasy then, does not imply total spiritual abandonment. On the contrary, apostasy has shown itself to be a multifarious phenomenon with distinct meanings for the various classes of apostates. While resistance to ‘... morality as obedience to a code of rules...’ (Foucault, 1990:49) is a common denominator in disaffiliation, the relationship of the apostate to post apostatic religiosity is highly varied. This thesis then, is concluded with an exploration of post apostatic religiosity, or in Foucault’s terms, ‘...the search for an aesthetics of existence’(1990:49). It asks if there is a need for the post apostatic self to search for, and enter into a post-Christian relationship that provides meaning, comfort and identity.

A sociological body of literature that views the foregoing of familial faith as the conclusion of apostasy, however, does not investigate issues of post apostatic religiosity. Post apostatic societal issues are rarely addressed, while spiritual issues do not fall under the traditional focus of sociological analysis. As I argued in Chapter One, particular discursive processes lead to an uncritically accepted assumption that ‘faith’ is necessarily tied to modern Christian constructions of religion. The foregoing of familial faith, then, is aligned with total spiritual abandonment. An unwarranted assumption in the literature is thus apostasy as the end of spiritual possibilities.
We are thus left to ponder whether the apostate has truly abandoned all aspects of deconstructed ‘religiosity’. Is there a need for post apostatic faith? And what form is this faith likely to take? Does post apostatic religiosity simply represent a shift from one ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49) to another, or do post apostatic negotiations point to a significant reformulation in how we think about the ‘religious’ in a postmodern world? Is apostasy the end of the spiritual self; or can apostasy be better understood as the dawn of a new spiritual beginning?

**Apostasy Typology**

As has been the format of previous chapters, religiosity is examined by both type and cohort. Explorations by type investigate how each class of apostate negotiates post apostatic religious terrain. Explorations by cohort address whether a search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’ becomes increasingly likely as we move towards as more postmodern state of society.

The eighty respondents in this study were asked about their relationships with post apostatic religiosity. They were asked whether they felt there was a need for post apostatic religiosity; whether or not they had sought and in fact, found a replacement for familial faith; and if a replacement was found, what was its exact nature. Table 6.1 outlines the quantitative data on religious replacements by each apostate type:
Table 6.1  Frequency Distributions for Religious Replacement by Apostate Type *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Replacement Need</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ever looked</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Replaced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>46.9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi² test of significance  p < .05
All numbers are expressed as percentages

The data in table 6.1 shows that the relationship of respondents to post apostatic religiosity falls in line with previously identified epistemological approaches to knowledge. Anomic apostates, for example, are the least likely apostate type to believe that there is a need for post apostatic religiosity (29%). Correspondingly, only a third have ever searched for a religious replacement. The success rate is low, with only two of the twenty-four anomic apostates in this study recognising a surrogate for familial faith. For both of these individuals, replacements come from the secular realm, and spiritual possibilities are characteristically dismissed. The unconsidered reactionary rejections that
characterise the epistemological orientation of anomic processes of disaffiliation, are thus reflected in these figures.

The data for egoistic apostates also reflects characteristic epistemological approaches to knowledge; in this case the figures reflect egoistic intellectualism. Just over 50% of egoistic apostates believe in a need for post apostatic religiosity. Approximately three out of four egoistic respondents, however, have engaged in a search for a religious replacement. This is interesting because over half of the egoists who claim that there is no need for post apostatic religiosity, do so only after engaging in an active search for post apostatic meaning.

The equivocation of the egoist is further alluded to by the percentage of apostates who succeed in this search. Only half of those who look find a replacement, and for even those who believe such a replacement is essential, one third remain without post apostatic faith. For those who do negotiate post apostatic religiosity, the sources of faith are almost twice as likely to be secular than supernatural. These results then, fall in line with both the introspective contemplations and pensive intellectualism that has consistently marked the egoistic respondents’ apostatic journey. For this group, questions are more prevalent than answers.

For postmodern apostates, there is an expectation that the more liberal experiences of youth, more critical approaches to assumed knowledge, and an openness to the diversity and potentialities of a transforming world, would allow for the acceptance of post apostatic religious possibilities. The data in table 6.1 supports this expectation. Two
thirds of the postmodern respondents in this study believe that there is a need for post apostatic religiosity. This exact percentage then goes on to search for a system of meaning that can give purpose to post apostatic life. Three fourths of those who look are successful in this endeavour, and draw religious replacements from both secular and supernatural realms.

While these figures are consistently high, it is important to remember that many of the younger, contemporary postmodern apostates were in their late teens and early twenties at the time of interview. A significant proportion of these postmodern respondents then, may not have yet renegotiated the 'religious' in a post apostatic world. The figures in table 6.1, therefore, may be artificially constrained by the age of contemporary postmodern respondents.

This quantitative perusal then, points to consistency in the epistemological orientations of anomic dismissal, egoistic intellectualism, and postmodern rationality. A more nuanced analysis of narrative text, however, is taken up in the remainder of this chapter in an attempt to explore the more subtle aspects of a post apostatic search for meaning. I hope to make sense of religious replacements, and discern whether post apostatic religious negotiations represent a search for new 'codes of rules' (Foucault, 1990:49), or whether they are indicative of a more Foucauldian search for an 'aesthetics of existence' (1990:49).
THE ANOMIC APOSTATE

As shown by the quantitative data in table 6.1, anomic apostates are less likely than egoistic or postmodern apostates to believe in a need for, seek out, and find religious replacements. There is not, however, a point blank rejection of post apostatic religious possibilities for the entire contingent of anomic apostates. While only two anomic respondents are successful in replacing familial faith, a full third of this group claim to have engaged in a search for post apostatic religiosity. These findings thus reflect a certain level of post apostatic consideration.

As might be predicted by varying levels of reflexivity, investigations by cohort reveal that those anomic apostates who engage in post apostatic considerations of religiosity are drawn predominantly from the younger cohort. Non-reflexive, generally older anomic apostates, are not likely to give credence to post apostatic religiosity. For a more reflexive, generally younger group of anomic apostates, however, considerations of post apostatic religiosity are not altogether dismissed. This data thus suggests that an emergent postmodern condition can affect relationships to post apostatic religiosity for even those whose apostatic process has been a reflex of the modern world. The diversity, potentialities, and broadening collective conscious of an increasingly postmodern society can allow post apostatic negotiations to enter the realm of the spiritual. Non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates’ relationships to post apostatic spiritual possibilities are accordingly divergent, and warrant continued independent consideration.
Non-Reflexive Anomic Apostates

We have come to know non-reflexive anomic apostates as those who epitomise the Durkheimian characterisation of anomie. Their apostatic journey is characterised by an epistemological orientation that relies on angry reactionism, and does not allow for thoughtful considerations. Non-reflexive anomic apostates have simply turned their backs to God, and have no inclination to engage grand philosophical issues. Given this profile, a quest for post apostatic religiosity would not be expected. In fact, the expectation would be for non-reflexive anomic apostates to approach such issues with a level of reactionary cynicism.

Narrative investigations show a strong level of support for this expectation. The following narrative is representative of those non-reflexive anomic apostates who engage in a reactionary dismissal of post apostatic spiritual negotiations:

Religion, who needs it. I don’t. Maybe we are tricked into thinking that we need it, but we don’t... Why do we? I got better things to worry about. If we spent as much energy on this world as we do on the other, things might be a darn sight better... why? why replace it when it is nothing but a crock? No, not for me (ROI# 7).

This narrative typifies the experience of those non-reflexive anomic apostates who clearly and succinctly dismiss the whole notion of post apostatic religiosity, and do so with an anomic flair. The use of language such as ‘crock’ and, ‘tricked’, as well as the entire tone of presentation, suggests that this respondent still carries a degree of disgust towards traditional religiosity; a disgust that is carried over to conceptualisations of religious replacement.
The idea of adopting a religious replacements is thus foreign and in fact, ridiculous to this respondent. The respondent feels that he has, ‘...better things to worry about’, for when it comes to a religious replacements, ‘...who needs it’. There is simply no place for post apostatic religiosity and simply no need. The epistemological orientation of this respondent does not allow the possibility for post apostatic religiosity removed from the alienating traditions of familial faith. Thus the issue progresses no further, and a replacement is not sought.

The following non-reflexive anomic apostate relates a similar closed minded approach to post apostatic religiosity. Although this particular respondent did temporarily seek a religious replacement, this narrative is clearly indicative of a thorough rejection of post apostatic possibilities:

I don’t need religion... I don’t know about everyone else, but I don’t need it. What I need I do for myself. No one else is going to do it for me... You can’t go relying on things you have no control over. There was a friend who tried to get me interested in finding ‘peace’ and took me to a new church... but what a load of... I don’t have the time for all that garbage (ROI #36).

At the insistence of a friend who wanted this non-reflexive anomic apostates to find ‘peace’, this respondent did attend a ‘new church’. This new faith, however, is referred to as, ‘garbage’, a flirtation with post apostatic religiosity is swiftly dismissed. In fact, at the start of the passage, the respondent states twice in quick succession, ‘I don’t need...’ religion. There is a tone of authority to these statements that does not imply any level of equivocation.
As was the case for the previous non-reflexive anomic apostates, conceptualisations for religious replacements appear constrained. This respondent’s negotiations of post apostatic religiosity, in fact, read as a continued rejection of traditional faith. A genuine attempt at rediscovering any deconstructed notions of religiosity not tied to familial understandings, are absent in this narrative.

For the following non-reflexive anomic apostate, narrative text shows an uncharacteristic level of post apostatic consideration. A point of commonality with the above respondents, however, is the tendency for conceptions of post apostatic faith to be constrained to modern understandings of religion. Unequivocal reactions against familial faith are, therefore, reflected in the dismissal of post apostatic spiritual possibilities:

Well, I guess it would be nice if there were some sort of replacement... some sort of meaning system we could cling to... but eventually it’s best to realise that it is a pipe dream. There are no easy answers. Religion is a crutch for the weak (ROI #22).

While this non-reflexive anomic apostate concedes that, ‘...it would be nice if there were some sort of replacement...’, this sentiment is narrated with an unmistakable sense of cynicism. For this respondent, an irritated disgust directed at traditional religiosity leads to a rejection of the need for religious replacements. In referencing ‘... some sort of meaning system...’, however, the respondent expressly mentions religion as a ‘...crutch for the weak’. More abstract possibilities for replacements, not tied to modern Christianity, are not considered. For an apostate whose epistemological approach to knowledge has been one of reaction, void of deconstructions, it appears that post apostatic spiritual possibilities are highly limited.
For non-reflexive anomic apostates then, a history of non-reflection colours the range of possibilities for post apostatic religiosity. For this group, familial faith has neither been thoughtfully considered nor deconstructed, and life has continued without a need to ponder greater philosophical issues. Alternative possibilities for ‘faith’ are not considered. Possibilities for religious replacements are constrained to conceptions of modern Christianity, and are dismissed in a typically anomic fashion. The lifecourse is thus negotiated without a surrogate for familial faith, and an angry resolve appears to be the only fodder filling the void of rejected beliefs.

**Reflexive Anomic Apostates**

For anomic apostates of the younger cohort an apostatic journey of reactive anger has incorporated a level of reflexive consideration. This more reflexive stance allows post apostatic religiosity to be more thoughtfully explored. The quantitative data in table 6.1 reports that recognition and acceptance of post apostatic ‘religious’ possibilities, is far greater for reflexive anomic apostates than for the non-reflexive group. While egoistic and postmodern apostates are still more likely to explore such options, this more reflexive group does not unilaterally engage in a blanket rejection of possibilities. Thus, while a contingent of non-reflexive anomic apostates engage in a dismissal of such post apostatic possibilities that is reminiscent of the anomic apostates of the older cohort, others engage in considerations that reach beyond rejection and dismissal.

The first reflexive anomic narrative reviewed is indicative of those that show some consideration to post apostatic religiosity, but nonetheless culminate in the dismissal of such possibilities:
No. I do not have a replacement for religion. I do not think that I can ever replace religion... But that doesn’t mean there isn’t a need. I mean more people would give it up if it didn’t do something. It has to provide something for it to survive. But, it is such a cop out... It is like a friendless child with imaginary playmates..., go out and make a real friend. There are no imaginary friends and I’m afraid there is no God and nothing ‘spiritual’ to replace him with (ROI #61).

In contrast to the non-reflexive group, this reflexive anomic apostate acknowledges a possible societal need for the religious. The respondent reasons that, ‘...more people would give it (religion) up if it didn’t do something’. This respondent, however, then goes on to refer to religion as a ‘cop out’, and express disappointment that so many are duped by the need for the religious. Thus while a societal need for religion is somewhat considered, there is a personal rejection of a need for a system of meaning to succeed familial belief.

A point in common with non-reflexive anomic apostates, however, is an interpretation for religious replacements still tied to understandings of modern Christianity. I believe this narrow interpretation limits possibilities for post apostatic faith, and for this apostate, leads to a rejection of post apostatic religiosity.

The following reflexive anomic apostate also rejects post apostatic possibilities for faith. For this more critical apostate, however, there is an allusion to a meaning system that may act as a potential surrogate for religious ideologies:

I do not think that there is a need for religion in this world. It carries too much room for disappointment, and so much room for guilt... It is so much cleaner to just be able to accept things as they are. To try to assign quite hideous events to a supreme being... It is better to be relieved of the burden of God, and face the responsibilities of man. At least that’s what I believe.
Politics is where we can make a difference not in the spiritual. Get your head out of the clouds and make a difference here on the ground (ROI #44).

For this no nonsense respondent, the anomic tendency for a reactionary dismissal of all things spiritual is clear. This respondent claims that religion gives us both ‘disappointment’ and ‘guilt’. Consequently, this apostate intends to remain grounded in the secular. Thus while there is an increased level of post apostatic consideration, the respondent rejects the idea of a religious replacement. As he states, ‘(i)t is better to be relieved of the burden of God, and face the responsibilities of man.’

Again, such a rejection ensues because the realm for religious replacements is constrained to modern understandings of religion. When replacements are relegated to traditional religiosity, there is little need to consider the idea of a religious substitute. This respondent, however, alludes to a post apostatic system of meaning. The respondent tells us that, ‘(p)olitics, is where we can make a difference...’, and speaks of the political as a sphere where individuals can possibly derive meaning and purpose. A religious replacement of a secular origin thus appears to be in operation. Post apostatic meaning and identity are provided for without the respondent’s conscious recognition of a religious surrogate.

There are, however, those reflexive anomic apostates who do consciously acknowledge a religious replacement not tied to understandings of familial faith. For these apostates, more reflexive considerations allow for a broader interpretation for religious replacements. As might be the expectation for a group who generally reject any spiritual grounding for morality and social order, these conceptualisations are tied to the secular.
The following narrative of a young anomic respondent who references ‘life’ as a replacement for traditional religiosity, makes the point:

Yeah, I think there is a need... Yes, I do. I have a baby, if that doesn’t give you meaning in your life I do not know what does... The church never gave me a sense of fulfilment the way my daughter has, I feel so much more in touch with myself. It is, well for me it was what was missing, who needs God when you have life... (ROI #65).

For this more reflexive anomic apostate, there is neither reactionary dismissal nor any level of equivocation. Questions are responded to readily, suggesting prior consideration. Contrary to most anomic apostates, this respondent believes there is a need to replace familial faith, and the birth of a daughter fills this need. Accordingly, the respondent feels, ‘...so much more in touch...’. ‘... (W)hat was missing...’ has been replaced by a source of meaning and identity that provides fulfilment and abates anomie. The void of abandoned familial faith no longer pains this anomic apostate. For this respondent, post apostatic ‘religiosity’ has been negotiated.

