Why authenticity precedes autonomy

Nikos Erinakis

Abstract: Most thinkers either identify authenticity with autonomy or take the one to be a core condition for the other. In this paper, I discuss what I believe that authenticity is not. My aim is to distinguish the two notions in regard to their very essence, function and role in our everyday life, while I argue that the conditions of the prominent conceptions of authenticity that relate it to autonomy are unconvincing. I investigate the weaknesses of both the higher-order endorsement models and the externalist historical models by maintaining that none of activity, wholeheartedness, reflection, and rationality is either necessary or sufficient for authenticity. Since manipulation in regard to higher-order desires may take place, one can meet any of these conditions while at the same time being inauthentic. Given this, it has been argued that although these conditions are perhaps insufficient for authenticity, they are still necessary. However, I argue that they are also unnecessary – that is, authenticity comes before activity, wholeheartedness, reflection and rationality, and not vice versa.

Keywords: authenticity, autonomy, identification, reflection, reasons, attitudes.

1. *Introduction*

In this paper, I elaborate on the weaknesses of the higher-order endorsement models and the externalist historical models of authenticity by concentrating on the reasons why I believe activity, wholeheartedness, rational and mere reflection, and both reflective and unreflective reasons are inadequate to operate as either necessary or sufficient conditions for authenticity. Since manipulation in regard to higher-order desires may take place, one can meet any of these conditions while at the same time being inauthentic with respect to an attitude. Given this, it has been argued that those conditions may not be sufficient for authenticity, but that they still are necessary. In contrast to the majority of the prominent autonomy and authenticity thinkers, I argue that they are not necessary either. This should create a basis upon which I maintain that when distinguishing which attitudes and creations are authentic, we should not only trust rationality and reflective thinking, but also other capacities of ours, like imagination, intuition, inclinations and drives, as long as they are creative.

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I claim that taking a step back and rationally reflecting on what is one's own cannot ensure that what one settles on is truly one's own authentic creation. The processes of rationality and all kinds of reasoning and reflection must also be authentic if they are to be adequate tools for distinguishing what is authentic from what is not. They need to have been formulated and developed creatively – not solely rationally – in order to be one's own and not simply externally generated. Given this, I argue that authenticity should come first in order to ensure a development of an authentic process of reflection and reasoning and not as a result of them.

Many thinkers understand authenticity in terms of the simple idea that what is authentic is whatever is one's own, with the question of what it is for something to be one's own either neglected or misconstrued as a question about autonomy. I aim at showing that a broader understanding of authenticity is required and that autonomy and authenticity are not only not coextensive but also potentially contradicting and conflicting. What is important regarding the quest for authenticity is to determine in which ways one's creations are one's own. Hence, there are two central questions that need to be answered: *What* it means for a creation to be one's own, and *how* it comes to be one's own.

In regard to the dominant contemporary autonomy and authenticity conceptions, there are two ways in which authenticity conditions are generally introduced. The first is that we seek conditions based on which we can distinguish authentic from inauthentic features of the self. The second is that we seek conditions that present the tools based on which the agent is able to formulate and develop authentic features. While studying various scholars that refer to higher-order endorsement and historical models, we may notice that Harry Frankfurt's (1988) conception of autonomy is equated with authenticity, Gerald Dworkin's (1988) with authenticity and independence, John Christman's (1991) with authenticity and competence and Alfred Mele's (1993) with self-control and authenticity. More precisely, it seems to me that the prominent theories of autonomy can be divided into two categories. In the one, autonomy is equated with authenticity, i.e. they conceive authenticity as both necessary and sufficient for autonomy, and in the other autonomy consists of authenticity plus some other element, i.e. they conceive authenticity as necessary but insufficient for autonomy. Accounts of the former kind have been developed by Frankfurt and Christman, while accounts of the latter kind have been developed by Dworkin and Mele. Frankfurt's and Dworkin's models are often considered as almost the same because of their hierarchical nature. However, in my opinion, Frankfurt's and Dworkin's conceptions of autonomy, despite their similarities, are importantly distinct, since the former can be equated with authenticity while the latter requires independence too, thus, they should not be conflated into one model.

Furthermore, even though Christman seems to distinguish authenticity from competence, he does not, as his competency condition is absorbed into the one of authenticity, with the result that he equates autonomy with authenticity too.

Thus, most thinkers who develop conceptions of autonomy seem to take for granted that authenticity is, if not autonomy itself, at least a core condition for autonomy, or in other words, that it is the first and basic step for autonomy to obtain. I believe that this is the source of several critical misunderstandings, beginning with the negligence of the importance of authenticity as a fundamentally separate concept. Only if authenticity is understood in its own terms can the various different dimensions of it be revealed.

2. *Activity*

Many theorists argue that authenticity and activity are directly connected, and more precisely that in order for a person to be authentic with respect to a certain desire one necessarily needs to be active towards it. The connection between activity and authenticity in the sense of ownership of attitudes is evident both in Frankfurt (1988, 1999, 2002a, 2002b) and Richard Moran (2002), who claim that what is required for a desire to be authentic is for the agent to be active with respect to it.

