

Choosing What One is Cut Out to Be¹

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In this paper I shall consider life pursuits understood in terms of the idea of a project. Specifically, I develop the notion of "inner necessity" within a non-essentialist and non-foundationalist approach. Such an approach is not deterministic and it accommodates individual choice. Finally, I sketch certain limits to the idea of a project within the soteriological contexts of Hinduism and Buddhism.

I

Bimal Matilal correctly observes that a universalist understanding of human needs should not be cast in essentialist terms. He says:²

Noticing that a culture resists drastic changes in norms, we may unconsciously be driven to a belief in the immutability of the norms or the central core of a culture – a belief that may well amount to a sort of "essentialism".... Once we give up the "essentialist's" dogma, we would find it natural to talk about not mutilation or destruction but mutation and change.

Immutability may be thought to obtain as much for individual selves as for cultures, and the impulse to construe both along essentialist lines is equally tempting and equally misguided. Even if one agrees that certain dispositions are common across cultures – such as the removal of suffering, love of justice, courage in the face of injustice, pride, shame, love of children, delight, laughter, happiness (as Matilal lists them), or need of affection, the cooperation of others, a place in a community, and help in trouble (as Phillipa Foot lists them) their construal in terms of some "intractable human essence" is unwarranted.³ However common or universal one's candidate list of needs or values, the temptation to place an essentialist construal on them should be resisted. Commonality does not imply essentiality, and there is good reason not to draw the inference.

How should we understand essentialism? Sir Karl Popper provides a useful explication. He says:⁴

While we may say that the essentialist interpretation reads a definition 'normally', that is to say, from the left to the right, we can say that a definition, as it is used in modern science, must be read back to front, or from the right to the left; for it starts with the defining formula, and asks for a short label for it. Thus the scientific view of the definition 'A puppy is a young dog' would be that it is an answer to the question 'What shall we call a young dog?' rather than an answer to the question 'What is a puppy?' (questions like 'What is life?' or 'What is gravity?' do not play any role in science.) The scientific use of definition, characterized by the approach 'from the right to the left', may be called its nominalist interpretation, as opposed to its Aristotelian or essentialist interpretation. In modern science, only nominalist definitions occur, that is to say, shorthand symbols or labels are introduced in order to cut a long story short. And we can at once see from this that definitions do not play a very important part in science.

I join Popper in his rejection of essentialism not only in the physical sciences but also in the human studies. Popper continues:⁵

...I reject all *what-is questions*: questions asking what a thing is, what is its essence, or its true nature. For we must give up the view, characteristic of essentialism, that in every single thing there is an essence, an inherent nature or principle (such as the spirit of wine in wine), which necessarily causes it to be what it is, and thus to act as it does. This animistic view explains nothing. ... We must give up the view...that it is the essential properties inherent *in each individual or singular thing* which may be appealed to as the explanation of this thing's behaviour. For this view completely fails to throw any light whatever on the question why different things should behave in like manner. If it is said, 'because their essences are alike', the new question arises: *why should there not be as many different essences as there are different things?*

Here Popper reminds us of a point he emphasizes in many of his writings, namely, that essentialist explanations presuppose a commitment to ultimate or "most basic" explanations. And such a commitment is ruled out by his negativist epistemology.⁶

Yet one might be tempted to invoke essentialism when speaking about human development, as when, for example, it might be thought that reference to someone's essence accounts for the way he or she evolves or unfolds. But there is no "most basic" essentialist

code, genetic or otherwise, the reading off of which accounts for a person's development. Rather, one actualizes oneself from possibilities, which, if acted upon, give rise to new actualities. There are no "most basic" essential human potentialities (or, some might say, capabilities). The essentialist dogma leaves us with no answer as to where essences are to be found and how one might, in a non-question-begging way, be able to corroborate or refute specific claims about particular essences. While there is movement from possibility to actuality and from actuality to possibility there is no clear starting point in this series. In this sense one is never in the beginning; one is always in the middle. In contrast, the non-essentialist rejects the understanding of selves and their development in terms of fixed essences. For example, American masters saw their slaves as essentially inferior, and Nazis saw Jews as essentially evil. On the non-essentialist view, it is not that slave-owners or Nazis *misdescribed the essences* of Africans, Americans or Jews. Rather, no essences were there to be described. That's all.