With this respondent, then, there is a conscious recognition of a religious replacement; a recognition forthcoming for only one other anomic apostate. Not surprisingly, this recognition corresponds with a less constrained conception of post apostatic religiosity. For the vast majority of anomic apostates of both cohorts, possibilities for post apostatic religious replacements are subjected to narrow interpretation. There is an assumption that religious replacements are necessarily of a similar nature to that of previously abandoned familial faith. The realisation that religious replacements can represent quite alternative realities to that of familial Christianity is uncommon. To reach beyond the confines of
traditional religiosity when referencing possibilities for religious replacements is not generally a part of anomic post apostatic negotiations.

For both cohorts of anomic apostate then, relationships to post apostatic religiosity are constrained by less reflexive approaches to knowledge. While a younger cohort may be more prone to consideration and deconstruction of previously unconsidered realms, these considerations are yet to explore the full range of postmodern possibilities. For anomic apostates, the emergence of a more postmodern form of society does not find a search for religiosity as an integral part of post apostatic negotiations.

For the range of anomic apostates then, there may be an unequivocal rejection of a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49) and even an active avoidance of alternate ‘codes’. Contrary to the expectations of Foucault, however, this does not appear to correspond to a need to search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’(1990:49).

THE EGOISTIC APOSTATE

Introspective wanderings have consistently marked the egoistic apostatic journey. Such wanderings continue in egoistic apostates’ negotiations of post apostatic religiosity. While table 6.1 may show that postmodern apostates are more likely to believe in a need for, and adopt religious replacements, it is the egoistic apostates who are most likely to engage in a search for post apostatic religiosity. Egoistic apostates are the most likely to attempt to, ‘...transform the horizon of what one knows’ (Foucault, quoted in Miller, 1993:326).
In post apostatic negotiations, however, the self doubt and 'negative solutions' (Durkheim, 1993:282) that often accompany such egoistic contemplations, do not present as systematically as they did in the narratives of disaffiliation. While introspective contemplation remains the hallmark of the egoistic approach to knowledge, melancholic disenchantment can be moderated by the successful negotiation of post apostatic issues. Resolving post apostatic religiosity lessens the negative emotive inclinations associated with egoism. A confused, melancholic detachment may thus continue to present for those who are yet to resolve the complexities of post apostatic faith. Those egoists who resolve such post apostatic issues, however, are apt to find a greater sense of peace.

As has been the case throughout the apostatic journey, an emergent postmodern society can impact on the negotiations of the egoist. In a postmodern world, for example, there are increased possibilities for post apostatic religiosity. There is also greater societal acceptance of alternate forms of faith. The introspective nature of egoistic apostates, however, does not find these influences altering the primary characteristic epistemological profile of introspective consideration. Additionally, the narration of postmodern influences is not always consistent. The most meaningful explorations of the egoistic apostates' relationships to post apostatic religiosity then, do not arise from investigation of cohort delineation. Cohort delineation, once again, proves insufficient in capturing the nuances and complexities of egoistic apostates' 'religious' negotiations. The range of responses and their impact on the egoists continues to cross the cohort divide.

Continuing the pattern established throughout this thesis, egoistic apostates do not undergo a primary delineation by cohort. Rather, an investigation of this class of apostate
explores the divergent post apostatic paths for religiosity across the entire range of respondents. Postmodern influences are explored in regard to the subtleties of post apostatic negotiations and divergent possibilities for the shape and form of potential religious replacements.

Across the range of egoists, then, a point of commonality continues to be introspective considerations. For the following egoistic apostate of the older cohort, negative Durkheimian overtones appear in conjunction with these introspective contemplations. A journey yet finalised, still causes angst:

I think there is a need for religion. At times in my life I know that I felt quite a void. Others, especially those of my age are so sure about things... it is so easy for them. I mean, someone dies and their pain can be assuaged by their knowledge of an ever loving God in the afterlife. They seem to take great comfort from knowing. For me there is just anxiety... I have friends and I have my family and they are my strength, they are my support system, they give me meaning... but I am yet to find anything that can take the place of the faith I see in others (ROI #20).

This passage is indicative of egoism. The thoughtful consideration and wistful melancholy expected of egoistic apostates is presented. There is explicit recognition of the need for a religious replacement. This is accompanied by a sense of envy at those who claim strong religious faith. The respondent, in fact, states that, ‘...it is so easy for them’, implicating the pain and hardship felt by the abandonment of traditional religiosity. For this respondent, this is particularly true in times of crisis, when it is difficult to negotiate peace without a return to ‘faith’.
Post apostatic issues of ‘meaning’ and ‘faith’, then, are not satisfactorily resolved for this egoist. ‘Friends’ and ‘family’ may be a source of ‘strength’, ‘support’, and ‘meaning’, but in the mind of this egoistic apostate, friends and family cannot act as rewarding religious replacements. This respondent continues to search for a system of belief, ‘... that can take the place of the faith I see in others’, and provide the respondent with ‘great comfort’.

These sentiments often cut across the cohort divide. The following passage, narrated by an egoist of the younger cohort, reflects many of the concerns spoken of by the older egoist just reviewed:

I felt abandoned... it would be nice to have something to replace him with, it would have been nice to find more... I went to a few different chaplains, priests and wanted guidance and support... sometimes the world can be unfair and there is no one to blame, and no one to turn to, I think you just have to realise that the world can be a hard place and you have to take control of your life. You are going to waste a lot of time if you are waiting for an outside force to change the things only you can (ROI #58).

For this respondent, thoughtful introspective considerations are evident. Resolving issues of faith have been part of post apostatic negotiations. This culminates in a recognition that, ‘...it would have been nice to find more’. The respondent then tells of the search for a religious replacement. For this young egoist, apostasy has not resolved issues of faith. Introspective contemplations continue in an ongoing apostatic journey.

Accordingly, the melancholic emotive characteristics that plagued this respondent’s process of disaffiliation, can still be somewhat discerned in this passage. The respondent articulates feelings of ‘abandonment’, and expresses a desire for ‘guidance’ and ‘support’.
I argue, however, that this sense of melancholy appears to have been at least partially abated. This respondent may not consciously recognise self-determination as a potential religious replacement. The respondent’s suggestion that, ‘you need to take control of your life’ and change, ‘...the things only you can’, however, points to a reliance on the self as a potential source of post apostatic meaning. To some extent then, an increased awareness of self can be seen as having filled the void of abandoned familial faith.

An egoistic apostate from the older cohort also speaks of self determination. Although this particular egoist completely rejects the idea of a religious replacement, there is an increased reliance on self knowing that eases the pain of familial disaffiliation:

No need. I have never replaced it and doubt if I ever will. I suppose after I finished questioning God, and finally gave him up, I wasn’t as much a young and confused kid. I had a family I was raising and felt quite fulfilled as person... I think that is a large part of it. If you have high self esteem, your need for anything tends to be less. People have much more strength than they are willing to give themselves credit for, and religion does not help the situation. You can get by better if you go without (ROI #25).

Issues of post apostatic religiosity have been thoughtfully considered by this respondent, and have been resolved with a rejection of any need for post apostatic spirituality.

In contrast to processes of disaffiliation, however, post apostatic negotiations do not appear to cause emotive strain. The respondent suggests that movement through the lifecourse from a ‘young and confused kid’, to a ‘fulfilled’ ‘family’ person, lessens the need to turn to the spiritual. The development of ‘self esteem’ allows this egoistic apostate to negotiate post apostatic religiosity without return to traditional aspects of faith. In fact, in spite of a conscious rejection of a need for religious replacements, this
apostate's increasing self esteem and a growing appreciation for the power of human strength, appears to have filled the void left by traditional religiosity. The respondent thus claims that, 'If you have high self esteem your need for anything tends to be less...'. Whether esteem and strength act as religious replacements, or whether they lessen the need for such replacements, this respondent has been able to mediate egoistic emotions.

In the narrative of the egoistic apostates thus far reviewed, a point of convergence is a lack of recognised religious replacements. There is an unwillingness or an inability to find a replacement for abandoned familial faith. These apostates do not consciously adopt a post apostatic system of meaning. I argue, however, that the introspective and contemplative nature of these apostates has seen post apostatic transitions eased through secular channels. Whether in the form of family, friends or the self, these secular sources provide identity, meaning and support for the apostate. They are not, however, recognised as potential religious replacements by this group.

For a contingent of egoistic apostates, then, possibilities for religious replacements are constrained in ways similar to that of anomic apostates' possibilities. Replacements appear to be imagined only as entities necessarily similar to the traditional religious structures previously abandoned. Increased awareness of self, and the support of family and friends are thus not seen as potential surrogates for familial faith.

There are, however, egoistic respondents who do consciously recognise religious replacements. As might be expected, conceptualisations of post apostatic religiosity are much broader for this group. Quite often, those who successfully negotiate issues of post
apostatic religiosity call upon highly alternate possibilities when naming successors to familial faith. The following narrative of a respondent of the older cohort makes the point:

Yes, I think there is a need. I certainly looked. I think most of us have a need to find something to make us feel whole. I think that the most convenient place you can look to is a religion. It seems to have all the easy answers... when we decide to give up religion, for whatever reason, if we are still short of a self knowing, we need a replacement. Ultimate power which comes from self knowledge is a lot to handle without allowing for the fall back to the supernatural. But when we have self knowing, then we have the answers to it all (ROI #37).

The defining egoistic epistemological orientation of introspective, intellectual considerations is evident in this passage. This egoistic respondent has considered: the functions of, and need for, religion; the difficulties associated with abandoning traditional faith and; the possibilities and significance of their renegotiation.

While this level of contemplation may be characteristic of egoism, there is little sense of self doubt or melancholic disenchantment narrated in this passage. On the contrary, this egoistic apostate appears to have satisfactorily negotiated post apostatic meaning and ‘religiosity’, while simultaneously resolving the emotive egoistic tendencies that marked the process of disaffiliation. The respondent is thus able to put aside the ‘easy answers’ of religion and turn to ‘self knowing’ as a means for successfully negotiating post apostatic spiritual terrain. The end result is the , ‘...answers to it all’, and a sense of ease not evident in this respondent’s negotiation of socialisation or process of disaffiliation. The ability to supplant familial faith with the, ‘(u)ltimate power which comes from self
knowledge...’ allows for a religious replacement no longer bracketed by the alienating confines of religiosity as defined by modern Christianity.

A similar profile is shown in the following narrative of an egoist of the younger cohort. For this respondent, apostatic angst is resolved through the negotiation of post apostatic religiosity:

I need religion. We would be nothing but shells, empty shells without a spirit and a presence to fill us. It is there for all of us, we have a need to find out how we can tap into our individual spiritual source. Whether it be through the conventional religions or through a deep and exhausting search of self, whether it be through a cult, or whatever... it is really all the same, it is our combined individual spirits. It is there for all of us, and whether we know it or not, we need it (ROI #67).

For this younger egoist, there is a strong belief in the need, not only for the self, but for all of humanity, to seek religious replacements. This respondent believes that this is in fact essential, for without religion, ‘(w)e would be nothing but shells, empty shells...’.

Following the profile for the egoist previously reviewed, then, post apostatic issues are well considered to a point of resolution, and the abatement of negative egoistic emotive overtones corresponds with the successful negotiation of post apostatic religiosity. Deconstructed religiosity, based on ‘...our individual spiritual source...’ has thus allowed for comfortable negotiations of post apostatic positionings.

Also interesting is this passage is an allusion to a postmodern condition. The tendency for egoistic narratives to focus on the self shows postmodern influences not consistently narrated. For this particular respondent, however, there is a recognition of the wide ranging possibilities for renegotiating the ‘religious’ in a post apostatic, postmodern
world. While the respondent may feel that post apostatic religious possibilities are, ‘...really all the same...’, explicit mention of ‘... conventional religions... search of self... cult or whatever...’, points to an awareness of the diversity of a postmodern society. This diversity allows for increased possibilities in the negotiation of the post apostatic spiritual self; meaning, faith, and identity can be provided for in a variety of ways.

The diversity and complexity that have marked the egoistic apostates’ journey thus far, continues to define post apostatic approaches to faith. While the highly contemplative nature of egoistic apostates sees a search for religious replacements fairly commonplace, negotiations of post apostatic religiosity vary in accordance with both the complexities of the egotistic personality, and the varied interpretations for religious replacements.

Thus while common epistemological threads can be found in both the thoughtful consideration given to the issues, and the tendency to partially supplant traditional religiosity, egoistic apostates are nonetheless diverse in negotiations of post apostatic religious possibilities. They vary considerably in the acceptance of religious replacements not tied to traditional aspects of the religious, and find the ability to negotiate negative egoistic emotions tied to the ultimate resolution of post apostatic religiosity. While the alternatives available in a postmodern world may aid successful negotiation of post apostatic terrains, divergences in this group fall more in line with notions of post apostatic religiosity, than cohort.

For egoistic apostates, then, there has been a painful and difficult rejection of a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49). Post apostasy, the introspective nature of this group

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often leads them on a search for religiosity. For some, success in this endeavour appears constrained by limitations placed on the possibilities for religious replacements. For others, however, a deconstruction of familial faith allows for a broader conception of post apostatic religiosity. This then opens the possibility for the egoist to embark on a search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’ no longer held to the dominating power relations endemic to modern Christianity.

THE POSTMODERN APOSTATE

For postmodern apostates, the rational and open-minded considerations that have consistently defined the epistemological dimensions of the apostatic journey, continue to present in negotiations of post apostatic religiosity. While contemplative egoists may be the most likely to search for religious replacements, the data in table 6.1 reports that most postmodern apostates believe in a need for post apostatic religiosity than either modern apostate type. Postmodern apostates are also most likely to find success in replacing familial faith. They are open to both supernatural and spiritual possibilities for post apostatic religiosity.

This profile shows relative consistency across cohort. For vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates, the tendency to believe in a need for, search for, and find religious replacements is stable. I argue, however, that it is precisely this lack of divergence that can point to postmodern societal influences. While reflexive epistemologies may see vanguard postmodern apostates open to alternate possibilities for abandoned familial faith it is expected that a world still strongly embedded in modernity might constrain pos
apostatic possibilities. Like many anomic and egoistic apostates, there may be a tendency to limit the realm of religious replacements. Both a limited imagination and a modernistic suspicion and distrust of spiritual alternatives, may impose on the older cohort’s post apostatic possibilities for deconstructed religiosity. For a more contemporary group, however, a broadening collective conscious might allow for a more open and eased transition to post apostatic faith.

I would therefore argue that contemporary postmodern apostates would be more likely to find success in embracing alternatives to familial faith, than their older counterparts. Further, I believe that the figures in table 6.1 would bear this out if it were not for the youth in the contemporary group. Just over one third of contemporary postmodern apostates have not considered the idea of religious replacements. I do not believe, however, that unresolved issues of post apostatic religiosity align this group with either dismissive, anomic respondents or alienated egoists. These younger, contemporary postmodern apostates have simply not yet embarked on a search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’. Thus while figures for post apostatic religiosity may be comparable by cohort, vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates will be spoken of independently. This delineation allows both the influences of a postmodern society, and the impact of youth to be discussed in relation to post apostatic possibilities.

**Vanguard Postmodern Apostates**

Vanguard postmodern apostates have shown themselves to be quite forward in the ability to rationally and logically deconstruct and reconstruct traditional platforms of knowing. The search for religious replacements and the acceptance of post apostatic religiosity
could thus be considered distinct and non-problematic possibilities. Vanguard postmodern apostates have shown themselves to be open to intellectual considerations of post apostatic positionings. While traditional societal structures may limit the range of alternate sources for replacing familial faith, an openness to the possibility for post apostatic religiosity would be expected.

Narratives, however, show that relationships to post apostatic religiosity are not easily standardised for this group. While a contingent of vanguard postmodern apostates are willing to push at the boundaries of postmodern possibility, and embrace available alternatives, others appear guided by a modern society’s restrictive approaches to knowledge. The following narrative shows the positioning of those vanguard postmodern apostates who manifest some difficulty in the negotiation of post apostatic religiosity:

No... I don't want one either. I thought about it a lot before I gave up Catholicism. Even after I saw its faults... I guess I had the desire to find something to replace it with but... I think all things religious are tarred with the same brush. It is a false reality to think that there is something out there controlling, there are just some things we may never know... We need to come to the realisation that there are things we may never fully grasp (ROI #11).