Frankfurt is rather clear about his view of what activity is. In order for one to be active with respect to a desire, one must identify with that desire. In other words, we are active towards only those passions that are genuinely internal to us, i.e. our own. For him, ownership of higher-order attitudes, identification with those attitudes and activity with respect to them all amount to the same thing. In his own words:

> Now a person is active with respect to his own desires when he identifies himself with them, and he is active with respect to what he does when what he does is the outcome of his identification of himself with the desire that moves him in doing it. Without such identification the person is a passive bystander to his desires and to what he does. (Frankfurt, 1988: 54)

Furthermore, he also writes: 'The attempt to explicate being active in terms of endorsement is inevitably circular, accordingly, since asserting that a person endorses something necessarily presupposes that he is active.' (Frankfurt, 2002b: 220) This suggests that we are active towards those desires that are truly our own, 'which express our nature most fully and most authentically,' (Frankfurt, 2002b: 224) or in other words that are in such a degree our own that 'do not accommodate themselves to our thinking. Rather, our thinking accommodates itself to them.' (Frankfurt, 2002b: 224) However, it also suggests that not

only are identification and ownership a presupposition for activity, but that activity is also a presupposition of identification and ownership. Identifying with a desire means being active towards it and being active towards a desire is necessary and sufficient for being able to identify with it. In this sense, authenticity cannot exist without activity and vice versa. Following from this, in his theory, authenticity is equated with identification, which is equated with ownership, and identification presupposes activity, while activity presupposes identification too. Thus, Frankfurt equates authenticity with activity or, at least, activity, in his view, can be considered a both necessary and sufficient condition for authenticity.

In *Contours of Agency*, Frankfurt's 'Reply' to Moran includes a number of interesting points. He writes: 'In his [Moran's] view identifying with something like a thought or a desire consists in "assuming some kind of active stance toward it".' (Frankfurt, 2002b: 218) For Moran, Frankfurt's grouping of the internal/external and active/passive distinctions makes sense for sensations and bodily movements but not for attitudes and mental states. In order to support the distinction between attitudes and sensations in terms of a person's responsibility towards them, Moran refers to the connection of it with activity, which for him presupposes identification. He attempts the same equation between the agent's ownership of beliefs and attitudes and her activity towards them. In other words, one is active with respect to an attitude if this attitude is one's own and in this sense one has endorsed and identified with it. Hence, in Moran's view too, activity is equated with authenticity.

Activity, however, cannot operate as a sufficient condition for authenticity, since a person, even when she is active with respect to an attitude, could have been manipulated into being active or into wanting to be active towards it.[1] Even if the person identifies with a desire based on higher-order reflection, her second-order desires may be a product of external manipulation. Consider the case of a person who is hypnotized by agents of the secret service of a country in order to murder the prime minister and to confess afterwards that he had personal or ideological reasons to do so. This person will certainly believe that his self is both active towards his second order desires and, since he identifies with those, active towards his first order desires too. In reality though, he has been manipulated into believing this and committing a crime, which he did not authentically desire to commit in the first place. Thus, one may be active towards a desire, while inauthentic with respect to it. Moreover, this same argument may just as easily be made against all of the other internalist conditions with which I deal in this paper, i.e. wholeheartedness, all kinds of reflection, and

[1] This is discussed in depth in Mele's *Autonomous Agents* (2005) and Christman's 'Autonomy and Personal History' (1991) and *The Politics of Persons* (2009).

having any kind of subjective reasons for desiring or doing something.

This said, I shall argue that activity, besides not being a sufficient condition for authenticity, is not a necessary condition for it either. The distinction between authenticity and activity should be clear. If a person is active that does not mean in any sense that she is necessarily authentic, i.e. it is possible for a person to be authentic but passive. It is often thought that when a person experiences a strong emotion that overwhelms her, she is passive towards it, since she can do nothing to control it. Even so, she might be completely authentic with respect to it since it may arise from her internally generated attitudes.

Consider the following example:

Unfaithfulness. A person meets someone and they both experience an extreme sexual connection between them. They authentically desire to sleep with each other. However, both of them are in strong relationships and they know that besides the sexual connection they share nothing else, while each of them has countless things in common with their current partner. Despite that, they go on and spend the night together. A common friend tells on them and they both end up divorced from their partners and unable to see each other again because of guilt or because they do not fit at all in everyday life.

The desire that these two persons experienced was so strong that they both felt passive with respect to it, and they could do nothing to control or change it. If they had been able to reflect properly (either rationally or not) on this desire they would have probably avoided having sex, and they would probably be better off afterwards. However, this does not change the fact that what both authentically desired at that moment was to sleep with each other. They may be considered passive with respect to this desire that surpasses any form of their rational resistance and gets control of them, but that does not mean that they are not also authentic with respect to it. In other words, this might have just been a strongly authentic desire that rendered them passive.

However, in many cases the question of passivity and activity might be more complex than it looks. In this sense, it would be better to speak of cases where the agent *experiences* something as active or passive and not necessarily *is* active or passive, since in reality one may be active in both cases. Attitudes, which are generally considered passive, may be actually active in cases that are direct responses of the person towards the stimuli that caused them. For instance, even inertia may be an active response in many instances. Nevertheless, when one is either active or passive, or even when one experiences an attitude as being passive towards it, while in reality one may be, in a different sense, active, one can be authentic with respect to it.

Authenticity and activity should come apart as notions. Authenticity does not require activity in order to obtain, i.e. activity is neither necessary nor sufficient for authenticity.

3. *Wholeheartedness*

In Frankfurt's view, identification with a desire requires a certain sort of stability or equilibrium with respect to one's attitude towards it; this is the role of wholeheartedness. For him, wholeheartedness means having a higher-order desire without reservation or other conflicting higher-order desires. Authenticity with respect to, or identification with, a desire is a matter of being reflectively satisfied with it, and this in turn is a matter of being wholehearted with respect to it. He writes: 'Now I will try to develop a more fully articulated understanding of what it is to be wholehearted, by construing it as tantamount to the enjoyment of a kind of self-satisfaction.' (Frankfurt, 1999: 102) and 'Identification is constituted neatly by an endorsing higher-order desire with which the person is satisfied.' (Frankfurt, 1999: 105) Thus, for Frankfurt wholeheartedness is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for self-ownership of the attitudes, i.e. for authenticity. However, I shall argue that it is neither sufficient nor necessary.