An account of human development should be non-essentialist. It should also be non-foundational in both its discursive and ontological variants. That is, it should reject the thought that "... there is a common set of basic statements, not capable of further analysis, which serve in each context for each kind of enquiry for the assessment of all judgments of a relevant kind" (discursive variant). And it should also reject the thought that "... there is a common ontology or set of basic existents, incapable of further analysis, out of which all other existents are constructed" (ontological variant).⁷ This non-foundational attitude does not, however, exclude propounding views about the natures of things in specific domains if understood as introduced by a rubric that concedes a historicity or contextuality in which the authorial voice of any theory is itself understood to be in flux, including the authorial voice of the rubric itself.⁸ In sum, my working assumptions are non-essentialist and non-foundationalist.

This favored non-essentialist and non-foundational approach is well expressed by Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harrè who address individuals, and it is equally applicable to cultures.⁹ They say:

An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly, who one is is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices and

within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our and others' lives. Stories are located within a number of different discourses, and thus vary dramatically in terms of the language used, the concepts, issues, and moral judgements made relevant and the subject positions made available within them...

The argumentative core of Davies and Harre's passage is the idea of a *practice* – and it leaves open the question whether the shape of a practice is fully determined by conditions that preclude personal choice. No strong thesis of determinism is entailed.¹⁰

In his searching new book, *Imagination, Understanding, and the Virtue of Liberty*,¹¹ David Norton addresses what he calls "directional questions" or questions concerning the directions of one's life. These directions are charted from "inner necessities". Norton pursues directional questions from an innatist essentialist point of view. At the same time, from my book *Rightness and Reasons: Interpretation in Cultural Practices* (R & R for short),¹² Norton adapts a thesis which I call "multiplism", or the view that, for a given object-of-interpretation in the cultural realm, there need not be a single conclusive right interpretation of it. He adapts this thesis for the case of the developing person to suggest that, while one's life directions arise from one's innatist-essentialist constitution, there may be more than one right life path to pursue. As he says:¹³

... I will draw from Krausz on self-interpretation, but supplement his case for multiplism with a logically independent case of my own in behalf of an innatist thesis that I will defend against the prevalent "social constructionist" theory of the formation of the self.

To help situate Norton's suggestion, I offer a brief recapitulation of the main theses of R & R. First, the "singularist" view holds that for any cultural object-of-interpretation there must be a single right interpretation of it. R & R argues that this interpretive ideal is misplaced. Without acceding to an interpretive anarchism, R & R embraces the alternative "multiplist" view which holds that cultural objects-of-interpretation characteristically answer to a multiplicity of ideally admissible interpretations. The multiplist thesis ranges over cultural entities like works of music, works of art, historical events, and other cultural entities including selves. It does not range over middle sized objects like sticks and stones. The singularist condition characteristically does not obtain in the cultural realm because a single neutral overarching standard to adjudicate between competing

interpretations is absent. Candidate standards are typically incommensurable. Consequently, multiplism is not just an epistemic condition. In the designated realm, there characteristically are no non-question-begging standards that would be required by singularism. The absence of such standards is further enforced by concerns about the viability of speaking of a single determinate world to which cognitive claims are meant to correspond (as critiqued by Nelson Goodman, Richard Rorty, and others), and by concerns about the viability of speaking of determinate abstract entities which interpretations might be thought to capture (as positively embraced by Plato, Karl Popper, and others).¹⁴ Further, R & R argues that, amongst admissible interpretations one may have good reasons for rational preferences. Hence the title: *Rightness and Reasons*. R & R leaves a good deal of room for critical discussion about which amongst admissible interpretations one should favour. Such discussions can be reasonably pursued, if inconclusively, in the absence of a single neutral overarching standard. Note that multiplism does *not* commit one to the view that ideally admissible interpretations are *equally* preferable. So much for the recapitulation.¹⁵

While R & R is concerned with interpretation of cultural objects-of-interpretation, Norton is concerned with the legitimation of life options or with "objects of pursuit" as I shall also call them. Many of the strategies in the first matrix are, with appropriate adjustment, transferable to those of the second.

Norton sets out his problematic in this way. He says:¹⁶

...I hope to show that the multiplism...[Krausz] demonstrates is a definitive condition of all cultural objects-of-interpretation by any viable meaning of "cultural," and that it discredits dogmatic absolutism. The fulcrum of my argument will be a class of propositions that I will term "directional" because they provide answers to the directional question that is posed by the inherent problematicity of human being - What kind of life shall be lived?... My intention is to show by extrapolation of Krausz's presentation that the epistemic condition of directional propositions is "multiplist".