For this respondent, the familiar epistemological profile of rational consideration is tainted with an emotive sense of egoism. The idea of a religious replacement is not strange to a respondent who appears to have introspectively, ‘... thought about it a lot...’. These considerations then lead to the rejection of a post apostatic system of meaning. As was the case for a significant proportion of anomic and egoistic apostates, however, the range of possibilities for post apostatic religiosity does not appear wide. Conceptualisations of religious replacements are similar to the abandoned belief structures of youth. The
respondent, for example, reports that ‘...all things religious are tarred with the same brush’. Post apostatic possibilities are thus imagined as embedded in traditional religious structures.

For this postmodern apostate, reflexive approaches to knowing have consistently been on the fore of more critical postmodern epistemologies. Constrained parameters for religious replacements, however, does not show predilection for the diversity of a postmodern age. For vanguard postmodern apostates in this situation, forward approaches to knowledge do not serve as a guarantee that post apostatic spiritual possibilities will arise free from modern societal influences.

The following vanguard postmodern apostate also tells of post apostatic religious negotiations that are approached with a characteristic sense of reflexivity:

I would think that it would be hard to travel through one's life without ever finding the need to understand the true meaning of the universe. I...I think we all have need to feel at peace and tap into our inner strength to try and become more than who we are...life would be so very empty if we were to accept this world at face value, I do not know how a being can come to its full potential without tapping into and fully welcoming his spiritual side, but as a religious replacement, I'm not sure that would qualify (ROI #30).

This passage shows the intellectual consideration given to issues of post apostatic meaning. The respondent tells us of the ‘...need to understand the true meaning of the universe’, and the, ‘...need to feel at peace...’. In fact, the passage alludes to negotiations of post apostatic religiosity as a fundamental to understandings of both the self and the social world.
The respondent then goes on to tell us how post apostatic religiosity can be negotiated. The value of, ‘... tapping into and fully welcoming (one’s) spiritual side’ is made clear. Post apostatic negotiations, then, do not lead to a blanket dismissal of all systems of meaning. Once again, however, the constraints placed on the possibilities for post apostatic religiosity, sees the respondent reply to the question of religious replacements with equivocation. Rather than acknowledge ‘spirituality’ as a potential substitute for familial faith, the respondent tells us that he is, ‘...not sure if it would qualify’. This scenario was not uncommon for this group. For many vanguard postmodern apostates, in spite of reflexive and rational consideration of post apostatic issues, religious replacements are often associated with traditional religious structures.

There are, however, those vanguard postmodern apostates who embrace the possibilities as they unfold in an emerging world of complexity. For these apostates, rational and logical considerations are not bound to interpretations of religious replacements tied to modern understandings of religion. These postmodern apostates of the older cohort claim to have procured religious replacements via diverse channels. The following passages reflect those broader possibilities for post apostatic religiosity:

My friend told me that my involvement with the forum..., which is based on EST... is like my religion, at the time I said no way, but when I thought about it, maybe she was right... (ROI #17).

Yes, I think that the earth is my replacement... I do feel that we are guests on the earth and that we are pushing for our own eviction, the earth is real and she deserves our respect... (ROI #28).
I am a feminist now, and I am interested in how religion can reconcile some of its beliefs, doctrines and its dogmas with equality... with women's rights. I am also interests in feminist spirituality (ROI #33).

Common to these vanguard postmodern apostates is the willingness and ability to embrace the diversity that begins to present in an emergent postmodern world. Whether it be via the ‘forum’, the ‘earth’, ‘feminism’, or ‘feminist spirituality’, identity, solidarity and meaning are being attained outside the traditional structures of religion. Rational considerations of post apostatic religiosity are quite open and foreshadow the range of options increasingly available for the negotiation of deconstructed religiosity. While egoistic and anomic contemporaries continue to have post apostatic negotiations tempered by traditional knowledges of religion, a significant proportion of vanguard postmodern apostates are able to break from such modern understandings. They are able to re-imagine boundaries for the sacred.

For postmodern apostates of the older cohort, vanguard epistemological approaches to knowledge continue in post apostatic negotiations of deconstructed religiosity. Such issues have been rationally approached by this group. Only half of these postmodern apostates, however, would be considered vanguard in their ability to re-imagine the parameters of post apostatic religiosity. For those who are successful in this re-imagination, both secular and spiritual sources can act as surrogates for familial faith. For others, however, post apostatic negotiations of religiosity are constrained by the narrow parameters of tradition. While some of these apostates adopt a system of meaning not consciously regarded as a religious replacement, I argue that restricted conceptualisations
can limit post apostatic possibilities for even those shown to be vanguard in epistemological approaches to knowledge.

**Contemporary Postmodern Apostates**

In an attempt to discern and understand the effects of a transforming society on the apostatic journey, it is contemporary postmodern apostates who best reflect postmodern possibilities. These apostates have been influenced by postmodern child rearing strategies, have adopted a reflexive, critical approach to knowledge, and negotiate a world of growing possibilities. For this group, epistemological approaches to knowledge no longer sees the apostatic journey associated with the emotive costs of modernity. Additionally, transforming societal conditions no longer finds the journey vanguard; a broadening collective conscious finds ready support for alternate beliefs. Not surprisingly, then, negotiations, including negotiations of post apostatic religiosity, are often non-traumatic. Issues of post apostatic religiosity that might be volatily dismissed by the anomic apostate, heart wrenchingly considered by the egoist, and intellectually and personally challenging for the vanguard postmodern apostate, are often approached with an air of nonchalance by the contemporary postmodern group.

I argue that this rational, open minded and often casual approach to post apostatic negotiations leads to two possibilities in the search for religious replacements. In the first instance, contemporary postmodern apostates may not find questions of religiosity particularly pressing, this combined with youth finds issues if post apostatic ‘faith’ yet resolved. For others, however, even in youth, the diversity of a postmodern age finds wide possibilities for negotiating post apostatic faith.
The following narratives represent those contemporary postmodern apostates who have yet to thoughtfully consider the idea of a religious replacement. This first shows a casual and quite dismissive attitude towards post apostatic religiosity. The second is more representative of those who rationally defer such considerations:

Well I suppose if marijuana is a replacement... but no, not right now. Later maybe... (ROI #49).

For this young contemporary postmodern apostate, it is clear that post apostatic negotiations aimed at replacing familial faith are not high on the current list of priorities. There is little sense of urgency in replacing beliefs that were rationally and non-emotively dismissed. In fact, there is a sense of complete nonchalance in the attitude towards post apostatic religiosity. This apostate does not appear to feel a void from abandoned faith. Consequently, there is not a pressing need to find a replacement.

The following contemporary postmodern apostate has also left issues of post apostatic religiosity unresolved. In this narrative, however, a casual or cynical nature is not apparent. For this postmodern apostate, a curiosity regarding post apostatic religiosity is not explored simply because life is too busy:

No I have no replacement. I would like to find meaning for my life but it is hard enough to get through the studies I have. When I think about it yes, I want to explore spirituality, but it is not something that I think of often. I just do not have the time. I guess I am curious, but I have not thought too much about it on a personal level..., I do think that I will want to resolve it one day. I guess it would be nice to have an ultimate purpose (ROI #56).
In this passage, a rational epistemological approach to knowledge expected from respondents of this group can be seen. While this apostate, ‘... would like to find meaning...’ and ‘... have an ultimate purpose’, considerations of post apostatic faith are nonetheless deferred. Such considerations may be of interest to the respondent, but this contemporary postmodern apostate, ‘... just do(es) not have the time’. The first priority is to, ‘... get through the studies’.

For those apostates then, who either casually dismiss or thoughtfully defer consideration and resolution of post apostatic religiosity, two factors appear to limit the adoption of religious replacements. First, the rational dismissal of familial faith, does not seem to create a pressing need for a post apostatic system of meaning. The emotive costs associated anomic and egoistic apostasy, do not need to be negotiated or alleviated in this group. While there may an openness post apostatic possibilities, there is little stress presented in the non-resolution of such quandaries. In conjunction with this more casual attitude, is the youth of contemporary postmodern apostates. For many, the time frame available post apostasy is quite short. Full exploration of post apostatic possibilities may not be possible. Additionally, a youthful phase in the lifecourse may not see such considerations reach high priority.

For the 45% of contemporary postmodern apostates who do consciously adopt religious replacements, conceptions for post apostatic religiosity are not bound by modern constructions of religion. Whether post apostatic systems of meaning, belief, and identity are derived from secular or spiritual domains, there is recognition that replacements for
familial faith need not be associated with conventional structures of religion. The possibilities of a postmodern society are embraced by this group.

The following respondent serves as an example of those contemporary postmodern apostates who have adopted a secular surrogate for familial faith:

I would say that I have a replacement, and funny enough I would say that it is my fascination with religion. I suppose I spend more time studying religion than most spend practicing it. It is a constant source of astonishment to me. How can religion continue, and continue to continue, especially now when technology and communications are so great that the mythical aspects of religion surely have to become uncovered... We no longer live in isolation, surely we will cotton on as a society. When will science and common sense come to replace religion (ROI #70)?

For this respondent, an intellectual fascination with religion is explicitly recognised as a religious replacement. Familial faith is no longer ‘followed’ it is now ‘studied’. Religion has been taken from the realm of the sacred, and is worthy of consideration for its ability to override the common sense of the masses. A fascination with traditional systems of meaning, actually replaces faith in these the traditional systems.

This situation is not uncommon for the range of postmodern apostates. In this study, eight of thirty-three postmodern apostates state that they have adopted a secular replacement for traditional religiosity. Half of these apostates mention an intellectual curiosity with traditional religion as a replacement for religion itself. This particular respondent’s surprise then, at the ability of religion to, ‘...continue and continue to continue...’ may represent a Durkheimian recognition of religion as the misplaced worship
of society (1971). A point fascinating enough for religion to occupy the mind of even the committed postmodern atheist.

Intellectual and rational considerations of post apostatic meaning, however, do not necessarily limit religious replacements to the intellectual or secular realm. On the contrary, the emergence of a postmodern world, increases the opportunity for post apostatic faith to enter previously uncharted territories. Spiritual replacements for traditional religiosity thus range from witchcraft and astrology, to iridology. Possibilities for religious replacements are not constrained to modern constructions of religion. The following narrative captures the essence of the contemporary post apostatic spiritualist, not bound by tradition:

Yes I do have a replacement. I am spiritual... I believe that we are all powerful and have a connection between us that can not be denied. You and I are actually one, we come from the same place. Your karma and mine have the same energy source, each other and every other life force on the planet (ROI #69).

This respondent unequivocally recognises a replacement for familial faith. The respondent confidently claims, ‘(y)es, I do have a replacement’. A ‘life force’ and ‘energy sources’, are cited as the centre of spirituality. Issues of post apostatic religiosity have been negotiated and resolved. A postmodern mindset, in conjunction with the diversity and plurality of a postmodern world, then, have left this respondent open to alternate possibilities for post apostatic faith. Issues of post apostatic meaning are negotiated without the constraints associated with modern Christianity.
For postmodern apostates, the mind is not closed to post apostatic religious possibilities. An open minded and rational approach to knowledge has left the postmodern apostate in a position to rationally regard a number of post apostatic options. While there may not be a pressing need to replace faith, there is an openness to the possibility. For the older cohort, post apostatic options are sometimes constrained by the structure of a modern world. For others, however, a vanguard nature continues in the ability to adopt alternatives often viewed suspiciously by larger society.

For a younger cohort, an increasingly postmodern world allows definitions and interpretations of post apostatic religiosity to be divergent from the confines of traditional Western religious structures. These apostates call upon everything from intellectual considerations of religion itself, to witchcraft and magic as viable post apostatic sources for meaning. While a youthful group without a pressing need to replace familial faith may defer such negotiations, these apostates are generally open to the future consideration of post apostatic religiosity.

For the range of postmodern apostates then, a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49), was never dogmatically imposed. The rejection of this code, can thus proceed in a rational fashion without angst. I suggest that this lack of angst does not find the need to search for an aesthetics of existence to be particularly pressing. While there is an openness to such possibilities, and even a desire to explore deconstructed faith, these apostates to not show an unwavering compulsion to negotiate and resolve such issues. Thus as both societies and individuals become more postmodern, freedom from modernity leaves spiritual options open.
FINAL REMARKS

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the heterogeneity seen in apostasy can be understood through an examination of the apostatic process as an historical product. Using a methodology that crosses epistemological divide through the use of quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical analysis, it has been my intention to draw and make sense of this heterogeneity. This realm of investigation is particularly relevant as both societies and individuals attempt to negotiate a shifting cultural terrain, for I believe that the varied and sometimes contradictory themes running through apostasy narratives can be drawn out through recognition of a complex and ever transforming social fabric. Simultaneously, the intricacies and inconsistencies seen in apostasy can shed light on the complexity of negotiating a society in transition.

I argue, for example, that anomie and egoism and their associated apostate types, can be understood as products of a modern age. The alienating aspects of modernity see resistance to the dominating power relations of Christianity exact high emotive costs. When the themes of modernity dominate narratives of child rearing, apostasy is likely to cause angst. The ‘modern’ finds resistance coming with a cost.

In the case of anomic apostates, investigations have shown that religious socialisation reflects ‘technologies of power’ (Foucault, 1988:18) endemic to modernity. For this group, religious socialisation progresses with authoritarian, patriarchal child rearing practices that do not encourage, or even accept, any level of reflexivity. In the words of Durkheim, ‘... the child is subjected, unrelentingly’ to ‘power’ (Durkheim 1982:54).
For the older cohort of anomic apostates, this authoritarian socialisation is relatively non-problematic, and not critically examined. It is not cited by this group as causal to apostasy. Rather, modern socialisation practices are reflected in uncritical approaches to disaffiliation. Uncritical rejections mirror socialisation as blind replication. Apostasy is thus a reactive response to a pivotal event in the life course for which religion proved ineffectual, or even offensive. Rejection of God is based solely on anomic responses initiated by a very emotive catalyst. There is little consideration or negotiation of the religious, and an eventuating resistance leads to complete abandonment of familial faith.

This reactionary stance continues in post-apostatic negotiations. On the individual level, all aspects of the spiritual are denied. On the societal level, little consideration is given to grand philosophical issues. For this group, reactions to familial faith stem from modern, repressive experiences of socialisation and religion that do not lend themselves to a more thoughtful re-formation/renegotiation of the post-apostatic self. Similarly, post-apostatic religiosity is thoroughly and uncritically dismissed.

For a generally younger cohort of reflexive anomic apostates, the juxtaposition of authoritarian modes of socialisation in a more postmodern society, can be cause for reflection. For this group, disaffiliation is still an emotive, reactive response that culminates in the foregoing of familial faith. A limited deconstruction, however, becomes part of the epistemological profile and continues in post-apostatic re-formations and negotiations. The emergence of a postmodern condition thus influences the epistemological mindset of younger anomic apostates. I argue, however, that ensuing deconstructions are generally
limited to particular sources of power, rather than more abstract techniques of power. Apostasy and post apostatic negotiation thus continue to reflect a modernistic reaction.

For egoistic apostates, the themes of modernity still see apostasy exacting an emotive toll. For these more introspective individuals, however, internal turmoil is presented as the cost of resistance to modern constructions of religion. An epistemic shift in socialisation practices may be undeniable across this particular cohort divide. The development of egoism, however, develops heedless of postmodern influences. Irrespective of authoritarian modes of socialisation as replication, or open liberal socialisation of ‘thinking’ individuals, there exists a broad common denominator in egoistic apostates’ development of angst. These apostates consistently reflect a sense of melancholic introspection.