Frankfurt conceives ambivalence as a volitional division in the self that keeps an agent from settling upon or from tolerating any coherent affective or motivational identity. A person is ambivalent when she is moved by preferences regarding her desires that are incompatible. For Frankfurt, ambivalence is constituted by conflicting volitional movements which meet two conditions: Firstly, they are by their nature opposed and secondly, they are both wholly internal to a person's will rather than alien to him, i.e. she is not passive with respect to them. Conflicts involving first-order psychic elements alone do not pertain to the will; conflicts that pertain to the will arise out of a person's higher-order reflective attitudes. But even conflicts that do implicate a person's will are nonetheless distinct from ambivalence if some of the psychic forces they involve are exogenous – that is, if the person is not identified with them and they are, in that sense, external to her will. This leads Frankfurt to claim that if ambivalence is to be understood as an illness of the will, then for the will to be healthy it should be unified and wholehearted (Frankfurt, 1999: 100-1, 106-7).

In my view, wholeheartedness seems like an ideal that can be reached only in specific and rare cases. I can imagine how I could wholeheartedly decide with whom I generally want to spend the following years of my life, but in issues met in everyday life the state of wholeheartedness is not so clear. Most decisions we make are outcomes of conflict, but we rarely come out of this conflict with the feeling of wholeheartedness that Frankfurt describes. More

than often we make a decision with some doubts or ambivalent thoughts about it. A part of ours might still want to decide to follow the other option. That is not to say, of course, that authentic decisions and actions cannot exist, but rather that wholeheartedness need not be a necessary condition for considering them such. I may authentically desire to cheat on my partner but that does not mean that I do it wholeheartedly, or I may have an authentic desire for self-harm but that does not mean that I harm myself wholeheartedly. A part of me might still want to do otherwise, even though doing otherwise might not be authentic. In this sense, wholeheartedness cannot operate as a sufficient condition for authenticity. Besides, the example of manipulation, mentioned in the previous section, stands here too. One may be manipulated in desiring wholeheartedly to act in a certain way. What remains, therefore, is to prove that it cannot operate as a necessary condition either.

Frankfurt explores the question of whether it is possible for a person to be satisfied with ambivalence. He takes for granted that we necessarily desire in a wholehearted way to be wholehearted: 'But no one can desire to be ambivalent for its own sake. It is a necessary truth about us, that we wholeheartedly desire to be wholehearted.' (Frankfurt, 1999: 106) However, I cannot see how this can be taken to be an axiom. There are people who prefer to be in a state of ambivalence, people who experience panic when they are with both legs on the one side of things. They may feel that by identifying themselves with only one desire out of two they become one-sided and they lose the complexity of their multisided nature. They may feel trapped by wholeheartedness, whereas their authentic state may be ambivalence and levitation between two or more equally authentic desires.

One may remain completely indecisive between two partners that one may have at a certain period of time. One may feel that choosing to be with only one of them would be inauthentic, since suppressing one's desire for the other partner would render one inauthentic with respect to this decision. In this case one may prefer the ambivalent state of being between both partners and not with each one exclusively. Thus, there may exist cases in which one may be authentic only when one levitates constantly between two different desires, whether these are irrelevant and unrelated to each other or they are conflicting.

At another point Frankfurt claims that the ambivalence of a person obstructs the way of a possible existence of a certain truth about this person; there exists neither truth nor lie about this person: 'This is why ambivalence, like self-deception, is an enemy of truth…[H]is ambivalence stands in the way of there being a certain truth about him at all. He is inclined in one direction, and he is inclined in a contrary direction as well; and his attitude toward these inclinations is unsettled. Thus, it is true of him neither that he prefers one of his alter-

natives, nor that he prefers the other, nor that he likes them equally.' (Frankfurt, 1999: 100) Could we, however, accept such an argument in this case? In my opinion, we cannot. The state of ambivalence may be part of the agent's authentic nature. Referring back to the discussion of the previous section, even if activity is lost because of the state of ambivalence, we may say that the agent is authentically passive, as long as the agent's authenticity is manifested more truly in a state of ambiguity.

Let us consider Agamemnon's case:

Agamemnon's love. Agamemnon needs to choose between sacrificing his daughter Iphigenia so that the Greek army can set out for Troy and win the war and keeping his daughter alive but losing the war. His parental love comes in clear contradiction with his desire to win.

Which of the two is Agamemnon's authentic desire? Perhaps both his love for his daughter and his desire to win the war are authentic desires but at the same time conflicting. However, he has to choose to act on only one of the two. If both desires are equally authentic, then are both potential decisions to be considered equally authentic too? For now, we may concentrate on the fact that whichever desire Agamemnon chooses to follow he is not going to be wholehearted with respect to it. However, that does not mean that he will not be authentic with respect to it either. Especially in the case that both conflicting desires are equally authentic, then whichever desire he decides to follow, his action will be just as authentic as the other. In this sense, wholeheartedness is not necessary for authenticity.

This said, two desires may be equally authentic. If these desires conflict, one may experience a state of pure ambivalence. This has both an important advantage and an important disadvantage. The advantage is that whichever desire one ends up following, one will be authentic with respect to it. The disadvantage is that one will have to sacrifice a part of oneself in following one of the desires and suppressing the other. This is evident in the case of Agamemnon. Each one of the available choices that he has leads him to an authentic path; however, he cannot move forward without making an unbearable sacrifice, and this is exactly what creates the essence of his tragedy, what makes him a tragic hero.