Now, I believe that Norton overstates the multiplist condition when he urges it as a *criterion* of the cultural. But I will not press that point here. Rather I wish to address the question of our understanding of *inner necessity* which is nested in Norton's idea of directionality.

Norton cites the inner necessities of Socrates, Martin Luther, Wassily Kandinsky, and Carl Jung, the latter two of whose remarks

Norton quotes:¹⁷

In [Kandinsky's] words, "The artist must ignore distinctions between 'recognised' or 'unrecognized' conventions of form, the transitory knowledge and demands of his particular age. He must watch his own inner life and hearken to the demands of inner necessity". Carl Jung is describing the inner necessity in his life and works when he says, "I have had much trouble getting along with my ideas. There was a daimon in me, and in the end its presence proved decisive. It overpowered me, and if I was at times ruthless it was because I was in the grip of the daimon. I could never stop at anything once attained. I had to hasten on, to catch up with my vision. Since my contemporaries, understandably, could not perceive my vision, they saw only a fool rushing ahead".

Norton quotes Abraham Maslow in his characterization of inner necessity in this way:¹⁸

Summarizing his research among self-actualizing persons, Maslow says, in the ideal instance..., 'I want to' coincides with 'I must'. There is a good matching of inner and outer requiredness. And the observer is then overawed by the degree of compellingness, of inexorability, of preordained destiny, necessity, and harmony that he perceives. Furthermore, the observer (as well as the person involved) feels not only that 'it has to be' but also that 'it ought to be, it is right, it is suitable, appropriate, fitting, and proper'.

It is easy to think of inner necessity in singularist terms, as Maslow's language seems to suggest. But Norton (I think rightly) does not do that. And, Norton observes (and I think rightly again) that without sufficiently determinate constraints on the range of ideally admissible life options or objects of pursuit multiplism turns out to be "a fair weather philosophy".¹⁹ Now while Norton answers the question of constraints in terms of an innatist theory of human nature understood in an essentialist way, R & R answers the question of constraints in terms of *practices*, (I now say *projects*) broadly understood in a constructionist way. This is the key point of difference between us. If, as I have suggested, essentialism writ large goes, then, notwithstanding his multiplism, Norton's project of articulating an essentialist account of inner necessity also goes. What follows is an elaboration of a non-essentialist alternative.

With Norton, I honor the phenomenon of inner necessity and account for it in multiplist terms.²⁰ But I seek to ground that account

in a non-essentialist and non-foundationalist view of project, one that also accommodates a persistent concern of Norton's, namely, the condition of individual freedom of choice. To do so I shall develop the thought that, while projects are made intelligible in virtue of their social contexts, one is free to choose or not choose one's projects.

III

Partly to emphasize the issue of individual choice, in contrast with R & R I now speak of *projects* instead of *practices*. To start with I introduce the term "projectism"—pronounced with the accent on the first syllable—simply as adjectival for "project" and no more. It does not mean that the world or some portion of it is a projection, as perhaps other labels which, with the accent on the second syllable, might mistakenly suggest—such as "projectionism" or "projectivism". Projects are not projections. Projectism is not a philosophy of projectors of any kind.

Here are some examples of projects that one may put on the positive side of a ledger: making a relationship, making a home, raising a family, pursuing a career, writing a book, playing a musical instrument, painting a series of artworks, caring for the sick or the elderly, preserving a benign culture or tradition or people, pursuing certain edifying religious or social practices, seeking a higher value. One might prioritize such a list according to some such distinction as that offered by Bernard Williams who distinguishes between second order and more general first order projects.²¹ Second order projects include

...desires for things for oneself, one's family, one's friend, including basic necessities of life, and in more relaxed circumstances, objects of taste. Or there may be pursuits and interests of an intellectual, cultural or creative character... Beyond these someone may have projects connected with his support of some cause: Zionism, for instance, or the abolition of chemical and biological warfare.

In contrast, first order projects embody general values, such as maximizing utility. Projects may enter into complex relationships with each other, as for example when they are hierarchized in such a way that one may trump another. For Williams there is a kind of symbiotic relation between second and first order projects. The content of first order projects is defined by which second order projects one countenances, and vice versa.