For egoistic apostates then, familial faith and modern constructions of religion may be a considerable source of concern. Additionally, critical thinking and constant reflection may in themselves, be problematic. In either case, the tendency for egoistic apostates to engage in critical examinations, leads to introspective doubts destined to cause emotive pain. Familial faith is thus deconstructed by the range of egoistic apostates with a sense of disenchantment, loss, and emptiness. An emerging postmodern state of society may be reflected in shifting associations of egoism with anomie to egoism in conjunction with logical considerations. The reflections of the egoist, however, remain introspective.

Introspection continues to present in the consideration given to post apostatic issues. Reformations of the self and post apostatic understandings of the social and the spiritual, are thoughtfully considered. The negative emotive overtones reflected in narratives of
disaffiliation, however, vary in accordance with the respondents' ability to negotiate a post apostatic world. The alienating aspects of familial faith may thus contribute to egoistic inclinations. These same egoistic emotions, however, can be resolved in accordance with the ability of the egoist to move beyond the difficulties encountered with traditional religion.

For these modern classes of apostate then, the modern world is reflected in the emotive cost of resistance, as well as in the limited ability of these apostates to engage in fulfilling post apostatic re- formations. While the emergence of a postmodern societal condition can begin to reshape and transform dimensions of the apostatic journey, anomie and egoism remain an integral part of apostasy. In a society that has yet to fully free itself from the 'technologies of power' and the 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988:18) that have constructed and constrained the modern individual, apostasy remains a reflex of the modern world.

The contemporary period, however, now finds these restrictive modern themes running alongside less restrictive constructions and understandings of the social. I argue that this more open landscape has allowed for the emergence of the postmodern apostate. For this classification of apostate, encouraged reflexivity can allow for negotiations of religiosity that are less emotive. For this group, religious socialisation no longer reflects the modern techniques that have traditionally shaped the individual. Faith is often seen as more than just replicated beliefs, and there is growing expectation that an active negotiation of faith needs to be engaged by children themselves. While older postmodern apostates may be more vanguard in experiencing these postmodern socialisation techniques, both cohorts have broken from the confines of religiosity and socialisation as understood in modernity.
These apostates then, have not experienced "...morality as obedience to a code of rules" (Foucault, 1990:49) first hand. Consequently, apostasy is easier engaged as a rational journey. For postmodern apostates, the apostatic process is distinguished by an epistemological profile of rational, decision making. This process reflects more 'postmodern' techniques for resisting 'modern' constructions of religion; angst is no longer central to apostasy. These distinctions continue in post apostatic self re-formations, and societal negotiations. Regardless of cohort, rationality and logic present throughout the full cycle of the apostatic journey. For the postmodern contingent of apostates then, means for negotiating the self are less reliant on punitive forms of self renunciation. Re-formations and negotiations are achieved without the cost associated with resistance in modernity, and possibilities for post apostatic religiosity are openly explored.

While cohort divergences can be discerned in the growing expectation for reflexivity in a transforming world, both cohorts of postmodern respondents experience apostasy as a non-traumatic exercise in deconstructing and reconstructing notions of faith, the self and the social. For these apostates less repressive and dominating techniques are called upon in both the socialisation and negotiation of familial faith. Traditional religion is no longer seen as sacred, and deconstructions and negotiations reflect more postmodern epistemological approaches to knowledge.

In this study then, the heterogeneity seen in apostasy has been investigated by both apostate type and by cohort. These delineations reflect the complexities of individuals and societies in the midst of transition. The typology allows for apostates with varied cognitive and emotive means for approaching knowledge, while cohort divisions show
societal change. Socialisation as replication, for example, is making way for socialisation accepting of critical examinations. Authoritarian replication can no longer be transmitted without the expectation of negotiation. There is growing recognition that the ability for critical examinations may better prepare children for a changing world order.

Apostatic processes reflect these varied constructions of socialisation. For more modern apostate types, anomic reactionism and egoistic introspection can be seen as responses that stem from experiences in youth. For the postmodern contingent, however, deconstructions of familial faith can actually be a perpetuation of the socialisation objectives of critical reflection. These divergent epistemological orientations of the varying apostate types continue in post apostatic negotiations. The negative Durkheimian emotions at the fore during processes of disaffiliation, however, have the potential to be eased via the abandonment of familial faith.

Cohort divergence within types further points to an emerging societal condition in which reflexivity is increasingly accepted and encouraged. For each group, an emergent postmodern condition can ease the transition to apostasy, and open possibilities for post apostatic negotiations. While anomie and egoism may continue throughout the apostatic journey, ever modern apostate types can find some respite from alienation and anomie as the collective conscious broadens.

For each class and cohort of apostate then, the apostatic journey has represented varied paths for resisting modern constructions of Christianity. Through the recognition of these distinct apostatic processes, and their association with a changing world order, angry rejection,
introspective wanderings, and rational considerations, can point to the re-formation of ‘resistance’ in a postmodern world. From the rejection of a *particular* ‘code of rules’ to the rejection of the *idea* of ‘a code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49), I have argued that apostasy can point to significant transformations in how we process the social world. Modernistic ‘technologies of power’ and ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988:18) are being perceived, examined and re-imagined.

The implications of this postmodern transformation are yet to be seen. While modern apostasy is a signifier of a rejection of modern Christianity, postmodern apostasy is better understood as a cathartic beginning for new possibilities. The possibilities for faith in a postmodern world are thus open. In the words of Foucault,

> I think that there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine (1988:15).
... for a whole series of reasons, the idea of a morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence (Foucault, 1990:49).

In this work, I have traced the socialisation experiences, disaffiliation processes, and post apostatic re-formations of eighty apostates of two cohorts. In these investigations, a fundamental point of commonality, across both cohort and type, is an assured rejection of modern Christianity. Familial faith has been resisted and negotiated by the range of apostates, and post apostatic re-formations are completely devoid of modern Western religious structures.

Investigations of the post apostatic self in chapter five, however, suggest that for most categories of apostate, there is the potential for some level of post apostatic religiosity. While issues of identity and meaning may be negotiated without a return to traditional religion, I argue that aspects of a deconstructed religiosity often present. A significant proportion of apostates adopt systems of belief that are underpinned by the primary religious functions of identity, meaning, and belonging. Thus, while identity is no longer embedded in the sacred, non-religious sources for identity can still be approached with a sacred air. Similarly, understandings of the social world may not be premised on the supernatural. Yet if one adopts Greely’s (1973) notion of religion as inclusive of all symbolic systems, many apostates
would find themselves yet enmeshed in the realm of the sacred. For Durkheim, this would be a natural expectation. He states,

...the believer is not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends and from which he receives all that is best in himself: this power exists, it is society (1965, 257).

Apostasy then, does not imply total spiritual abandonment. On the contrary, apostasy has shown itself to be a multifarious phenomenon with distinct meanings for the various classes of apostates. While resistance to ‘... morality as obedience to a code of rules...’ (Foucault, 1990:49) is a common denominator in disaffiliation, the relationship of the apostate to post apostatic religiosity is highly varied. This thesis then, is concluded with an exploration of post apostatic religiosity, or in Foucault’s terms, ‘...the search for an aesthetics of existence’(1990:49). It asks if there is a need for the post apostatic self to search for, and enter into a post-Christian relationship that provides meaning, comfort and identity.

A sociological body of literature that views the foregoing of familial faith as the conclusion of apostasy, however, does not investigate issues of post apostatic religiosity. Post apostatic societal issues are rarely addressed, while spiritual issues do not fall under the traditional focus of sociological analysis. As I argued in Chapter One, particular discursive processes lead to an uncritically accepted assumption that ‘faith’ is necessarily tied to modern Christian constructions of religion. The foregoing of familial faith, then, is aligned with total spiritual abandonment. An unwarranted assumption in the literature is thus apostasy as the end of spiritual possibilities.
We are thus left to ponder whether the apostate has truly abandoned all aspects of deconstructed ‘religiosity’. Is there a need for post apostatic faith? And what form is this faith likely to take? Does post apostatic religiosity simply represent a shift from one ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49) to another, or do post apostatic negotiations point to a significant reformulation in how we think about the ‘religious’ in a postmodern world? Is apostasy the end of the spiritual self; or can apostasy be better understood as the dawn of a new spiritual beginning?

**Apostasy Typology**

As has been the format of previous chapters, religiosity is examined by both type and cohort. Explorations by type investigate how each class of apostate negotiates post apostatic religious terrain. Explorations by cohort address whether a search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’ becomes increasingly likely as we move towards as more postmodern state of society.

The eighty respondents in this study were asked about their relationships with post apostatic religiosity. They were asked whether they felt there was a need for post apostatic religiosity; whether or not they had sought and in fact, found a replacement for familial faith; and if a replacement was found, what was its exact nature. Table 6.1 outlines the quantitative data on religious replacements by each apostate type:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Replacement Need</th>
<th>Anomic</th>
<th>Egoistic</th>
<th>Pomo</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>65.6</td>
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<table>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>65.6</td>
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<table>
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<th>Replaced</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>91.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>46.9</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi² test of significance  p < .05
All numbers are expressed as percentages

The data in table 6.1 shows that the relationship of respondents to post apostatic religiosity falls in line with previously identified epistemological approaches to knowledge. Anomic apostates, for example, are the least likely apostate type to believe that there is a need for post apostatic religiosity (29%). Correspondingly, only a third have ever searched for a religious replacement. The success rate is low, with only two of the twenty-four anomic apostates in this study recognising a surrogate for familial faith. For both of these individuals, replacements come from the secular realm, and spiritual possibilities are characteristically dismissed. The unconsidered reactionary rejections that
characterise the epistemological orientation of anomic processes of disaffiliation, are thus reflected in these figures.

The data for egoistic apostates also reflects characteristic epistemological approaches to knowledge; in this case the figures reflect egoistic intellectualism. Just over 50% of egoistic apostates believe in a need for post apostatic religiosity. Approximately three out of four egoistic respondents, however, have engaged in a search for a religious replacement. This is interesting because over half of the egoists who claim that there is no need for post apostatic religiosity, do so only after engaging in an active search for post apostatic meaning.

The equivocation of the egoist is further alluded to by the percentage of apostates who succeed in this search. Only half of those who look find a replacement, and for even those who believe such a replacement is essential, one third remain without post apostatic faith. For those who do negotiate post apostatic religiosity, the sources of faith are almost twice as likely to be secular than supernatural. These results then, fall in line with both the introspective contemplations and pensive intellectualism that has consistently marked the egoistic respondents' apostatic journey. For this group, questions are more prevalent than answers.

For postmodern apostates, there is an expectation that the more liberal experiences of youth, more critical approaches to assumed knowledge, and an openness to the diversity and potentialities of a transforming world, would allow for the acceptance of post apostatic religious possibilities. The data in table 6.1 supports this expectation. Two
thirds of the postmodern respondents in this study believe that there is a need for post apostatic religiosity. This exact percentage then goes on to search for a system of meaning that can give purpose to post apostatic life. Three fourths of those who look are successful in this endeavour, and draw religious replacements from both secular and supernatural realms.

While these figures are consistently high, it is important to remember that many of the younger, contemporary postmodern apostates were in their late teens and early twenties at the time of interview. A significant proportion of these postmodern respondents then, may not have yet renegotiated the 'religious' in a post apostatic world. The figures in table 6.1, therefore, may be artificially constrained by the age of contemporary postmodern respondents.

This quantitative perusal then, points to consistency in the epistemological orientations of anomic dismissal, egoistic intellectualism, and postmodern rationality. A more nuanced analysis of narrative text, however, is taken up in the remainder of this chapter in an attempt to explore the more subtle aspects of a post apostatic search for meaning. I hope to make sense of religious replacements, and discern whether post apostatic religious negotiations represent a search for new 'codes of rules'(Foucault, 1990:49), or whether they are indicative of a more Foucauldian search for an 'aesthetics of existence'(1990:49).
THE ANOMIC APOSTATE

As shown by the quantitative data in table 6.1, anomic apostates are less likely than egoistic or postmodern apostates to believe in a need for, seek out, and find religious replacements. There is not, however, a point blank rejection of post apostatic religious possibilities for the entire contingent of anomic apostates. While only two anomic respondents are successful in replacing familial faith, a full third of this group claim to have engaged in a search for post apostatic religiosity. These findings thus reflect a certain level of post apostatic consideration.

As might be predicted by varying levels of reflexivity, investigations by cohort reveal that those anomic apostates who engage in post apostatic considerations of religiosity are drawn predominantly from the younger cohort. Non-reflexive, generally older anomic apostates, are not likely to give credence to post apostatic religiosity. For a more reflexive, generally younger group of anomic apostates, however, considerations of post apostatic religiosity are not altogether dismissed. This data thus suggests that an emergent postmodern condition can affect relationships to post apostatic religiosity for even those whose apostatic process has been a reflex of the modern world. The diversity, potentialities, and broadening collective conscious of an increasingly postmodern society can allow post apostatic negotiations to enter the realm of the spiritual. Non-reflexive and reflexive anomic apostates' relationships to post apostatic spiritual possibilities are accordingly divergent, and warrant continued independent consideration.
Non-Reflexive Anomic Apostates

We have come to know non-reflexive anomic apostates as those who epitomise the Durkheimian characterisation of anomie. Their apostatic journey is characterised by an epistemological orientation that relies on angry reactionism, and does not allow for thoughtful considerations. Non-reflexive anomic apostates have simply turned their backs to God, and have no inclination to engage grand philosophical issues. Given this profile, a quest for post apostatic religiosity would not be expected. In fact, the expectation would be for non-reflexive anomic apostates to approach such issues with a level of reactionary cynicism.

Narrative investigations show a strong level of support for this expectation. The following narrative is representative of those non-reflexive anomic apostates who engage in a reactionary dismissal of post apostatic spiritual negotiations:

Religion, who needs it. I don’t. Maybe we are tricked into thinking that we need it, but we don’t... Why do we? I got better things to worry about. If we spent as much energy on this world as we do on the other, things might be a darn sight better... why? why replace it when it is nothing but a crock? No, not for me (ROI# 7).

This narrative typifies the experience of those non-reflexive anomic apostates who clearly and succinctly dismiss the whole notion of post apostatic religiosity, and do so with an anomic flair. The use of language such as ‘crock’ and, ‘tricked’, as well as the entire tone of presentation, suggests that this respondent still carries a degree of disgust towards traditional religiosity; a disgust that is carried over to conceptualisations of religious replacement.
The idea of adopting a religious replacements is thus foreign and in fact, ridiculous to this respondent. The respondent feels that he has, ‘...better things to worry about’, for when it comes to a religious replacements, ‘...who needs it’. There is simply no place for post apostatic religiosity and simply no need. The epistemological orientation of this respondent does not allow the possibility for post apostatic religiosity removed from the alienating traditions of familial faith. Thus the issue progresses no further, and a replacement is not sought.

The following non-reflexive anomic apostate relates a similar closed minded approach to post apostatic religiosity. Although this particular respondent did temporarily seek a religious replacement, this narrative is clearly indicative of a thorough rejection of post apostatic possibilities:

I don’t need religion... I don’t know about everyone else, but I don’t need it. What I need I do for myself. No one else is going to do it for me... You can’t go relying on things you have no control over. There was a friend who tried to get me interested in finding ‘peace’ and took me to a new church... but what a load of... I don’t have the time for all that garbage (ROI #36).

At the insistence of a friend who wanted this non-reflexive anomic apostates to find ‘peace’, this respondent did attend a ‘new church’. This new faith, however, is referred to as, ‘garbage’, a flirtation with post apostatic religiosity is swiftly dismissed. In fact, at the start of the passage, the respondent states twice in quick succession, ‘I don’t need...’ religion. There is a tone of authority to these statements that does not imply any level of equivocation.
As was the case for the previous non-reflexive anomic apostates, conceptualisations for religious replacements appear constrained. This respondent’s negotiations of post apostatic religiosity, in fact, read as a continued rejection of traditional faith. A genuine attempt at rediscovering any deconstructed notions of religiosity not tied to familial understandings, are absent in this narrative.