Nevertheless, Frankfurt might raise a certain objection to this. He might argue that one could be wholehearted with respect to both conflicting desires, i.e. be equally wholehearted in regard to each of them. What if Agamemnon was wholehearted with respect to both of his conflicting desires? But this is not a coherent possibility. Firstly, in order to be wholehearted, one's heart needs to be whole in regard to a certain attitude. Secondly, even if we do not take the word literally and we only refer to the abstract, metaphorical concept of whole-

heartedness, I cannot see how one could desire absolutely one thing and at the same time desire absolutely another conflicting thing too. When conflicts exist; division takes place. This does not imply that because one cannot desire something in an absolute way, one cannot be authentic. As life goes on and one's inner nature expands, one may experience potentially more and more conflicts. Regardless of this, authenticity may still obtain, even in respect to conflicting attitudes. Which one, however, is more authentic depends on its degree and not on whether it is endorsed absolutely by a person who identifies with it in an absolute wholehearted way. The self, even though in a certain sense it may seem unified macroscopically, experiences certain conflicts which can be compatible mainly with a fragmented conception of it. Authenticity, nonetheless, is not necessarily obstructed when in ambivalence or conflict. Besides, at times, a person's inner nature may be genuinely authentic when in ambivalence or conflict.

Based on the above, I argue that wholeheartedness is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for authenticity. A person can be authentic with respect to an attitude without, in any sense, being wholehearted towards it.

4. *Reflection*

As mentioned, the significant majority of accounts of autonomy and authenticity take rational reflection to be a necessary condition, except for Frankfurt's account in which reflection need not be rational. In the first subsection I deal with the condition of rational reflection[2], while in the second subsection I deal with Frankfurt's 'mere' reflection.

4.1. Rational reflection

Both in Alfred Mele's and John Christman's conceptions, rational reflection (either actual or hypothetical) is necessary for authenticity. Mele argues that in order for one to be authentic one's beliefs should be conducive to one's informed deliberation and that one should be a reliable deliberator (Mele, 1995: 187), while Christman devotes almost half of his conditions to the capacity of the agent to critically reflect (Christman, 2009: 155). The reason why most theorists tend to provide a condition of rational reflection for authenticity is because they believe that through this they avoid the danger of manipulation or other-directedness, which, as already mentioned, is evident in higher-order reflection theories. This, however, leads to a miscomprehension between the notions of activity, rational reflection and authenticity. In these thinkers' views, in order for one to be au-

[2] I will be using the terms critical reflection and rational reflection interchangeably while referring to the same form of reflection based on the faculty of reasoning.

thentic one needs to be active, and in order for one to be active one necessarily needs to be able to rationally reflect. That is why they consider the capacity for rational reflection as at least a necessary condition for authenticity.

Turning now to Alfred Mele, in the first part of his book *Autonomous Agents* (1995) he discusses the notions of akrasia and self-control, arguing that self-control is the basis for autonomy.[3] He clarifies that self-control by itself cannot ensure autonomy, since the agent may be self-controlled, while, however, controlling herself in accordance with values and beliefs that are products of external manipulation. In the second part of his book he proposes the addition that must be made to self-control in order for autonomy to exist: authenticity. For Mele, in order for a pro-attitude to be possessed autonomously, it should be also possessed authentically.

Thus, it is clear that for Mele autonomy consists of self-control and authenticity. Even an ideally self-controlled person cannot be autonomous if the condition for authenticity is not met. For him, as with Dworkin, the capacity of one to reflect critically upon one's preferences and desires, and the ability either to identify with these or to change them in light of higher-order preferences and values, is necessary for autonomy. However, in order for autonomy to exist something more is required and this is where the historical aspect appears. Since for Mele autonomy is not simply an internalist matter, like it is for Frankfurt and Dworkin, the history of the individual and the formation of her characteristics play a significant role. This makes his conception an externalist one. As proven especially by his 2* condition (Mele, 1995: 171-2), he is interested in the history of the formation of each characteristic in order to distinguish whether it is a history which is authenticity-enabling or authenticity-blocking. In this sense, his conception of authenticity is clearly history-sensitive.

However, a number of thinkers acknowledge that rational reflection cannot be sufficient by itself as a sole condition for authenticity. Mele, while criticizing higher-order reflection theories, summarises the crucial weakness of rational reflection:

> Possession of a capacity for critical reflection is a plausible requirement for autonomy. But the problem of value engineering…suggests that even a robust and effectively exercised capacity of this kind is not sufficient for psychological autonomy…If the perspective from which an agent critically reflects upon his first order preferences and

[3] The condition of self-control, which has been common to thinkers of freedom and autonomy, has its origins in Descartes's model of rational control and more importantly in Locke's rebuilding and redefinition of Descartes's theory of rational control of the self. Locke develops an idea of a process of self-remaking from which it is concluded that a person instead of blindly following the *telos* of nature may formulate one's own self.

desires at a time is dominated by values produced by brainwashing and dominated in such a way as to dictate the results of his critical reflection it is difficult to view the reflection as autonomously conducted and the results as autonomously produced. (Mele, 1995: 147)

Mele believes that in order to determine whether values and preferences are authentic we need to look to their history, and that it is therefore possible to solve these problems by supplementing a higher-order reflection theory with a historical condition. The problem, nevertheless, exists not only in the history of the formation of values and preferences, but also in the history of the formation of the processes of rationality and reflection themselves. Obviously there can be authentic preferences formulated and located through rationality and reflection, but it is inadequate to consider them the sole conditions for authenticity. In the same way as values, beliefs and desires may be manipulatively imposed on the agent, certain processes of reasoning or reflection may be manipulatively imposed on one too. Besides, this commonly occurs in societies during the upbringing in the early stages of persons' lives through various forms of social conditioning.