A project may be *foisted upon* one, as for example such custodial

projects as caring for an aged parent when no other care-giver is available. In this regard, E.M. Zemach mentions collective custodial projects such as preserving one's people or culture or way of life when it is threatened.²² We may add the project of preserving the physical well-being of the planet when it is threatened. For such cases Zemach holds that there is an objective moral obligation to fulfill one's duties. Yet one is free to reject such projects, whatever else one might want to say about the approbatory morality of doing so.

Here are some examples of projects that one might put on the negative side of a ledger: inflicting pain and suffering on others, exterminating a people, annihilating a race, eliminating a culture, killing or maiming innocent persons, or depleting the earth's resources below a sustainable level.

Projects characteristically take on their own lives and they may impose demands upon their agents. They demand resolution whose features are emergent in the sense that such resolutions were not initially consciously entertained by their agents. A project characteristically seeks its own autonomous consummation, in much the way as a story seeks its own resolution.²³ A painting which has been sufficiently shaped may demand of its artist that it be completed in a certain sort of way. If it is resolved in ways beyond an admissible range, the nature of the project as initially conceived transforms it into one of another kind. The initial project would have been overridden, interrupted, aborted, derailed, or something of the kind.

In David Lean's film, "Bridge on the River Kwai", we find a striking case in which interned Colonel Nicholson (played by Alec Guinness), initially to turn his battalion into a disciplined group, seriously adopts the Japanese project of building a proper bridge in which his soldiers could take pride.²⁴ And Nicholson does so with imagination, zest, skill and enthusiasm. This with the full knowledge that the bridge is to help transport Japanese soldiers who are to kill the colonel's own fellow British soldiers. No wonder Nicholson's medical officer says to him, "What you are doing could be construed as collaborating with the enemy". No wonder the allied forces activate Force 316 to take up the project of blowing up the project that has overtaken the colonel.

As in the above case, a project may embody certain values within its own terms, such as fidelity, authenticity and integrity. Such values may also be found, for example, in Adolf Eichmann's project to exterminate all Jews, and in the present Chinese government's project to destroy the Tibetan people and culture.

I call such necessities demanded by a project in the course of its completion "projectist necessities". And I suggest that projectist

necessities better captures the "necessity" found in cases adduced of inner necessity, except that there is nothing that is essentialist or "human naturish" about projectist necessity. Projectist necessities better capture Abraham Maslow's thought that, "In the ideal instance..., 'I want to' coincides with 'I must'."²⁵ There is no inherent "inner" in inner necessity. In short, projectist necessity leaves behind the unwanted disadvantages of an innatist essentialist metaphysics.

We are the products of our own projects, which – generally – we can choose. So projectist necessities provide constraints to the kinds of product that we become. In that sense, as the title of this paper suggests, we can *choose what we are cut out to be*. The necessities which foster who we become are not nested in an essentialized self, as Norton would hold. They are nested in the projects which we take on and with which we come to identify.

Projectist necessity does not morally certify or approbate the pertinent activity. In his defense in Jerusalem, Eichmann played on the mistaken slide from projectist necessity to moral approbatoriness when he tried to justify his behavior as morally correct. Clearly, projectist necessity may well obtain while the project in question is immoral.

And there may be projects the taking up of which may raise no particular morally approbatory questions, but may nevertheless be rejected perhaps out of fear. As an example I cite a personal episode:²⁶

In the spring of 1964 I was walking alone at the foot of mount Vesuvius and unexpectedly came upon a grouping of bushes, greenery, and flowers in which were a sheep and several lambs. It was a most beautiful sight. I was overcome by a religious feeling. I experienced a connectedness with the environment that was both exhilarating and frightening. Given my intellectual commitments at the time (I was a student of analytic philosophy), I was unable to make sense of this kind of experience. I cut the experience short, choosing not to be present for it. My rational faculties were summoned, and questions began to be put, doubts felt; the moment passed. Later I even chastised myself for permitting myself to experience such a "silly" thing.

I mistakenly thought that authentically owning the experience would entail adopting a broadly religious or spiritual project, then to be weighed in relation to other favored projects. And so, in rejecting the imagined project I disowned the epiphany.