For the following non-reflexive anomic apostate, narrative text shows an uncharacteristic level of post apostatic consideration. A point of commonality with the above respondents, however, is the tendency for conceptions of post apostatic faith to be constrained to modern understandings of religion. Unequivocal reactions against familial faith are, therefore, reflected in the dismissal of post apostatic spiritual possibilities:

Well, I guess it would be nice if there were some sort of replacement... some sort of meaning system we could cling to... but eventually it’s best to realise that it is a pipe dream. There are no easy answers. Religion is a crutch for the weak (ROI #22).

While this non-reflexive anomic apostate concedes that, ‘...it would be nice if there were some sort of replacement...’, this sentiment is narrated with an unmistakable sense of cynicism. For this respondent, an irritated disgust directed at traditional religiosity leads to a rejection of the need for religious replacements. In referencing ‘... some sort of meaning system...’, however, the respondent expressly mentions religion as a ‘...crutch for the weak’. More abstract possibilities for replacements, not tied to modern Christianity, are not considered. For an apostate whose epistemological approach to knowledge has been one of reaction, void of deconstructions, it appears that post apostatic spiritual possibilities are highly limited.
For non-reflexive anomic apostates then, a history of non-reflection colours the range of possibilities for post apostatic religiosity. For this group, familial faith has neither been thoughtfully considered nor deconstructed, and life has continued without a need to ponder greater philosophical issues. Alternative possibilities for ‘faith’ are not considered. Possibilities for religious replacements are constrained to conceptions of modern Christianity, and are dismissed in a typically anomic fashion. The lifecourse is thus negotiated without a surrogate for familial faith, and an angry resolve appears to be the only fodder filling the void of rejected beliefs.

**Reflexive Anomic Apostates**

For anomic apostates of the younger cohort an apostatic journey of reactive anger has incorporated a level of reflexive consideration. This more reflexive stance allows post apostatic religiosity to be more thoughtfully explored. The quantitative data in table 6.1 reports that recognition and acceptance of post apostatic ‘religious’ possibilities, is far greater for reflexive anomic apostates than for the non-reflexive group. While egoistic and postmodern apostates are still more likely to explore such options, this more reflexive group does not unilaterally engage in a blanket rejection of possibilities. Thus, while a contingent of non-reflexive anomic apostates engage in a dismissal of such post apostatic possibilities that is reminiscent of the anomic apostates of the older cohort, others engage in considerations that reach beyond rejection and dismissal.

The first reflexive anomic narrative reviewed is indicative of those that show some consideration to post apostatic religiosity, but nonetheless culminate in the dismissal of such possibilities:
No. I do not have a replacement for religion. I do not think that I can ever replace religion... But that doesn’t mean there isn’t a need. I mean more people would give it up if it didn’t do something. It has to provide something for it to survive. But, it is such a cop out... It is like a friendless child with imaginary playmates..., go out and make a real friend. There are no imaginary friends and I’m afraid there is no God and nothing ‘spiritual’ to replace him with (ROI #61).

In contrast to the non-reflexive group, this reflexive anomic apostate acknowledges a possible societal need for the religious. The respondent reasons that, ‘...more people would give it (religion) up if it didn’t do something’. This respondent, however, then goes on to refer to religion as a ‘cop out’, and express disappointment that so many are duped by the need for the religious. Thus while a societal need for religion is somewhat considered, there is a personal rejection of a need for a system of meaning to succeed familial belief.

A point in common with non-reflexive anomic apostates, however, is an interpretation for religious replacements still tied to understandings of modern Christianity. I believe this narrow interpretation limits possibilities for post apostatic faith, and for this apostate, leads to a rejection of post apostatic religiosity.

The following reflexive anomic apostate also rejects post apostatic possibilities for faith. For this more critical apostate, however, there is an allusion to a meaning system that may act as a potential surrogate for religious ideologies:

I do not think that there is a need for religion in this world. It carries too much room for disappointment, and so much room for guilt... It is so much cleaner to just be able to accept things as they are. To try to assign quite hideous events to a supreme being... It is better to be relieved of the burden of God, and face the responsibilities of man. At least that’s what I believe.
Politics is where we can make a difference not in the spiritual. Get your head out of the clouds and make a difference here on the ground (ROI #44).

For this no nonsense respondent, the anomic tendency for a reactionary dismissal of all things spiritual is clear. This respondent claims that religion gives us both 'disappointment' and 'guilt'. Consequently, this apostate intends to remain grounded in the secular. Thus while there is an increased level of post apostatic consideration, the respondent rejects the idea of a religious replacement. As he states, '(i)t is better to be relieved of the burden of God, and face the responsibilities of man.'

Again, such a rejection ensues because the realm for religious replacements is constrained to modern understandings of religion. When replacements are relegated to traditional religiosity, there is little need to consider the idea of a religious substitute. This respondent, however, alludes to a post apostatic system of meaning. The respondent tells us that, '(p)olitics, is where we can make a difference...', and speaks of the political as a sphere where individuals can possibly derive meaning and purpose. A religious replacement of a secular origin thus appears to be in operation. Post apostatic meaning and identity are provided for without the respondent's conscious recognition of a religious surrogate.

There are, however, those reflexive anomic apostates who do consciously acknowledge a religious replacement not tied to understandings of familial faith. For these apostates, more reflexive considerations allow for a broader interpretation for religious replacements. As might be the expectation for a group who generally reject any spiritual grounding for morality and social order, these conceptualisations are tied to the secular.
The following narrative of a young anomic respondent who references ‘life’ as a replacement for traditional religiosity, makes the point:

Yeah, I think there is a need... Yes, I do. I have a baby, if that doesn’t give you meaning in your life I do not know what does... The church never gave me a sense of fulfilment the way my daughter has, I feel so much more in touch with myself. It is, well for me it was what was missing, who needs God when you have life... (ROI #65).

For this more reflexive anomic apostate, there is neither reactionary dismissal nor any level of equivocation. Questions are responded to readily, suggesting prior consideration. Contrary to most anomic apostates, this respondent believes there is a need to replace familial faith, and the birth of a daughter fills this need. Accordingly, the respondent feels, ‘...so much more in touch...’. ‘... (W)hat was missing...’ has been replaced by a source of meaning and identity that provides fulfilment and abates anomie. The void of abandoned familial faith no longer pains this anomic apostate. For this respondent, post apostatic ‘religiosity’ has been negotiated.

With this respondent, then, there is a conscious recognition of a religious replacement; a recognition forthcoming for only one other anomic apostate. Not surprisingly, this recognition corresponds with a less constrained conception of post apostatic religiosity. For the vast majority of anomic apostates of both cohorts, possibilities for post apostatic religious replacements are subjected to narrow interpretation. There is an assumption that religious replacements are necessarily of a similar nature to that of previously abandoned familial faith. The realisation that religious replacements can represent quite alternative realities to that of familial Christianity is uncommon. To reach beyond the confines of
traditional religiosity when referencing possibilities for religious replacements is not generally a part of anomic post apostatic negotiations.

For both cohorts of anomic apostate then, relationships to post apostatic religiosity are constrained by less reflexive approaches to knowledge. While a younger cohort may be more prone to consideration and deconstruction of previously unconsidered realms, these considerations are yet to explore the full range of postmodern possibilities. For anomic apostates, the emergence of a more postmodern form of society does not find a search for religiosity as an integral part of post apostatic negotiations.

For the range of anomic apostates then, there may be an unequivocal rejection of a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49) and even an active avoidance of alternate ‘codes’. Contrary to the expectations of Foucault, however, this does not appear to correspond to a need to search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’(1990:49).

THE EGOISTIC APOSTATE

Introspective wanderings have consistently marked the egoistic apostatic journey. Such wanderings continue in egoistic apostates’ negotiations of post apostatic religiosity. While table 6.1 may show that postmodern apostates are more likely to believe in a need for, and adopt religious replacements, it is the egoistic apostates who are most likely to engage in a search for post apostatic religiosity. Egoistic apostates are the most likely to attempt to, ‘...transform the horizon of what one knows’ (Foucault, quoted in Miller, 1993:326).
In post apostatic negotiations, however, the self doubt and 'negative solutions' (Durkheim, 1993:282) that often accompany such egoistic contemplations, do not present as systematically as they did in the narratives of disaffiliation. While introspective contemplation remains the hallmark of the egoistic approach to knowledge, melancholic disenchantment can be moderated by the successful negotiation of post apostatic issues. Resolving post apostatic religiosity lessens the negative emotive inclinations associated with egoism. A confused, melancholic detachment may thus continue to present for those who are yet to resolve the complexities of post apostatic faith. Those egoists who resolve such post apostatic issues, however, are apt to find a greater sense of peace.

As has been the case throughout the apostatic journey, an emergent postmodern society can impact on the negotiations of the egoist. In a postmodern world, for example, there are increased possibilities for post apostatic religiosity. There is also greater societal acceptance of alternate forms of faith. The introspective nature of egoistic apostates, however, does not find these influences altering the primary characteristic epistemological profile of introspective consideration. Additionally, the narration of postmodern influences is not always consistent. The most meaningful explorations of the egoistic apostates' relationships to post apostatic religiosity then, do not arise from investigation of cohort delineation. Cohort delineation, once again, proves insufficient in capturing the nuances and complexities of egoistic apostates' 'religious' negotiations. The range of responses and their impact on the egoists continues to cross the cohort divide.

Continuing the pattern established throughout this thesis, egoistic apostates do not undergo a primary delineation by cohort. Rather, an investigation of this class of apostate
explores the divergent post apostatic paths for religiosity across the entire range of respondents. Postmodern influences are explored in regard to the subtleties of post apostatic negotiations and divergent possibilities for the shape and form of potential religious replacements.

Across the range of egoists, then, a point of commonality continues to be introspective considerations. For the following egoistic apostate of the older cohort, negative Durkheimian overtones appear in conjunction with these introspective contemplations. A journey yet finalised, still causes angst:

I think there is a need for religion. At times in my life I know that I felt quite a void. Others, especially those of my age are so sure about things... it is so easy for them. I mean, someone dies and their pain can be assuaged by their knowledge of an ever loving God in the afterlife. They seem to take great comfort from knowing. For me there is just anxiety... I have friends and I have my family and they are my strength, they are my support system, they give me meaning... but I am yet to find anything that can take the place of the faith I see in others (ROI #20).

This passage is indicative of egoism. The thoughtful consideration and wistful melancholy expected of egoistic apostates is presented. There is explicit recognition of the need for a religious replacement. This is accompanied by a sense of envy at those who claim strong religious faith. The respondent, in fact, states that, ‘...it is so easy for them’, implicating the pain and hardship felt by the abandonment of traditional religiosity. For this respondent, this is particularly true in times of crisis, when it is difficult to negotiate peace without a return to ‘faith’.
Post apostatic issues of 'meaning' and 'faith', then, are not satisfactorily resolved for this egoist. 'Friends' and 'family' may be a source of 'strength', 'support', and 'meaning', but in the mind of this egoistic apostate, friends and family cannot act as rewarding religious replacements. This respondent continues to search for a system of belief, '...that can take the place of the faith I see in others', and provide the respondent with 'great comfort'.

These sentiments often cut across the cohort divide. The following passage, narrated by an egoist of the younger cohort, reflects many of the concerns spoken of by the older egoist just reviewed:

I felt abandoned... it would be nice to have something to replace him with, it would have been nice to find more... I went to a few different chaplains, priests and wanted guidance and support... sometimes the world can be unfair and there is no one to blame, and no one to turn to, I think you just have to realise that the world can be a hard place and you have to take control of your life. You are going to waste a lot of time if you are waiting for an outside force to change the things only you can (ROI #58).

For this respondent, thoughtful introspective considerations are evident. Resolving issues of faith have been part of post apostatic negotiations. This culminates in a recognition that, '...it would have been nice to find more'. The respondent then tells of the search for a religious replacement. For this young egoist, apostasy has not resolved issues of faith. Introspective contemplations continue in an ongoing apostatic journey.

Accordingly, the melancholic emotive characteristics that plagued this respondent's process of disaffiliation, can still be somewhat discerned in this passage. The respondent articulates feelings of 'abandonment', and expresses a desire for 'guidance' and 'support'.

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I argue, however, that this sense of melancholy appears to have been at least partially abated. This respondent may not consciously recognise self determination as a potential religious replacement. The respondent’s suggestion that, ‘you need to take control of your life’ and change, ‘...the things only you can’, however, points to a reliance on the self as a potential source of post apostatic meaning. To some extent then, an increased awareness of self can be seen as having filled the void of abandoned familial faith.

An egoistic apostate from the older cohort also speaks of self determination. Although this particular egoist completely rejects the idea of a religious replacement, there is an increased reliance on self knowing that eases the pain of familial disaffiliation:

No need. I have never replaced it and doubt if I ever will. I suppose after I finished questioning God, and finally gave him up, I wasn’t as much a young and confused kid. I had a family I was raising and felt quite fulfilled as person... I think that is a large part of it. If you have high self esteem, your need for anything tends to be less. People have much more strength than they are willing to give themselves credit for, and religion does not help the situation. You can get by better if you go without (ROI #25).

Issues of post apostatic religiosity have been thoughtfully considered by this respondent, and have been resolved with a rejection of any need for post apostatic spirituality.

In contrast to processes of disaffiliation, however, post apostatic negotiations do not appear to cause emotive strain. The respondent suggests that movement through the lifecourse from a ‘young and confused kid’, to a ‘fulfilled’ ‘family’ person, lessens the need to turn to the spiritual. The development of ‘self esteem’ allows this egoistic apostate to negotiate post apostatic religiosity without return to traditional aspects of faith. In fact, in spite of a conscious rejection of a need for religious replacements, this
apostate’s increasing self esteem and a growing appreciation for the power of human strength, appears to have filled the void left by traditional religiosity. The respondent thus claims that, ‘(I)f you have high self esteem your need for anything tends to be less...’. Whether esteem and strength act as religious replacements, or whether they lessen the need for such replacements, this respondent has been able to mediate egoistic emotions.

In the narrative of the egoistic apostates thus far reviewed, a point of convergence is a lack of recognised religious replacements. There is an unwillingness or an inability to find a replacement for abandoned familial faith. These apostates do not consciously adopt a post apostatic system of meaning. I argue, however, that the introspective and contemplative nature of these apostates has seen post apostatic transitions eased through secular channels. Whether in the form of family, friends or the self, these secular sources provide identity, meaning and support for the apostate. They are not, however, recognised as potential religious replacements by this group.

For a contingent of egoistic apostates, then, possibilities for religious replacements are constrained in ways similar to that of anomic apostates’ possibilities. Replacements appear to be imagined only as entities necessarily similar to the traditional religious structures previously abandoned. Increased awareness of self, and the support of family and friends are thus not seen as potential surrogates for familial faith.

There are, however, egoistic respondents who do consciously recognise religious replacements. As might be expected, conceptualisations of post apostatic religiosity are much broader for this group. Quite often, those who successfully negotiate issues of post
apostatic religiosity call upon highly alternate possibilities when naming successors to familial faith. The following narrative of a respondent of the older cohort makes the point:

Yes, I think there is a need. I certainly looked. I think most of us have a need to find something to make us feel whole. I think that the most convenient place you can look to is a religion. It seems to have all the easy answers... when we decide to give up religion, for whatever reason, if we are still short of a self knowing, we need a replacement. Ultimate power which comes from self knowledge is a lot to handle without allowing for the fall back to the supernatural. But when we have self knowing, then we have the answers to it all (ROI #37).

The defining egoistic epistemological orientation of introspective, intellectual considerations is evident in this passage. This egoistic respondent has considered: the functions of, and need for, religion; the difficulties associated with abandoning traditional faith and; the possibilities and significance of their renegotiation.