In other words, it is not only the material on which the agent reflects or reasons, i.e. values, beliefs etc., that may be manipulatively imposed, but also the process of rational reflection itself, the way in which the agent interprets, develops and uses those values and beliefs, that may be manipulatively imposed too. Having good reasons for desiring something does not mean that one authentically desires it, but more importantly, even if it did mean that, what the agent considers good or bad reasons for having a desire, i.e. one's way of reasoning, should be formulated authentically to begin with. Thinkers who develop historical conditions for authenticity, as Mele and Christman do, tend to neglect this latter aspect.

Furthermore, while concentrating on the relationship between authenticity and autonomy, Mele discusses the case of someone who voluntarily decides to be manipulated in order to promote her autonomy (e.g. she allows herself to be hypnotised in order to quit smoking). This is an interesting case which incorporates the crucial reason why the distinction between authenticity and autonomy is important. If one decided that a particular desire was inauthentic, then it would make sense to choose autonomously to reject it. But what if one's desire was authentic and one autonomously decided to reject it?

Based on Cal's case, an ex-smoker who is happy with her decision to quit smoking but sometimes still experiences a desire to smoke, Mele claims that even if the desires of an agent are not manifestations of her autonomy, the agent may be autonomous in continuing to have them. It would be interesting to consider Mele's argument in terms of authenticity in order to possibly stretch out a

crucial difference between autonomy and authenticity. Think of a person who quit smoking last year but now desires to smoke a cigarette. Even though she has autonomously quit smoking for a year and she continues to rationally believe that she should not smoke, she may, while meeting Mele's requirements for authenticity, authentically desire to have a smoke. If she lights one up, she is authentically non-autonomous. In addition, based on Dworkin's theory, consider a person who experiences a first order desire to quit his job in order to travel with an old bike all the way through Pan-American Highway in Latin America. He experiences, however, a second-order desire that dictates him to keep his job in order to be able to retain his costly way of living. Although, he concludes after rational reflection that he should follow his second-order desire, he does not, and he embarks for Latin America. This person also is authentically non-autonomous.

Since most conceptions require the capacity for rational reflection in order for authenticity to obtain, it can be argued, based on their views, that emotions can compromise authenticity. However, there may be cases in which reasoning may compromise equally, or even more, the authenticity of emotions. For instance, in the case of Agamemnon, if, for the sake of this argument, we consider parental love a deeper emotion that originates before it is endorsed through reflective reasoning and the desire to win the war an outcome of rational reflection based on good reasons, we understand that, in some cases, rational thinking may compromise and constrain authentic desires through putting limits on the manifestations of our authentic attitudes. Given this, we could assume that sacrificing his daughter is a desire rational for him and the others, but completely inauthentic for him. In this sense we notice that through rational reflection authenticity is not guaranteed, since after serious and even independent rational reflection, one may decide to neglect one's authentic desire in order to follow an inauthentic desire, simply because one's reasoning and rational reflection dictate one to do so. What I am suggesting is that in the same way as autonomy theorists have argued that rationality should be the sole tool for determining the authentic attitudes of a person, the person's creative processes may be in turn the tool for determining her authentic processes of reasoning and reflection. Besides, as I shall argue elsewhere, it is my view that creative attitudes are the ones that create the reasons on which authentic reasoning should be based and not vice versa.

As mentioned, many thinkers claim that for one to be authentic with respect to a desire, one must critically reflect on it. This presupposes that an agent must have good reasons in order to identify or endorse a desire, and that one is capable of discovering or developing these good reasons through rational reflection. However, Frankfurt disagrees with this. His notion of reflection, which I discuss in more detail in the next subsection, does not involve rationality. He writes:

> Identification and wholeheartedness are volitional states that necessarily create reasons but that do not otherwise depend upon them. We can identify with various psychic elements, and we can be wholehearted in various thoughts and attitudes, without having any reasons for doing so. On the other hand, it is in virtue of these states of our wills that certain things count for us as reasons. (Frankfurt, 2002b: 218)

Take, for example, the passivity, or potential inauthenticity, of an akratic or mentally ill person. Moran (2002: 192-3) claims that what characterizes her is the absence of rational endorsement, which for Frankfurt is different from mere approval. For Moran an unwilling narcotics addict is passive towards her desire for the drug because she does not endorse that desire rationally. He claims that since a person's intentional attitudes are supported by reasons, one identifies more with them than with one's sensations, as the former reflect more accurately who we are than the latter. For Frankfurt (2002b: 219), on the other hand, whether the endorsement is rational or not does not make a difference in rendering the addict active towards the desire.

Taking Frankfurt's argument one step further, a person may identify with certain desires without having any good reasons, and be completely foolish but still authentic with respect to them. In other words, these desires may be completely irrational but still authentic. On the other hand, a command or an other-directed desire that you take to be rational need not be authentic; this only means that you have reflected on it and it seems to make sense to you. Perhaps you may rationally agree with it and you may be able to understand that it might be authentic to you, but this alone is not adequate. Considering something rational while reflecting on it and deciding to incorporate it, even through identification, cannot adequately prove that you are authentic with respect to it.