Projects are erotetic constructions, that is, they are made

intelligible and shaped within the matrix of questions and answers, problems and solutions. Correspondingly, answers to directional questions are embedded well within a web of erotetic constructions. They are not issued unmediated by an epiphany, experienced by an essentialist self.

But what about the necessities involved in the choice of projects themselves? What about such testimonies of inner necessity as "I have to paint" or "I have to compose music" or "I have to write poems". The force of such 'have to's' might well be understood in terms of the consequences of not doing so. And often they are cast in such terms as provided by poet Thomas Lux, who says, "If I don't write, I feel empty and lost".²⁷ That is, the necessity of the particular project is mandated by the prior commitment to a more general project, in this case, of a life of fullness and place. But what of that more general project? If it is not justified by a yet more general project it appears to be arbitrary. In turn, if it is not "capped" by some such project as a "life of fullness and place", then justification appears to invite an infinite regress. But, as culturally endowed beings, we do not begin in the beginning of a logically sequenced decision procedure; we begin in the middle. We may cap the infinite regress by stipulating that a certain form of life is the operative meta-project; and while that form of life may undergo transformation, one is never prior to some form of life. Being situated in some form of life is part and parcel of being a culturally endowed being.

IV

In the final section of this paper I shall sketch some limits of the idea of a project, whose very applicability may be colored by one's interpretive stance toward soteriological issues – that is, issues concerning the development of one's consciousness. Specifically, how should we understand the project of the no-project? Is it perhaps a higher order project? Or is the very idea of a no-project project an oxymoron? Consider the Hindu project of realizing the state of Cosmic Selfhood or Atma; and consider the Buddhist project of realizing the state of Emptiness or Anatma. Both archic principles²⁸ involve a non-erotetic space in which there are no questions or answers, no problems or solutions. The puzzle arises from the fact that *the idea of a project is erotetic*. Both the Hindu and the Buddhist would construe the project of the no-project as soteriologically useful to a limited degree. That is, the idea of a project would help bring one to that state of consciousness where the matrix of questions and

answers, problems and solutions, drop out. Both would regard the idea of a project as useful up until a certain level of consciousness were achieved, then to be left behind. Thereafter, insistence upon its pertinence would be seen as impeding the movement beyond.

For the Hindu that movement beyond involves the ego-self coming to be at-one with the Atma. For the Buddhist that movement beyond involves the realization of the emptiness of the inherent existence of all things, including the ego-self as well as the Atma. In either case, the movement beyond is one in which the erotetic context drops out. In such conditions there is no felt sense of a knower in dualistic opposition to a known. *There is no project.* The very idea of a project does not operate. Yet post-dictively – after the realization of Oneness with Atma or the realization of Emptiness of inherent existence – the Hindu or the Buddhist may seek to account for such “experiences”. One may overcome the subject-object duality in the realization of Atma or of Anatma, only to reconstruct (or rather, construct) a subject-object duality in the retelling. In such retelling the subject who would be said to have “had” such an experience is a latterly posited self without a substantive correlate in the experience so described. In the direct realization of Atma or of Emptiness one could not have “had” an “experience” of it. To the extent that experience as such requires dualities of knower and known, and to the extent that at the time of such realization the distinction between subject and object does not operate, the very idea of experience does not apply. While post-dictively one might say that one had experienced direct awareness, the question is whether direct realization could, at the time, be *experienced*. Here the idea of Buddhahood enters. According to the tradition, one has attained Buddhahood when one has realized emptiness while simultaneously engaging in the conventional world. So understood, any concession to having “had an experience” of direct awareness of emptiness would be tantamount to saying that it was the conventional mind which “experienced” it.

Here is a second puzzle that arises from the idea of the no-project project. Multiplism is a condition in which two or more interpretations may “compete” just in case those interpretations address the same object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit. Sometimes it is easier than other times to say whether contending interpretations address the same thing. Now if we try to raise the issue of singularism versus multiplism in such soteriological contexts as in Hinduism or Buddhism, the question of the *identity* of the objects-of-interpretation or the objects of pursuit becomes problematic. Both traditions agree that their archic principles, Atma and Anatma, are made

intransparent or opaque by the very use of language, for language is inherently dualistic and so it cannot capture what either the Hindu or the Buddhist take as the final condition of their respective movements. Under these conditions, neither singularism nor multiplism can be determined to apply, for the boundary conditions of Atma and Anatma remain indeterminate. One cannot tell if Atma and Anatma address the same or different things.²⁹