While this level of contemplation may be characteristic of egoism, there is little sense of self doubt or melancholic disenchantment narrated in this passage. On the contrary, this egoistic apostate appears to have satisfactorily negotiated post apostatic meaning and 'religiosity', while simultaneously resolving the emotive egoistic tendencies that marked the process of disaffiliation. The respondent is thus able to put aside the 'easy answers' of religion and turn to 'self knowing' as a means for successfully negotiating post apostatic spiritual terrain. The end result is the, '...answers to it all', and a sense of ease not evident in this respondent's negotiation of socialisation or process of disaffiliation. The ability to supplant familial faith with the, '(u)ltimate power which comes from self
knowledge...’ allows for a religious replacement no longer bracketed by the alienating confines of religiosity as defined by modern Christianity.

A similar profile is shown in the following narrative of an egoist of the younger cohort. For this respondent, apostatic angst is resolved through the negotiation of post apostatic religiosity:

I need religion. We would be nothing but shells, empty shells without a spirit and a presence to fill us. It is there for all of us, we have a need to find out how we can tap into our individual spiritual source. Whether it be through the conventional religions or through a deep and exhausting search of self, whether it be through a cult, or whatever... it is really all the same, it is our combined individual spirits. It is there for all of us, and whether we know it or not, we need it (ROI #67).

For this younger egoist, there is a strong belief in the need, not only for the self, but for all of humanity, to seek religious replacements. This respondent believes that this is in fact essential, for without religion, ‘(w)e would be nothing but shells, empty shells...’.

Following the profile for the egoist previously reviewed, then, post apostatic issues are well considered to a point of resolution, and the abatement of negative egoistic emotive overtones corresponds with the successful negotiation of post apostatic religiosity. Deconstructed religiosity, based on ‘...our individual spiritual source...’ has thus allowed for comfortable negotiations of post apostatic positionings.

Also interesting is this passage is an allusion to a postmodern condition. The tendency for egoistic narratives to focus on the self shows postmodern influences not consistently narrated. For this particular respondent, however, there is a recognition of the wide ranging possibilities for renegotiating the ‘religious’ in a post apostatic, postmodern
world. While the respondent may feel that post apostatic religious possibilities are, ‘...really all the same...’, explicit mention of ‘... conventional religions... search of self... cult or whatever...’, points to an awareness of the diversity of a postmodern society. This diversity allows for increased possibilities in the negotiation of the post apostatic spiritual self; meaning, faith, and identity can be provided for in a variety of ways.

The diversity and complexity that have marked the egoistic apostates’ journey thus far, continues to define post apostatic approaches to faith. While the highly contemplative nature of egoistic apostates sees a search for religious replacements fairly commonplace, negotiations of post apostatic religiosity vary in accordance with both the complexities of the egotistic personality, and the varied interpretations for religious replacements.

Thus while common epistemological threads can be found in both the thoughtful consideration given to the issues, and the tendency to partially supplant traditional religiosity, egoistic apostates are nonetheless diverse in negotiations of post apostatic religious possibilities. They vary considerably in the acceptance of religious replacements not tied to traditional aspects of the religious, and find the ability to negotiate negative egoistic emotions tied to the ultimate resolution of post apostatic religiosity. While the alternatives available in a postmodern world may aid successful negotiation of post apostatic terrains, divergences in this group fall more in line with notions of post apostatic religiosity, than cohort.

For egoistic apostates, then, there has been a painful and difficult rejection of a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49). Post apostasy, the introspective nature of this group
often leads them on a search for religiosity. For some, success in this endeavour appears constrained by limitations placed on the possibilities for religious replacements. For others, however, a deconstruction of familial faith allows for a broader conception of post apostatic religiosity. This then opens the possibility for the egoist to embark on a search for an 'aesthetics of existence' no longer held to the dominating power relations endemic to modern Christianity.

**THE POSTMODERN APOSTATE**

For postmodern apostates, the rational and open-minded considerations that have consistently defined the epistemological dimensions of the apostatic journey, continue to present in negotiations of post apostatic religiosity. While contemplative egoists may be the most likely to search for religious replacements, the data in table 6.1 reports that most postmodern apostates believe in a need for post apostatic religiosity than either modern apostate type. Postmodern apostates are also most likely to find success in replacing familial faith. They are open to both supernatural and spiritual possibilities for post apostatic religiosity.

This profile shows relative consistency across cohort. For vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates, the tendency to believe in a need for, search for, and find religious replacements is stable. I argue, however, that it is precisely this lack of divergence that can point to postmodern societal influences. While reflexive epistemologies may see vanguard postmodern apostates open to alternate possibilities for abandoned familial faith it is expected that a world still strongly embedded in modernity might constrain pos
apostatic possibilities. Like many anomic and egoistic apostates, there may be a tendency to limit the realm of religious replacements. Both a limited imagination and a modernistic suspicion and distrust of spiritual alternatives, may impose on the older cohort’s post apostatic possibilities for deconstructed religiosity. For a more contemporary group, however, a broadening collective conscious might allow for a more open and eased transition to post apostatic faith.

I would therefore argue that contemporary postmodern apostates would be more likely to find success in embracing alternatives to familial faith, than their older counterparts. Further, I believe that the figures in table 6.1 would bear this out if it were not for the youth in the contemporary group. Just over one third of contemporary postmodern apostates have not considered the idea of religious replacements. I do not believe, however, that unresolved issues of post apostatic religiosity align this group with either dismissive, anomic respondents or alienated egoists. These younger, contemporary postmodern apostates have simply not yet embarked on a search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’. Thus while figures for post apostatic religiosity may be comparable by cohort, vanguard and contemporary postmodern apostates will be spoken of independently. This delineation allows both the influences of a postmodern society, and the impact of youth to be discussed in relation to post apostatic possibilities.

**Vanguard Postmodern Apostates**

Vanguard postmodern apostates have shown themselves to be quite forward in the ability to rationally and logically deconstruct and reconstruct traditional platforms of knowing. The search for religious replacements and the acceptance of post apostatic religiosity
could thus be considered distinct and non-problematic possibilities. Vanguard postmodern apostates have shown themselves to be open to intellectual considerations of post apostatic positionings. While traditional societal structures may limit the range of alternate sources for replacing familial faith, an openness to the possibility for post apostatic religiosity would be expected.

Narratives, however, show that relationships to post apostatic religiosity are not easily standardised for this group. While a contingent of vanguard postmodern apostates are willing to push at the boundaries of postmodern possibility, and embrace available alternatives, others appear guided by a modern society’s restrictive approaches to knowledge. The following narrative shows the positioning of those vanguard postmodern apostates who manifest some difficulty in the negotiation of post apostatic religiosity:

No... I don't want one either. I thought about it a lot before I gave up Catholicism. Even after I saw its faults... I guess I had the desire to find something to replace it with but... I think all things religious are tarred with the same brush. It is a false reality to think that there is something out there controlling, there are just some things we may never know... We need to come to the realisation that there are things we may never fully grasp (ROI #11).

For this respondent, the familiar epistemological profile of rational consideration is tainted with an emotive sense of egoism. The idea of a religious replacement is not strange to a respondent who appears to have introspectively, ‘... thought about it a lot...’. These considerations then lead to the rejection of a post apostatic system of meaning. As was the case for a significant proportion of anomic and egoistic apostates, however, the range of possibilities for post apostatic religiosity does not appear wide. Conceptualisations of religious replacements are similar to the abandoned belief structures of youth. The
respondent, for example, reports that ‘...all things religious are tarred with the same brush’. Post apostatic possibilities are thus imagined as embedded in traditional religious structures.

For this postmodern apostate, reflexive approaches to knowing have consistently been on the fore of more critical postmodern epistemologies. Constrained parameters for religious replacements, however, does not show predilection for the diversity of a postmodern age. For vanguard postmodern apostates in this situation, forward approaches to knowledge do not serve as a guarantee that post apostatic spiritual possibilities will arise free from modern societal influences.

The following vanguard postmodern apostate also tells of post apostatic religious negotiations that are approached with a characteristic sense of reflexivity:

I would think that it would be hard to travel through one’s life without ever finding the need to understand the true meaning of the universe. I... I think we all have need to feel at peace and tap into our inner strength to try and become more than who we are... life would be so very empty if we were to accept this world at face value, I do not know how a being can come to its full potential without tapping into and fully welcoming his spiritual side, but as a religious replacement, I’m not sure that would qualify (ROI #30).

This passage shows the intellectual consideration given to issues of post apostatic meaning. The respondent tells us of the ‘...need to understand the true meaning of the universe’, and the, ‘...need to feel at peace...’. In fact, the passage alludes to negotiations of post apostatic religiosity as a fundamental to understandings of both the self and the social world.
The respondent then goes on to tell us how post apostatic religiosity can be negotiated. The value of, ‘... tapping into and fully welcoming (one’s) spiritual side’ is made clear. Post apostatic negotiations, then, do not lead to a blanket dismissal of all systems of meaning. Once again, however, the constraints placed on the possibilities for post apostatic religiosity, sees the respondent reply to the question of religious replacements with equivocation. Rather than acknowledge ‘spirituality’ as a potential substitute for familial faith, the respondent tells us that he is, ‘...not sure if it would qualify’. This scenario was not uncommon for this group. For many vanguard postmodern apostates, in spite of reflexive and rational consideration of post apostatic issues, religious replacements are often associated with traditional religious structures.

There are, however, those vanguard postmodern apostates who embrace the possibilities as they unfold in an emerging world of complexity. For these apostates, rational and logical considerations are not bound to interpretations of religious replacements tied to modern understandings of religion. These postmodern apostates of the older cohort claim to have procured religious replacements via diverse channels. The following passages reflect those broader possibilities for post apostatic religiosity:

My friend told me that my involvement with the forum..., which is based on EST... is like my religion, at the time I said no way, but when I thought about it, maybe she was right... (ROI #17).

Yes, I think that the earth is my replacement... I do feel that we are guests on the earth and that we are pushing for our own eviction, the earth is real and she deserves our respect... (ROI #28).
I am a feminist now, and I am interested in how religion can reconcile some of its beliefs, doctrines and its dogmas with equality... with women's rights. I am also interests in feminist spirituality (ROI #33).

Common to these vanguard postmodern apostates is the willingness and ability to embrace the diversity that begins to present in an emergent postmodern world. Whether it be via the 'forum', the 'earth', 'feminism', or 'feminist spirituality', identity, solidarity and meaning are being attained outside the traditional structures of religion. Rational considerations of post apostatic religiosity are quite open and foreshadow the range of options increasingly available for the negotiation of deconstructed religiosity. While egoistic and anomic contemporaries continue to have post apostatic negotiations tempered by traditional knowledges of religion, a significant proportion of vanguard postmodern apostates are able to break from such modern understandings. They are able to re-imagine boundaries for the sacred.

For postmodern apostates of the older cohort, vanguard epistemological approaches to knowledge continue in post apostatic negotiations of deconstructed religiosity. Such issues have been rationally approached by this group. Only half of these postmodern apostates, however, would be considered vanguard in their ability to re-imagine the parameters of post apostatic religiosity. For those who are successful in this re-imagination, both secular and spiritual sources can act as surrogates for familial faith. For others, however, post apostatic negotiations of religiosity are constrained by the narrow parameters of tradition. While some of these apostates adopt a system of meaning not consciously regarded as a religious replacement, I argue that restricted conceptualisations
can limit post apostatic possibilities for even those shown to be vanguard in epistemological approaches to knowledge.

**Contemporary Postmodern Apostates**

In an attempt to discern and understand the effects of a transforming society on the apostatic journey, it is contemporary postmodern apostates who best reflect postmodern possibilities. These apostates have been influenced by postmodern child rearing strategies, have adopted a reflexive, critical approach to knowledge, and negotiate a world of growing possibilities. For this group, epistemological approaches to knowledge no longer sees the apostatic journey associated with the emotive costs of modernity. Additionally, transforming societal conditions no longer finds the journey vanguard; a broadening collective conscious finds ready support for alternate beliefs. Not surprisingly, then, negotiations, including negotiations of post apostatic religiosity, are often non-traumatic. Issues of post apostatic religiosity that might be volatily dismissed by the anomic apostate, heart wrenchingly considered by the egoist, and intellectually and personally challenging for the vanguard postmodern apostate, are often approached with an air of nonchalance by the contemporary postmodern group.

I argue that this rational, open minded and often casual approach to post apostatic negotiations leads to two possibilities in the search for religious replacements. In the first instance, contemporary postmodern apostates may not find questions of religiosity particularly pressing, this combined with youth finds issues if post apostatic ‘faith’ yet resolved. For others, however, even in youth, the diversity of a postmodern age finds wide possibilities for negotiating post apostatic faith.
The following narratives represent those contemporary postmodern apostates who have
yet to thoughtfully consider the idea of a religious replacement. This first shows a casual
and quite dismissive attitude towards post apostatic religiosity. The second is more
representative of those who rationally defer such considerations:

Well I suppose if marijuana is a replacement... but no, not right now. Later
maybe... (ROI #49).

For this young contemporary postmodern apostate, it is clear that post apostatic
negotiations aimed at replacing familial faith are not high on the current list of priorities.
There is little sense of urgency in replacing beliefs that were rationally and non-emotively
dismissed. In fact, there is a sense of complete nonchalance in the attitude towards post
apostatic religiosity. This apostate does not appear to feel a void from abandoned faith.
Consequently, there is not a pressing need to find a replacement.

The following contemporary postmodern apostate has also left issues of post apostatic
religiosity unresolved. In this narrative, however, a casual or cynical nature is not
apparent. For this postmodern apostate, a curiosity regarding post apostatic religiosity is
not explored simply because life is too busy:

No I have no replacement. I would like to find meaning for my life but it is
hard enough to get through the studies I have. When I think about it yes, I
want to explore spirituality, but it is not something that I think of often. I just
do not have the time. I guess I am curious, but I have not thought too much
about it on a personal level..., I do think that I will want to resolve it one day.
I guess it would be nice to have an ultimate purpose (ROI #56).
In this passage, a rational epistemological approach to knowledge expected from respondents of this group can be seen. While this apostate, ‘... would like to find meaning...’ and ‘... have an ultimate purpose’, considerations of post apostatic faith are nonetheless deferred. Such considerations may be of interest to the respondent, but this contemporary postmodern apostate, ‘... just do(es) not have the time’. The first priority is to, ‘... get through the studies’.

For those apostates then, who either casually dismiss or thoughtfully defer consideration and resolution of post apostatic religiosity, two factors appear to limit the adoption of religious replacements. First, the rational dismissal of familial faith, does not seem to create a pressing need for a post apostatic system of meaning. The emotive costs associated anomic and egoistic apostasy, do not need to be negotiated or alleviated in this group. While there may an openness post apostatic possibilities, there is little stress presented in the non-resolution of such quandaries. In conjunction with this more casual attitude, is the youth of contemporary postmodern apostates. For many, the time frame available post apostasy is quite short. Full exploration of post apostatic possibilities may not be possible. Additionally, a youthful phase in the lifecourse may not see such considerations reach high priority.

For the 45% of contemporary postmodern apostates who do consciously adopt religious replacements, conceptions for post apostatic religiosity are not bound by modern constructions of religion. Whether post apostatic systems of meaning, belief, and identity are derived from secular or spiritual domains, there is recognition that replacements for
familial faith need not be associated with conventional structures of religion. The possibilities of a postmodern society are embraced by this group.

The following respondent serves as an example of those contemporary postmodern apostates who have adopted a secular surrogate for familial faith:

I would say that I have a replacement, and funny enough I would say that it is my fascination with religion. I suppose I spend more time studying religion than most spend practicing it. It is a constant source of astonishment to me. How can religion continue, and continue to continue, especially now when technology and communications are so great that the mythical aspects of religion surely have to become uncovered... We no longer live in isolation, surely we will cotton on as a society. When will science and common sense come to replace religion (ROI #70)?