In addition, Frankfurt talks about desires that are so deeply rooted in us that we cannot avoid or reject them. I do not agree with Frankfurt that such desires are necessarily authentic, since as Mele and others have pointed out, those desires might be a product of manipulation. I do agree with Frankfurt though that truly authentic desires determine our thinking whereas our thinking and/or reasoning in many cases is unable to determine them, i.e. it is authenticity that creates reasons and not vice versa. These desires are not simply as Frankfurt claims 'stronger than we are' (Frankfurt, 2002b: 224), they might be exactly what we are. They might be stronger than our reasoning and rational reflection, but this is perhaps why they constitute and manifest what we are more faithfully. They reach aspects of us that lie beyond reasons. The fact that one locates certain reasons for a desire is neither necessary nor sufficient for it being actually authentic; on the contrary, the fact that one experiences a desire as authentic is a strong reason by itself to accept it as such and this can itself generate reasons.

In order to shed more light on this argument, we could refer to one of Frankfurt's examples, in which a mother believes that what would be rationally best would be to give up her child for adoption, but she finds that she cannot go through with it (Frankfurt, 2002a: 149-151, 160-1). For Gary Watson this is a kind of defeat, since he claims that: '[T]he second outcome [i.e. to give her child away] leaves her with a kind of volitional or authorial integrity that is not achieved in the other case' (Watson, 2002: 150), while for Frankfurt it may be a liberation (in any case, more information about the mother is required in order to reach a sound conclusion). It seems to me that even if the mother rationally decided to give her child away, this would mean that she would have decided to act inauthentically, i.e. to overcome her authentic desire and act without its influence on her; in other words, to impose on herself a rational necessity in order to overcome her authentic one. The mother, after rationally reflecting, might have more than good reasons to give her child away, but that does not mean that it would be authentic of her to do so. Given this, the mother might act completely irrationally, both in the sense of acting against her best judgment based on good reasons and, as I shall argue, of acting against other unreflective reasons that she may have, and still be authentic. We do not always agree with or find rational our authentic desires, and we do not always identify with them, but this does not mean that they are not authentic.

In this sense, rationality and reasoning may be inadequate to help us in distinguishing our authentic desires from our inauthentic ones. The concept of the rational agent cannot represent the whole nature of a person and it seems wrong to base our conception of authenticity on an agential idea that excludes other fundamental aspects of our inner nature. The equation of human nature with rationality is a distorted, one-sided ideal that constricts and confines both the actuality and the potentiality of human nature. For reasons already mentioned, like manipulation through implantation of second order desires, I consider self-reflection inadequate too. Thus, the solution lies in understanding how these desires can be authentic without necessarily invoking our ability to critically reflect or our taking ourselves to have good reasons for having them.

Rational reflection is neither necessary nor sufficient for authenticity. One can be absolutely authentic without the use of rational reflection or without even the hypothetical capacity for it. However, that does not mean that I agree with Frankfurt's conception, since, as I argue in the next subsection, reflection of any kind is not necessary for authenticity either.

4.2. Mere reflection

Frankfurt takes reflection to be a condition for authenticity, but he does not require this reflection to be rational. Having good reasons for identifying with

an attitude through reflection may not be involved at all in his view. However, his notion of reflection experiences an unavoidable flaw. The common counter-argument to Frankfurt's conception of higher-order reflection is the historical objection to which I referred in the second section. Mele (2005) and Christman (2009) have developed their objection by proving the possibility of manipulation of one's higher-order desires. One cannot be considered authentic based solely on one's processes of reflection and endorsement. This alone is enough to prove that reflection, even without the rational/critical aspect, cannot operate as a sufficient condition for authenticity.

What is more, Frankfurt argumentation is not adequately convincing in considering that we can conclude whether a desire is internal or external only through the processes of reflection and identification. I argue that one can be absolutely authentic without the use of any kind of reflection. Consider the following example:

In search of the authentic foot. A dancer or actress who self-choreographs her kinesiology for an art performance is looking for which of her two legs she should use as the centre of expression of her movements. The obvious answer that she should use her good foot, admittedly does not involve the artistically meaningful dimension that she seeks. Thus, a colleague of hers, as she tries different versions – which she films and does not want to interrupt them – approaches her and, without her knowing, suddenly pushes her. Instinctively she puts one foot in front of her, not the good one, in order to avoid the fall, but at the same time not to spoil the attempt of a choreographic ensemble of that version. In this way, she realizes that the answer to her dilemma has been revealed.

She could not have figured out which leg she would like to use as the canter of her kinesiology only through rational and/or mere reflection. The reason her colleague pushed her without warning was because, in order to find it, she had to trust her instinct without further thought. Of course, the reflection was useful later, since based on this she could decide which foot to use in order to better express the artistic meaning of her performance. But in order to detect it, she first needed the help of her instinctive reaction. Obviously, finding one's authentic foot is a physical characteristic of the body and thus significantly different from attitudes. However, I use this example as an analogy in order to argue that the same also stands for attitudes and decisions. Consider another example:

Ionesco's Bérenger. Bérenger is the central character in Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. In the play the inhabitants of a small, provincial French town turn into rhinoceroses; ultimately the only human who does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis is the

central character, Bérenger. The play is often read as a metaphor and criticism of the sudden upsurge of Fascism and Nazism.

Bérenger, before being able to rationalize why he feels the need to go against the 'Rhinoceritidis', experiences that need as an intuitive reaction. He says: 'Now I 'll never become a rhinoceros, never, never! I 've gone past changing. I want to, I really do, but I can't, I just can't…People who try to hang on to their individuality always come to a bad end! Oh well, too bad! I 'll take on the whole of them! I 'll put up a fight against the lot of them the whole lot of them! I'm the last man left, and I'm staying that way until the end. I'm not capitulating!' (Ionesco, 1960: 107) For the time being, a deeper intuitive reaction is revealing to him his authentic desire and guides him in remaining authentic. Bérenger experiences, in the form of a feeling instead of a reflective conclusion, the need to resist. He does not raise any rational or intellectual arguments against the '*Rhinoceritidis*', he simply experiences a strong need for resistance against it and a robust feeling that he would be alienated were he to succumb to it.