Yet the Hindu and the Buddhist do have views as to whether Atma and Anatma address themselves to the same or different things. The Hindu holds that both the Hindu and the Buddhist seek realization/enlightenment and that the Buddhist's path is mistaken. The Buddhist holds that the Hindu and the Buddhist seek different things, and that the Hindu's aim of realization is different from the Buddhist's aim of enlightenment. Notice that, given their views about the inhibiting character of language, neither the Hindu nor the Buddhist can demonstrate the identities of their objects-of-interpretation or their objects of pursuit. There is no non-question-begging way of determining if there is a common ground between them. *There is no non-question-begging way of determining whether the controversy between singularism and multiplism as it applies to Hinduism versus Buddhism actually obtains.*³⁰ Put otherwise, the singularist-multiplist issue arises on the condition that a designated object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit does or does not answer to one or more admissible interpretations. But the very object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit is contentious as between Hinduism and Buddhism. The Hindu's and the Buddhist's understanding of the ways in which their views would be exemplified in the singularism-multiplism dispute would have to vary.³¹ Such is the elusiveness of any putative contest between Hinduism and Buddhism, and it may well be exhibited in a wider range of cultural phenomena.

Generally speaking, objects-of-interpretation or paths of pursuit may be perpetually reformulated in ever more fine-grained ways. With the specifying and detailing of an unfolding path, one proceeds with increasing subtlety and refinement. And with such specification the understanding and the nature of the earlier object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit transfigures. Accordingly, initial disputants over once common objects-of-interpretation or objects of pursuit may come to talk at cross-purposes. And without a common object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit the very controversy between singularism and multiplism ceases to arise. Yet a revised more fine-grained object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit may come to be specified and held common between fresh disputants, and so the

singularist-multiplist issue may well arise again in more detailed form. And with still further specification, the revised understanding and nature of the object-of-interpretation or object of pursuit may once again be transfigured. And so on.³² To help illustrate the dynamics of such a "situational shift," consider the analogous case in the interpretation of art. Consider the projects of rendering a human figure according to a gesture-drawing approach or according to a contour-drawing approach. The nature of the depicted figure changes as between each project. With each project new objects-of-interpretation emerge. As regards a general rendering of a figure, gesture drawing and contour drawing may be seen as competitors within a multiplist matrix. Then when one focuses on the new object-of-interpretation, as the figure is rendered as a contour, say, the initial general object-of-interpretation drops out. The fresh question arises whether we should countenance more than one admissible contour interpretation. As one answers that question in turn, a new project arises: one which specifies contours as objects-of-interpretation, say, as Van Gogh rendered them in contrast with how Picasso did. With each specification a revised project emerges, and with it the nature of its object-of-interpretation redefined. As regards gesture drawing projects, a parallel set of specifications would obtain, as for example in the styles of a Chaim Soutine or a Cy Twombly. And so on.

From our sojourn into the soteriological cases, we may conclude that to the extent the objects-of-interpretation or objects of pursuit are erotetically formulable, they may be understood in projectist terms. And to the extent they are not erotetically formulable, they may not be understood in projectist terms. Exactly where that extent lies is a matter to be pondered within the terms of each of these considered traditions.

In this paper I have offered a construal of inner necessity in non-essentialist and non-foundationalist terms. I did so by introducing the idea of projectist necessity. It captures both the idea that certain resolutions are mandated within the terms of a project (hence, necessity); and it allows one to choose one's projects (hence freedom) – thus avoiding determinism. Finally, I have sketched some of the limits of the idea of a project in the soteriological cases of Hinduism and Buddhism.

NOTES

1. I owe the title of this paper to Arindam Chakrabarti whom I also thank for stimulating discussions. I remain profoundly indebted to H.H. The Dalai Lama, Lobsang Gyatso, Ngawang Saniten, and Swami Shyam for interviews that have

substantially aided in my understanding of Buddhism and Hinduism. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Society for Philosophy in the Contemporary World, Estes Park, Colorado, August, 1995; and at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts, March, 1996.

2. Bimal Matilal, "Ethical Relativism and Confrontation of Cultures", in M. Krausz, ed. *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*, Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1989, p. 351.