For this respondent, an intellectual fascination with religion is explicitly recognised as a religious replacement. Familial faith is no longer ‘followed’ it is now ‘studied’. Religion has been taken from the realm of the sacred, and is worthy of consideration for its ability to override the common sense of the masses. A fascination with traditional systems of meaning, actually replaces faith in these the traditional systems.

This situation is not uncommon for the range of postmodern apostates. In this study, eight of thirty-three postmodern apostates state that they have adopted a secular replacement for traditional religiosity. Half of these apostates mention an intellectual curiosity with traditional religion as a replacement for religion itself. This particular respondent’s surprise then, at the ability of religion to, ‘...continue and continue to continue...’ may represent a Durkheimian recognition of religion as the misplaced worship
of society (1971). A point fascinating enough for religion to occupy the mind of even the committed postmodern atheist.

Intellectual and rational considerations of post apostatic meaning, however, do not necessarily limit religious replacements to the intellectual or secular realm. On the contrary, the emergence of a postmodern world, increases the opportunity for post apostatic faith to enter previously uncharted territories. Spiritual replacements for traditional religiosity thus range from witchcraft and astrology, to iridology. Possibilities for religious replacements are not constrained to modern constructions of religion. The following narrative captures the essence of the contemporary post apostatic spiritualist, not bound by tradition:

Yes I do have a replacement. I am spiritual... I believe that we are all powerful and have a connection between us that can not be denied. You and I are actually one, we come from the same place. Your karma and mine have the same energy source, each other and every other life force on the planet (ROI #69).

This respondent unequivocally recognises a replacement for familial faith. The respondent confidently claims, ‘(y)es, I do have a replacement’. A ‘life force’ and ‘energy sources’, are cited as the centre of spirituality. Issues of post apostatic religiosity have been negotiated and resolved. A postmodern mindset, in conjunction with the diversity and plurality of a postmodern world, then, have left this respondent open to alternate possibilities for post apostatic faith. Issues of post apostatic meaning are negotiated without the constraints associated with modern Christianity.
For postmodern apostates, the mind is not closed to post apostatic religious possibilities. An open minded and rational approach to knowledge has left the postmodern apostate in a position to rationally regard a number of post apostatic options. While there may not be a pressing need to replace faith, there is an openness to the possibility. For the older cohort, post apostatic options are sometimes constrained by the structure of a modern world. For others, however, a vanguard nature continues in the ability to adopt alternatives often viewed suspiciously by larger society.

For a younger cohort, an increasingly postmodern world allows definitions and interpretations of post apostatic religiosity to be divergent from the confines of traditional Western religious structures. These apostates call upon everything from intellectual considerations of religion itself, to witchcraft and magic as viable post apostatic sources for meaning. While a youthful group without a pressing need to replace familial faith may defer such negotiations, these apostates are generally open to the future consideration of post apostatic religiosity.

For the range of postmodern apostates then, a Christian ‘code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49), was never dogmatically imposed. The rejection of this code, can thus proceed in a rational fashion without angst. I suggest that this lack of angst does not find the need to search for an aesthetics of existence to be particularly pressing. While there is an openness to such possibilities, and even a desire to explore deconstructed faith, these apostates to not show an unwavering compulsion to negotiate and resolve such issues. Thus as both societies and individuals become more postmodern, freedom from modernity leaves spiritual options open.
FINAL REMARKS

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the heterogeneity seen in apostasy can be understood through an examination of the apostatic process as an historical product. Using a methodology that crosses epistemological divide through the use of quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical analysis, it has been my intention to draw and make sense of this heterogeneity. This realm of investigation is particularly relevant as both societies and individuals attempt to negotiate a shifting cultural terrain, for I believe that the varied and sometimes contradictory themes running through apostasy narratives can be drawn out through recognition of a complex and ever transforming social fabric. Simultaneously, the intricacies and inconsistencies seen in apostasy can shed light on the complexity of negotiating a society in transition.

I argue, for example, that anomie and egoism and their associated apostate types, can be understood as products of a modern age. The alienating aspects of modernity see resistance to the dominating power relations of Christianity exact high emotive costs. When the themes of modernity dominate narratives of child rearing, apostasy is likely to cause angst. The ‘modern’ finds resistance coming with a cost.

In the case of anomic apostates, investigations have shown that religious socialisation reflects ‘technologies of power’ (Foucault, 1988:18) endemic to modernity. For this group, religious socialisation progresses with authoritarian, patriarchal child rearing practices that do not encourage, or even accept, any level of reflexivity. In the words of Durkheim, ‘... the child is subjected, unremittingly’ to ‘power’ (Durkheim 1982:54).
For the older cohort of anomic apostates, this authoritarian socialisation is relatively non-problematic, and not critically examined. It is not cited by this group as causal to apostasy. Rather, modern socialisation practices are reflected in uncritical approaches to disaffiliation. Uncritical rejections mirror socialisation as blind replication. Apostasy is thus a reactive response to a pivotal event in the lifecourse for which religion proved ineffectual, or even offensive. Rejection of God is based solely on anomic responses initiated by a very emotive catalyst. There is little consideration or negotiation of the religious, and an eventuating resistance leads to complete abandonment of familial faith.

This reactionary stance continues in post apostatic negotiations. On the individual level, all aspects of the spiritual are denied. On the societal level, little consideration is given to grand philosophical issues. For this group, reactions to familial faith stem from modern, repressive experiences of socialisation and religion that do not lend themselves to a more thoughtful re-formation/renegotiation of the post apostatic self. Similarly, post apostatic religiosity is thoroughly and uncritically dismissed.

For a generally younger cohort of reflexive anomic apostates, the juxtaposition of authoritarian modes of socialisation in a more postmodern society, can be cause for reflection. For this group, disaffiliation is still an emotive, reactive response that culminates in the foregoing of familial faith. A limited deconstruction, however, becomes part of the epistemological profile and continues in post apostatic re-formations and negotiations. The emergence of a postmodern condition thus influences the epistemological mindset of younger anomic apostates. I argue, however, that ensuing deconstructions are generally
limited to particular sources of power, rather than more abstract techniques of power. Apostasy and post apostatic negotiation thus continue to reflect a modernistic reaction.

For egoistic apostates, the themes of modernity still see apostasy exacting an emotive toll. For these more introspective individuals, however, internal turmoil is presented as the cost of resistance to modern constructions of religion. An epistemic shift in socialisation practices may be undeniable across this particular cohort divide. The development of egoism, however, develops heedless of postmodern influences. Irrespective of authoritarian modes of socialisation as replication, or open liberal socialisation of ‘thinking’ individuals, there exists a broad common denominator in egoistic apostates’ development of angst. These apostates consistently reflect a sense of melancholic introspection.

For egoistic apostates then, familial faith and modern constructions of religion may be a considerable source of concern. Additionally, critical thinking and constant reflection may in themselves, be problematic. In either case, the tendency for egoistic apostates to engage in critical examinations, leads to introspective doubts destined to cause emotive pain. Familial faith is thus deconstructed by the range of egoistic apostates with a sense of disenchantment, loss, and emptiness. An emerging postmodern state of society may be reflected in shifting associations of egoism with anomie to egoism in conjunction with logical considerations. The reflections of the egoist, however, remain introspective.

Introspection continues to present in the consideration given to post apostatic issues. Re-formations of the self and post apostatic understandings of the social and the spiritual, are thoughtfully considered. The negative emotive overtones reflected in narratives of
disaffiliation, however, vary in accordance with the respondents’ ability to negotiate a post apostatic world. The alienating aspects of familial faith may thus contribute to egoistic inclinations. These same egoistic emotions, however, can be resolved in accordance with the ability of the egoist to move beyond the difficulties encountered with traditional religion.

For these modern classes of apostate then, the modern world is reflected in the emotive cost of resistance, as well as in the limited ability of these apostates to engage in fulfilling post apostatic re-formations. While the emergence of a postmodern societal condition can begin to reshape and transform dimensions of the apostatic journey, anomie and egoism remain an integral part of apostasy. In a society that has yet to fully free itself from the ‘technologies of power’ and the ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988:18) that have constructed and constrained the modern individual, apostasy remains a reflex of the modern world.

The contemporary period, however, now finds these restrictive modern themes running alongside less restrictive constructions and understandings of the social. I argue that this more open landscape has allowed for the emergence of the postmodern apostate. For this classification of apostate, encouraged reflexivity can allow for negotiations of religiosity that are less emotive. For this group, religious socialisation no longer reflects the modern techniques that have traditionally shaped the individual. Faith is often seen as more than just replicated beliefs, and there is growing expectation that an active negotiation of faith needs to be engaged by children themselves. While older postmodern apostates may be more vanguard in experiencing these postmodern socialisation techniques, both cohorts have broken from the confines of religiosity and socialisation as understood in modernity.
These apostates then, have not experienced ‘...morality as obedience to a code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49) first hand. Consequently, apostasy is easier engaged as a rational journey. For postmodern apostates, the apostatic process is distinguished by an epistemological profile of rational, decision making. This process reflects more ‘postmodern’ techniques for resisting ‘modern’ constructions of religion; angst is no longer central to apostasy. These distinctions continue in post apostatic self re-formations, and societal negotiations. Regardless of cohort, rationality and logic present throughout the full cycle of the apostatic journey. For the postmodern contingent of apostates then, means for negotiating the self are less reliant on punitive forms of self renunciation. Re-formations and negotiations are achieved without the cost associated with resistance in modernity, and possibilities for post apostatic religiosity are openly explored.

While cohort divergences can be discerned in the growing expectation for reflexivity in a transforming world, both cohorts of postmodern respondents experience apostasy as a non-traumatic exercise in deconstructing and reconstructing notions of faith, the self and the social. For these apostates less repressive and dominating techniques are called upon in both the socialisation and negotiation of familial faith. Traditional religion is no longer seen as sacred, and deconstructions and negotiations reflect more postmodern epistemological approaches to knowledge.

In this study then, the heterogeneity seen in apostasy has been investigated by both apostate type and by cohort. These delineations reflect the complexities of individuals and societies in the midst of transition. The typology allows for apostates with varied cognitive and emotive means for approaching knowledge, while cohort divisions show
societal change. Socialisation as replication, for example, is making way for socialisation accepting of critical examinations. Authoritarian replication can no longer be transmitted without the expectation of negotiation. There is growing recognition that the ability for critical examinations may better prepare children for a changing world order.

Apostatic processes reflect these varied constructions of socialisation. For more modern apostate types, anomic reactionism and egoistic introspection can be seen as responses that stem from experiences in youth. For the postmodern contingent, however, deconstructions of familial faith can actually be a perpetuation of the socialisation objectives of critical reflection. These divergent epistemological orientations of the varying apostate types continue in post apostatic negotiations. The negative Durkheimian emotions at the fore during processes of disaffiliation, however, have the potential to be eased via the abandonment of familial faith.

Cohort divergence within types further points to an emerging societal condition in which reflexivity is increasingly accepted and encouraged. For each group, an emergent postmodern condition can ease the transition to apostasy, and open possibilities for post apostatic negotiations. While anomie and egoism may continue throughout the apostatic journey, ever modern apostate types can find some respite from alienation and anomie as the collective conscious broadens.

For each class and cohort of apostate then, the apostatic journey has represented varied paths for resisting modern constructions of Christianity. Through the recognition of these distinct apostatic processes, and their association with a changing world order, angry rejection,
introspective wanderings, and rational considerations, can point to the re-formation of ‘resistance’ in a postmodern world. From the rejection of a particular ‘code of rules’ to the rejection of the idea of ‘a code of rules’ (Foucault, 1990:49), I have argued that apostasy can point to significant transformations in how we process the social world. Modernistic ‘technologies of power’ and ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988:18) are being perceived, examined and re-imagined.

The implications of this postmodern transformation are yet to be seen. While modern apostasy is a signifier of a rejection of modern Christianity, postmodern apostasy is better understood as a cathartic beginning for new possibilities. The possibilities for faith in a postmodern world are thus open. In the words of Foucault,

I think that there are more secrets, more possible freedoms, and more inventions in our future than we can imagine (1988:15).
RE-IMAGINING APOSTASY

ZINA O'LEARY

B.A. M.S.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Humanities at the University of Western Sydney - Hawkesbury

October, 1997
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

Zina O'Leary
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the apostate: those who have given up the beliefs of their birth religion; and apostasy: the process of foregoing said religion. Beyond empirically derived determinants of religious defection often provided by conventional investigations in the sociology of religion, this thesis treats apostasy as a potential signifier of societal change. It attempts to see apostasy as a window for examining the location, of not only apostasy, but of socialisation, religion, and religiosity as constructs of modernity. It provides an investigation beyond a traditional analysis of apostasy as an aberration or problematic rupture in religious socialisation. Rather, apostasy is explored as a potential signifier of resistance to modernistic constructions of socialisation, religion and religiosity. It asks whether, commensurate with an emerging postmodern condition, there has been a transformation in Foucauldian ‘technologies of the self’ (1988:18) that allows more agency in the negotiation of the self, religion and religiosity.

The data for this project were derived from in-depth interviews with 80 Christian apostates from two distinct cohorts (40 who gave up religious beliefs prior to 1967 and 40 who gave up beliefs post 1982), with an eye towards gleaning a division between a modern and postmodern condition. Data was analysed using theoretical, quantitative, and qualitative analysis. An apostasy typology was constructed based on epistemological orientations to foregoing faith. Modernistic Durkheimian categories of ‘anomic’ and ‘egoistic’ apostates, and a third category of ‘postmodern’ apostates were found across both cohorts. An examination of cohort to type and cohort division within type, however, suggests that the apostasy experiences of a new generation may vary significantly from those of their apostatic forbearers. Construction of the self, epistemological forms of disaffiliation, and ‘religion’ itself have taken new shape, and strategies for locating meaning in a post-apostatic world have also transformed.

Chapter One introduces and contextualises the argument. It lays the theoretical framework for the thesis and situates the work in the literature. Chapter Two presents the methodology, reviews preliminary statistical findings, and offers the apostasy typology. Chapters Three and Four examine religious socialisation and epistemological orientation of religious disaffiliation. Chapter Five discusses post apostatic re-formations of the self and Chapter Six concludes the thesis with a discussion of the potential need for post apostatic religiosity.
The past decades have been a period of complex cultural and social transition. In this period, there has been a break from past societal trends sufficient to warrant the definition of a new cultural space. The constructed knowledges and traditional understandings that define the modern world now stand alongside alternate constructions and understandings. Many argue that the Western world is moving from a ‘modern’ to a ‘postmodern’ condition. Diversity and plurality have come to define cultural choices, while critical approaches to knowledge are no longer viewed with suspicion. In fact, I argue that there is movement towards a societal condition that allows the construction of social knowledges to be perceived, challenged, and even re-created\(^1\).

This transition, however, is highly intricate. The current landscape is simultaneously composed of obsolete, current and emergent artefacts. Thus relationships to the social reflect the complex and often contradictory nature of the social fabric.

Exploration of contemporary relationships to religiosity exemplify the intricacy of shifting relationships in a period of transition. Just a few generations ago, questions of religiosity did not systematically pre-occupy the minds of Western youth. Although relationships to religiosity have always incorporated certain themes of resistance, familial faith was generally transmitted without the expectation of negotiation. To consider, critique, or resist one’s birth religion was not part of the social landscape. From birth to death,

\(^{1}\) Discussion of the postmodern condition and its relationship to religiosity is formally engaged in Chapter One, pp. 41 to 52.
baptism to last rites, identity, community, morals, values, and meaning were all directed through an association with familial faith; a faith that was part of a social reality not held up for critical examination by the general community. Christianity was part of a collective consciousness embedded in both the social culture and the personal psyche.