According to this, one could argue that Bérenger could be considered a wanton in Frankfurt's sense. Frankfurt defines a wanton as an agent with no second-order volitions who does not care what she wills (Frankfurt, 1988: 16-7). An individual who is a wanton may have rational faculties of a higher order, but she is not concerned with the desirability of her desires, or with what her will ought to be. Frankfurt claims that a wanton's identity is her first-order desires. However, why can there not be cases in which those first-order desires are authentic? Since a wanton's identity is her first-order desires, then if those are authentic, she is authentic too. Besides, a first-order desire might be much more authentic than one's reflective desire to be a person that would desire and will something different. Furthermore, in Frankfurt's view, a wanton has no stake in the conflict between two desires and, as the one desire prevails and the other is left unsatisfied, the wanton is neither a winner nor a loser. But, what Frankfurt has not taken into account is that if the wanton is authentic in the state of ambivalence, i.e. authentically desires to experience ambivalence, then she can be satisfied by remaining in such a state.

Imagine an authentic wanton; for instance, a child dancing freely. Bérenger does resist the transformation and he clearly chooses between becoming a rhinoceros or not. He may not have or acknowledge good reasons for doing so, like the child who dances freely, since his feeling of resistance to this transformation operates as a reason itself. Thus, Bérenger, despite of whether he is a wanton or not, even if he had been 'trapped' in a state of ambivalence, he would have had equal chances to be authentic.

That form of resistance is an outcome of authenticity coming from an intuitive feeling as opposed to a more rational way of reflective thinking (which from time to time and from society to society may be conceived differently). Even if at a first glance that non-rational 'inner voice' might seem completely irrational, it still remains authentic. That inner voice may be understood as a strong, almost robust inclination that has been formed not necessarily by rational reflection but by emotions or an intuitive feeling that the agent has not rationalized yet. This may seem to be in line with Frankfurt's point. However, as I shall argue, this by itself is not adequate for authenticity. Bérenger's example constitutes a case in which a person may act in the eyes of the others, or even in the eyes of himself, completely unreflectively but completely authentically too. His desire to remain as he is and not to succumb is both unreflective and authentic.

Following from the above, one might be authentic with respect to a desire not only despite a lack of rational endorsement, but also despite a lack of any kind of endorsement or reflection. For example, recall the *Unfaithfulness* example mentioned in Section 2, where two people experience a strong connection and authentically desire to sleep with each other. Whether they do so or not, this was an authentic desire, whereas the one produced by reflection might be inauthentic and other-directed. I do not intend to suggest that first-order desires are necessarily more authentic than second-order desires. My aim is simply to claim that there are equal possibilities of first-order and second-order desires being authentic or inauthentic. In this sense, reflection in general is not only an insufficient condition for authenticity, but also an unnecessary one.

5. *Unreflective reasons*

I have argued that reflection is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition of authenticity. However, another line of argumentation has also been suggested. Nomy Arpaly (2003) argues that one can base one's attitudes and decisions on good reasons that one has not reflected on. A possible extension of Arpaly's view might hold that one can be authentic with respect to an attitude only if one has good reasons for it – even if one has not reflected on these reasons. I shall argue that good reasons of any kind, even unreflective, are neither necessary nor sufficient for authenticity.

More precisely, Arpaly's account implies that in cases that one may act without an articulated reason in mind, one should not come to the conclusion that one is acting irrationally but rather consider the possibility that one is acting on good reasons which one simply has not yet articulated. In the same sense, when one tends to act against one's 'considered judgment' – the judgment one makes on the basis of the reasons one can articulate – one should not automati-

cally conclude that acting on this inclination would be irrational, but rather one should consider also the possibility that one is acting on good reasons which one may not have articulated yet. Let us consider Huckleberry Finn's (Twain, 2008) case:

> *Huckleberry Finn*. Finn saves his friend Jim, an escaped slave, by not turning him in to the authorities, even though this was illegal. Arpaly concludes that Finn is praiseworthy because he is responsive to the right reasons. Even though he cannot correctly represent those reasons as moral reasons, and he himself does not understand the nature of his actions, Arpaly suggests that he is right with respect to them.

Finn, however, may have not acted on the basis of a reason. Finn may have acted in the way he did out of an attitude, which is not necessarily based on other kinds of beliefs but mostly on intuitive feelings like empathy and sympathy for a fellow human being and, in this case, a friend. However, one could argue that those feelings of empathy and sympathy are responsive to moral reasons to begin with. Given that, an agent that acts based on other beliefs that may not be rational in any sense, reflective or unreflective, may nevertheless still do so authentically. If we assume, for the sake of the argument, that even if there were no good reasons, even unreflective, for saving his friend, i.e. that for Finn neither acting on moral reasons nor saving his friend was important for him, this would not prove that Finn did not save him authentically. It may be important for moral reasons to base the moral worth of actions on having good reasons for such actions, but in relation to authenticity having reasons of any kind is not relevant. Arpaly's theory is fruitful in the sense that she proves the non-importance of deliberation or reflection in actually acting rationally or being self-controlled. However, in terms of authenticity one more step is required in arguing that being rational in any sense and having good reasons for a decision or action is not necessary for acting authentically either.

In my view, in order for an attitude to be authentic, the reasons for it not only should not necessarily be known, but also they should not necessarily be good, and, in fact, they should not necessarily exist at all. What I discussed in the previous section stands for Arpaly's theory too. Attitudes that are authentic to a person may be the source of unreflective reasons and not vice versa or they may operate as reasons themselves and the authenticity of the former should not be based on the latter. Following from this, reasons of any kind are not necessary for authenticity. They might of course obtain and they might often be in line with the person's authentic attitude, but it is not they that constitute an attitude authentic.