3. Ibid. p. 357.

4. Karl Popper, in David Miller, ed. *Popper Selections*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985, p. 92.

5. Karl Popper, in Miller, *ibid.*

6. Karl Popper, "Three Views Concerning Human Knowledge", in *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963).

7. Rom Harré and Michael Krausz, *Varieties of Relativism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996, p. 5.

8. See R.G. Collingwood, *Essays on Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, 1962; Joseph Margolis, *Historied Thought, Constructed World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. See also Michael Krausz, "Interpretation, Relativism and Culture: Four Questions for Margolis," in Michael Krausz and Richard Shusterman, eds., *Interpretation, Relativism and the Metaphysics of Culture*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1997.

9. Bronwyn Davies and Rom Harré, "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves," *Journal of Theory and Social Behaviour*, 20, No. 1 (March, 1990), p. 46).

10. The condition of free choice presumes developed capacities. Consequently, the present treatment does not range over young children. As well it takes on normative force in the case of peoples whose capacities are prevented from being developed. This is pertinent for a democracy which presumes (often falsely) that its citizens have (sufficiently) developed capacities. Here the question of the responsibility of a state's government to nurture such development is brought into relief.

11. David Norton, *Imagination, Understanding, and the Virtue of Liberality*, Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 1996. (IUVL)

12. Michael Krausz, *Rightness and Reasons: Interpretation in Cultural Practices*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993.

13. Norton, IUVL, p. 86.

14. See Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1978; Richard Rorty, *Objectivism, Relativism and Truth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991; Plato, *Thaetetus*, trans. B. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, volume III, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953; Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

15. See Norton's review of "Rightness and Reasons" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 55, no. 3 September, 1995, pp. 711-715.

16. Norton, IUVL, pp. 84-85.

17. Norton, IUVL, p. 107.

18. Norton, IUVL, p. 108.

19. Norton, IUVL, p. 109.

20. The phenomenon of inner necessity is instanced in my own case. "Though I have long been exposed to the visual arts, I was not particularly visually sensitive until 1971 at the age of 28. While visiting the studio of a friend and being surrounded by

her large canvasses, I experienced myself inhabiting the space visually depicted in them. It corresponded to and somehow forged an "inner" space with which I somehow felt familiar. It was a space in which I was to journey. I suddenly became visually much more highly sensitive, and, as a consequence, needed to paint – to pursue the journey – and become a painter. Since that time I have experienced the word differently. This experience was not unlike that described by Abraham Maslow as a peak experience." From Michael Krasuz, "Creating and Becoming", in Denis Dutton and Michael Krausz, eds., *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981, p. 191. In the spring of 1996 I mounted my 17th one person show at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. This note underscores the seriousness with which I take Norton's concern about inner necessity. It is not something to be explained away.

21. Bernard Williams, "A Critique of Utilitarianism", in J.J.C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, Cambridge University Press, 1963, pp.10-11.

22. See E.M. Zemach, "Custodians", in David Theo Goldberg and Michael Krausz, eds., *Jewish Identity*, Temple University Press, 1993.

23. See John Dewey on consummatory experiences in his *Art as Experience*, New York: Capricorn Books, 1934.

24. "Bridge on the River Kwai", Sam Spiegel Productions. Novel by Pierre Boulle, Directed by David Lean.

25. Norton, IUVL, p. 108. Carl Jung's remarks quoted earlier (see note # 17) might be more illuminatingly recast along such projectist rather than his essentialist-sounding terms.

26. Michael Krausz, "Creating and Becoming", p. 192.

27. Thomas Lux, Los Angeles Times, F/Section E, Monday April 10, 1995

28. Ven. Ngawang Samten has indicated to me that, according to Tibetan Buddhism, ultimate truth is not conventional truth. But ultimate truth exists conventionally. So seen, the Buddhist principle of emptiness may turn out not to be an archic principle after all.

29. This point holds for any case where determinate conditions of objects-of interpretation cannot be specified, even where the reasons for such indeterminacy are unrelated to the issue of the limits of language.

30. And this remark leaves unexamined the question of the soteriological attitude of the third person interpreter. But whatever that attitude is, it too would be question-beggingly implicated in his interpretation of the Hindu and Buddhist cases.

31. This sort of case challenges Charles Taylor's idea of a language of perspicuous contrast. See his *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, vol. 2, pp. 125-26.

32. I owe this point, among many here mentioned, to His Holiness The Dalai Lama; interview May 22, 1995.