To forego familial faith, to ‘apostatise’ in this era, was both uncommon and troubling. Troubling not only to parents and the greater religious community, but troubling to those who did attempt to disassociate from familial faith. Ostracism by family, friends, community, and even the self, made apostasy a process often entwined with guilt, fear, anger, and isolation. There was a price to pay for apostasy. Resisting a fundamental component of one’s cultural heritage did not come easily.

These ‘modern’ relationships to religion continue in a postmodernising world. For many, guilt and fear are still inherently tied to dogmatically socialised Christianity. For others, however, relationships to Christianity have undergone transition. Dominating modern relationships are now seen alongside those more indicative of a postmodern condition. For example, in many Western nations, primary sources of identity, community and meaning are no longer axiomatically derived from the church. Life is no longer controlled by a dogmatic set of Christian beliefs. In fact, many Christian youth are socialised with only a vague sense of religious heritage; faith is being transmitted merely as family history. In a postmodern world of increasing diversity, this weaker intergenerational transmission of religion is accompanied by an ever growing expectation that contemporary children will explore, challenge, and even reject familial faith.
Consequently, while ‘modern’ forms of apostasy can still be a source of angst, the exploration of birth religion is no longer an aberration. It is not even uncommon. In fact, in this period of transition, examining, negotiating and even resisting familial faith can be seen as part of the lifecourse; as part of self determination and growth. Recent songs in the top forty, such as REM’s Losing my Religion, Joan Osborne’s, What if God was One of Us and Alanis Morisette’s Forgiven, show that exploration and re-imagination of the sacred has become part of everyday consciousness. Familial faith is no longer taken for granted, and apostasy now reflects a multitude of complex and sometimes contradictory themes, reflecting the intricacy of a society in transition. Apostasy is no longer a phenomenon destined to cause strain and produce angst. ‘Postmodern’ apostasy can also be a process of reflection that can make way for new spiritual explorations.

This represents a huge divergence and shift in the construction and understanding of apostasy. This thesis explores this shift and what it signifies. From apostasy as a problematic rupture in the intergenerational transmission of beliefs, to apostasy as an accepted means for self exploration and determination, this thesis attempts to investigate the divergences, commonalities, and transformations in ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ forms of apostasy.

I have been interested in the relationship between societal condition and apostatic processes since living as an exchange student in Galway, Ireland in 1987. As an American apostate, I was struck by the intensity of Irish relationships to religiosity. In a rural area where a postmodern condition had yet to permeate the culture, and critical approaches to knowledge were not part of everyday epistemological orientations, apostasy was
incredibly rare and not easily negotiated. The collective conscious did not allow for realities outside Catholicism.

This was distinct from my experiences in the US and Australia. In these more postmodern countries, multiple realities were commonplace. To explore religiosity was not unusual or particularly difficult. In fact for many of my peers, questions of faith were difficult to avoid. For an apostate raised in this particular landscape, unwavering devotion to dogmatic religion often seemed more problematic than critical examinations of familial faith. This, however, was my reality, and until juxtaposed with the very distinct Irish condition, apostasy as a construct tied to societal conditions went unnoticed. Once this connection was perceived, varied relationships to religiosity became an ongoing interest that I eventually decided to pursue in graduate studies.

I turned to the sociology of religion literature in an attempt to investigate the relationship between states of society and forms of apostasy. To my surprise, I discovered that apostasy is not explored as a potentially shifting construct in this body of work. While there was no scarcity of research that linked a secularising modern world with increasing rates of apostasy (Roof, 1978; McAllister, 1988; Tamney, Powell, and Johnson 1989; Sherkat and Wilson 1995), I found very few studies dealing with the relationship of a secularising society with forms of apostasy. None seemed to connect varied apostatic processes with an emergent postmodern condition. While a secularising world might make apostasy more common, apostasy was not seen as a potentially diverse phenomenon

---

2 I was a high school exchange student from the US to Australia in 1982, and returned numerous times before immigrating in 1990. I spent 1987 as an exchange student at University College Galway.

3 Condron and Tamney's 1985 study, 'Religious "Nones": 1957 to 1982' is an exception. These authors identify both 'structural' and 'cultural' nones and discuss the relationship of each to a secularising world.
capable of transformation. I found apostasy to be trapped in the literature as a construct of modernity.

This thesis is thus a response to a field of inquiry that has been limited by modern discursive processes. It argues that apostasy needs to be recognised as a heterogeneous and potentially shifting phenomenon tied to historical conditions. This recognition can allow apostasy to point to larger societal transformations. Conversely, an appreciation of a postmodern societal condition can lead us to ask if traditional understandings of apostasy and related sociological constructs are sufficient in the current period.

Central to this thesis then, is a deconstruction and re-imagining of the significance of apostasy. I argue that recognition of apostasy as an historical product can allow the construct to be a vital signifier of postmodern change. Such an approach also opens the possibility for apostasy to act as a catalyst for the re-examination of fundamental sociological constructs. For example, if apostasy is no longer an aberration, nor necessarily a cause of alienation and anomie, then the Durkheimian premise of religion as functional and a protection from emotive angst must be re-thought. If certain forms of apostasy can be best understood as emancipatory processes of self actualisation, then our understandings of rebellion, resistance, and criticism must also be re-imagined. If themes of apostasy now reflect both resistance and exploration, we must consider whether the dominating power relationships of modernity are in a process of redefinition. Finally, if apostasy no longer reflects complete spiritual abandonment but is better understood as a means for initiating new investigations, then we must re-consider what it means to be ‘religious’ in a postmodern world.
Throughout this thesis then, apostasy is treated as a potential signifier of modern constructions, and postmodern transitions. Apostasy is perceived as a construct that can help remove the blinkers placed on knowledge by modern discursive processes. It is treated as a construct that allows us to re-imagine fundamental parameters of knowledge.

Structurally, Chapter One argues that conventional paradigms of knowledge have left the construct of apostasy marginalised and under-theorised. Research has not connected apostasy to major themes in sociology, nor to theoretical discourses of the postmodern. The literature is limited by empirical investigations that do not challenge conventions. This chapter addresses the problematic nature of such limitations and offers a theoretical map for examining and re-imagining apostasy in a period of postmodern transformation.

Durkheim’s analysis of modernity and the emotive toll that can be a consequence of this societal condition, are central to the exploration of apostatic forms that still reflect the angst of modernity. Durkheim’s description of the future also serves to remind us that traditional sociological understandings of religion, anomie, and alienation are often based on projections of high modernity, and do not reach into the realities of a postmodern societal condition.

Foucault is also called upon to help elucidate the emotive toll of modern forms of apostasy. Resisting the dominating power relations he sees as endemic to modernity is destined to produce angst. Foucault, however, is explicit in his recognition that alternate forms of society will produce alternate realities. Thus a postmodern condition may allow
for re-defined power relationships. This Foucauldian recognition is used as a theoretical launching point for the re-examination of apostasy free from modern constraints.

Chapter Two discusses methodology and argues the need for an analytical framework not bound by modern empirical approaches to knowledge. It argues the need for a methodological approach that can allow apostates to have a voice and explain the significance of their apostatic processes. This chapter then outlines the specifics of a methodological frame that crosses epistemological divides by employing a combination of statistical, narrative, and theoretical analysis.

Chapter Two also reports on preliminary statistical investigations of the apostate sample. After reviewing findings that compare apostates by familial religious affiliation, gender, and cohort, it argues the need for an apostasy typology that better informs the study. The construction of such a schema is then discussed. The chapter explains how two modern apostate types are derived and identified with the Durkheimian labels of anomic and egoistic, while a group aligned with more critical and reflexive approaches to knowledge are labelled postmodern. The chapter then goes on to discuss the cohort divisions within each classification.

By using this typology, it is hoped that the complexity of individuals, the complexity of a society in the midst of an amorphous transition, and the relationship of the two will be drawn out. Division by type attempts to delineate apostates by cognitive and emotional relationships to a world in transition. Cohort division within each of these types, seeks to discern the effects of a shifting and diversifying collective conscious. This chapter argues
that such a double edged sword is necessary for capturing the complexities of postmodern transformations.

The remaining chapters all engage the apostasy typology and examine cohort distinction within and between types in a bid to uncover aspects of a postmodern epistemic shift in the negotiations of, and orientations to, knowledge. Through quantitative and narrative analysis, each chapter examines various stages of the apostatic journey, and asks whether traditional understandings of sociological phenomenon need to be re-imagined in light of an emerging postmodern condition.

Chapter Three discusses religious socialisation as a preliminary step in understanding heterogeneity in apostasy. Through an engagement with the work of Durkheim and Foucault, it asks whether the ways in which the subject is formed have shifted in a postmodern world. It also explores the negotiations of varied socialisation experiences. From socialisation as unquestioned replication, to socialisation that prepares children with the tools of critical thought and reflexivity, this chapter addresses the shifting parameters of early childhood socialisation, and how relationships and understandings of socialisation have transformed in a more reflexive world.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, it attempts to link apostatic processes to socialisation experiences. Second, it questions whether traditional understandings of socialisation are appropriate as the state of society increasingly reflects a postmodern condition. Is there a need to re-think understandings of socialisation that suggest
individuals are but passive pawns destined to be at the mercy of societal pressures that shape, mould, inculcate and assimilate towards unthinking replication?

Chapter Four investigates *processes* of apostasy. Explorations are not limited to what beliefs are shed and why; but how inherently socialised beliefs are foregone. It thus explores epistemology. It asks: how do apostates negotiate knowledge?; what are the means and techniques of resistance?; and have these parameters shifted in a postmodern world?

This chapter argues that apostatic processes are tied to historical conditions. It finds that modern forms of apostasy often rely on anomic reactionism and/ or egoistic introspection. More postmodern forms of apostasy, however, present as rational and less emotive negotiations of familial faith. By examining the shift of apostasy as an emotive response, to apostasy as exploration, this chapter asks two fundamental questions. First it asks whether understandings of apostasy as aberration, or apostasy as a failure of socialisation can continue to define postmodern processes of disaffiliation. Second, it asks if a society that traditionally bases the effectiveness of socialisation on how well individuals quell flashes of resistance, has undergone a transformation that allows resistance to reflect agency. Are there new postmodern parameters for epistemological approaches to knowledge?

Chapter Five continues an exploration of such questions through the investigation of the post apostatic self. It asks how apostates negotiate a self and a society no longer tied to modern constructions of Christianity. It explores the relationship of agency to a
postmodern condition, and the relationship of the self to lifecourse transitions. Are post
apostatic changes limited to resisting only certain sources of power, or are power
relationships themselves in a state of transformation?

This chapter thus questions traditional understandings of lifecourse transitions. It asks
whether re-formation of the self is simply subjection to new sources of re-socialisation, or
whether postmodern individuals are capable of restructuring post apostatic relationships.
Chapter Five also continues an investigation of postmodern societal changes; changes that
may see ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault, 1988:18) transform from punitive processes
to those that are personally empowering.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes this work with an exploration of the need for the
‘religious’ in the apostate. It asks if there is a post apostatic need for religious
replacements, and what these replacements may signify for each apostate type. It
questions whether replacements are but a new mask for abandoned beliefs, or whether
they represent new relationships and new orientations to post apostatic religiosity.

Through an investigation of these questions, this chapter concludes that apostasy is not
complete spiritual abandonment. Rather, it is more appropriately understood as the
abandonment of modernity’s construction of religion, now uncomfortably positioned at
the emergence of a postmodern world. This chapter is then concluded by addressing the
Foucauldian question of whether the rejection of modernity’s ‘technologies of power’
(Foucault, 1988:18) necessarily corresponds to the search for an ‘aesthetics of existence’
(Foucault, 1990:49). It ponders the spiritual possibilities of a postmodern world free from religion as constructed and understood in modernity.

In conclusion then, this thesis explores the apostatic process in a period of cultural transition, and argues that a re-imagined examination of apostasy, freed from the constraints of modern discursive processes, can open a multitude of traditional understandings. Whether it be religion as functional, successful socialisation as replication, apostasy as aberration, individuals as passive pawns with limited agency, or apostasy as total spiritual abandonment, this thesis argues that apostasy can point to the need for fundamental paradigm shifts as we enter a postmodern world.

The thesis thus makes a significant contribution to the literature by presenting apostasy as a construct linked to fundamental sociological phenomena; a construct that is capable of signifying outmoded discursive processes and postmodern epistemic transformations.
APPENDIX I
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TOPICAL CHECKLIST

Classification

pre 1967 or post 1982

Demography

Name:
Gender:
Age:
Occupation:
Educational Attainment and Background:
Familial Class Background:
Father’s Occupation:
Mother’s Occupation:
Father’s educational attainment:
Mother’s educational attainment:
Married:
Children:

Religious Upbringing

Father’s Religion:
  intensity during subject’s childhood:
  waning of intensity:
  perceived need for intergenerational transmission of belief:
    child:
    adult:

Mother’s Religion:
  intensity during subject’s childhood:
  waning of intensity:
  perceived need for intergenerational transmission of belief:
    child:
    adult:

Religion at Birth:

Rites and Rituals:

Frequency and intensity of religious activities in youth:

Perceived conviction through lifecourse:
Current Religious Beliefs

Label:

Comfort level / commitment

Thoughts on:
- religious institution raised with:
  Christianity:
  other organised religions:

  God raised with:
  supernatural deities:
  spirituality:
  afterlife:

Process of Foregoing Belief

Date/Age of first doubt:

Length of process:
- current stage:
- intensity of process:
- open mindedness / perceived likeliness of return to religion:

How did you come to consider yourself an apostate:

Type of process:
- reactionary (cause) / self search / vague disenchantment /
  peers / formal education / family / partner / rebellion / other or combination

  scientific / rational or emotive

  Why you think you changed, when others around you do not:

Replacements for Religion (Secular and Sacred)

Is there a need: If yes:
  have / are you looking: If yes:
    why:
    where have / are you looking:

Do you now have what you consider a replacement:

How do you currently ground morality and social order:
APPENDIX II

VARIABLES SCORING AND MEANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE A.1</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variables</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scoring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apostate Type</td>
<td>For each: 0=no, 1=yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomic</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egoistic</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation</td>
<td>0=post 82, 1=pre 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>0=prot, 1=cath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascribed Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0=female, 1=male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>For each: low of 0 to high of 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ SES</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond’s SES</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond’s Occupation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>For each: years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’</td>
<td>m(mother, father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifecycle</td>
<td>For each: 0=never, 1=ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Scoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s Religion</td>
<td>For each: 0=none, .5=one, 1=both</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents’ Intensity</td>
<td>For each: low of 0 to high of 1, averaged between mother &amp; father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ Need to Transmit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transmission Strength</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ritual Participation</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1 averaged between rituals applicable for respond’s religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent’s Intensity</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood Conviction</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anomie Prior to Apostasy</td>
<td>0=no, 1=yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>Scoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age of First Doubt</td>
<td>Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Process</td>
<td>Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Stage</td>
<td>0=ongoing, 1=completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intensity of Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood of Return</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<td><strong>Type of Process</strong></td>
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<td>Search</td>
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<td>Disenchantment</td>
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<td>Internal Disappointment</td>
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<td>External Disappointment</td>
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<td>Peers</td>
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<td>Family</td>
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<td>Partner</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Reactionary</td>
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<td>Logic</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anomie</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Apostasy</td>
<td>For each: 0=no, 1=yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Apostasy</td>
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</table>
TABLE A.4  CURRENT RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

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<td>Atheist</td>
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<td>Agnostic</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Comfort Level</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoughts on:</td>
<td>For each: credibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainstream Religion</td>
<td>low of 0 to high of 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative beliefs</td>
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<td>.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Apostatic Religiosity</td>
<td>For each: 0=no, 1=yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement Need</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ever looked</td>
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<td>.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replaced</td>
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<td>.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Replacement Nature</td>
<td>0=supernatural, .5=both, 1=secular</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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