For instance, in Frankfurt's case of the mother and the adoption, she has explicit reasons for wanting to give away the child, while she has inchoate reasons for wanting to keep it. None of these reasons, however, are adequate to render

her attitude to give her child away or to keep it authentic. The feeling or intuition that creates the attitude of the mother to keep her child need not be based on any kind of reason, reflective or unreflective, in order for her to be authentic with respect to it. In further support of this, let us consider one more example:

Authentically self-destructive person. Her reasons may not be good even for her, they may not make any sense even through the prism of her strong depression, but she continues to act in a self-destructive way that leads her to suicide.

The desire of this person to kill herself, even though she may not have any reason to do so, may still be more authentic than rationally deciding to avoid it. Even in the case that she considers all the good reasons not to act in such a way, they are still not strong enough to overcome her desire to harm herself. Committing suicide in her situation may be something completely irrational. This, however, does not prove that it is also something inauthentic. Irrational or non-rational persons can be authentic and in some occasions they can be even more authentic than rational persons.

6. *Conclusion*

I have argued that the prominent contemporary autonomy conceptions can be divided into three categories, those which consider authenticity as i) necessary and sufficient for autonomy, ii) necessary but insufficient for autonomy, and iii) neither necessary nor sufficient for autonomy. Therefore, the line between where authenticity ends and autonomy begins and more importantly where the two overlap (if they actually do) is hard to be distinguished based on them. In addition, we have highlighted that many thinkers take for granted that authenticity should be based on rationality and self-reflection, i.e. on the exact same elements that autonomy is based on too. Given this, the occasions when authenticity comes into direct conflict with autonomy tend to be neglected and unexplored. If a more enriched and inclusive account of authenticity is proposed, not based only on the same features as autonomy, then authenticity could not simply be the basis of autonomy. Identification should not be misunderstood as either authenticity or autonomy per se. In terms of authenticity, there are cases that the person might not be able to identify with a desire of hers but still this desire to be authentic of hers. In this sense, Frankfurt's and Christman's theories of autonomy, even though they are equated with their understanding of authenticity, remain theories closer to the essence of autonomy than to authenticity. Moreover, I understand Dworkin's and Mele's theories as mainly theories of autonomy, which misuse the nature and role of authenticity in regard to autonomy. This said, the theories to which I referred are theories of autonomy that

are identified with or based on authenticity.

Even if most thinkers tend to identify authenticity with autonomy or, at least, consider the one a core condition for the other, it is my view that for a person to be authentic with respect to an attitude, not only rationality and good reasons but also activity, wholeheartedness, reflection and unreflective reasons are neither necessary nor sufficient. Following from this, since the aforementioned conditions traditionally describe autonomy, we should distinguish the different nature and roles that authenticity and autonomy have in our everyday life. Frankfurt's theory has critical flaws, since it does not take into account the personal history and development of the person. On the other hand, theories which incorporate the personal history of the agent are restricted to conditions founded solely on rationality, rendering them weak, inadequate and unrealistic. Nevertheless, the historical aspect is required for an adequate conception of authenticity and it should be retained, but without the necessity of the rational or any other kind of reflection, since, as I have claimed, reflection in any form cannot guarantee authenticity. This said, in short, the historical condition required for authenticity needs to be based on an enriched conception of creativity that I shall develop in a following article and it is developmental, externalist, non-intellectualist, non-rationalist and content-neutral.

More precisely, in contrast to the majority of prominent theorists of autonomy and authenticity, who base their conceptions of authenticity on rationality, I shall base mine on creativity, while I also explore other relevant notions, such as novelty, originality, and imagination. Furthermore, while all theories of authenticity require the existence of a true self or at least some kind of self, I shall put forward a conception that is not a 'self-expression' view of authenticity; that is, the theory proposed will not require a substantial theory of the self. Creativity has been widely understood as the production of something that is original and valuable in some way. My aim is to develop a conception of creativity designed specifically to help us understand authenticity. I shall focus on what a creative process is, and understand it in terms of a psychological conception of novelty and of sensitivity in regard to the intrinsic value of the creative outcome.

It would be, however, a critical miscomprehension of my theory to construe it as individualistic and lacking social/relational elements. I am not denying the importance of social interrelations with other persons and social entities in the formulation of authentic creations. On the contrary, the account proposed involves both social and asocial aspects. Besides, there cannot exist ex-nihilo creations, i.e. outcomes of parthenogenesis. Whereas manipulation, oppression and coercion bypass creativity and authenticity, more voluntary forms of influence enhance them. One is endlessly creating one's inner nature, not through an inward self-directed direction, but in a constant creative feedback with one's so-

cial reality. Both individual and social life can be radically transformed through creativity, and in this sense creativity and authenticity are capable of potentially playing a crucial transformative role in both an individual and a collective level.

Against the simplification of founding authenticity solely on reflective rationality, my aim is to grasp a more complete image of our nature. In my view, creativity is a more wholly human capacity than mere rationality and in this respect is more appropriate to operate as a core condition of authenticity. Hence, based on the above, I shall argue for a new view of authenticity and its relation to autonomy. The motivation behind the view I am considering is to pull apart authenticity from autonomy, reflective rationality and the self, which I believe seriously restrict it, and to direct it towards imaginativeness and creativity, where it may be more at home.

Nikos Erinakis
Department of Philosophy, University of Athens
nikos.erinakis@gmail.com

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