

NIKOS ERINAKIS*

AUTHENTICITY AS CREATIVITY**

1. Introduction

Most contemporary theories of autonomy either do not distinguish between authenticity and autonomy, or else they take authenticity to be a core condition for autonomy. In my view, a redefinition of the notion of *authenticity* and a reconsideration of its conditions are required. Both the higher-order endorsement models and the externalist historical models of authenticity display serious weaknesses; in other words, the capacities of activity, wholeheartedness, rational and mere reflection, and both reflective and unreflective reasons do not adequately operate as either necessary or sufficient conditions for authenticity. This opens the way to the idea that, when distinguishing which attitudes are authentic, we should look not only to rationality and reflection but also to feelings, emotions, intuitions and imagination—as long as they are *creative*.

Due to the limited length of this paper, rather than further discussing why I believe authenticity does not require the above-mentioned conditions that are proposed by the dominant conceptions, I concentrate on analytically presenting the conditions proposed here. In contrast to the vast majority of prominent thinkers, who base their conceptions of authenticity on rationality and reflection, I base mine on *creativity*. Creativity has been widely understood as the creation of something both original and valuable. I develop a novel conception of creativity, which is designed to help us understand authenticity. I focus on what a creative process is, and I define it in terms of a conception of novelty and of sensitivity to the intrinsic value of the creative outcome. In light of this, I formulate a necessary and sufficient historical, externalist, anti-intellectualist, non-rationalist and content-neutral condition for authenticity.

* Nikos Erinakis received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Universities of London and Oxford.

** This paper was presented at the 8th Annual Conference of the International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry (ISME) that was co-organized by the Department of Philosophy of the University of Ioannina and the Department of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and was convened on July 9-12, 2014 at the Main Building of the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece.

A widespread presupposition underlying many theories of authenticity is that there is a substantial self lying deep within each of us, a self with attributes that are both distinctively our own and profoundly important as guides for how we ought to live. Up until now, the project of authenticity has involved living in such a way that in all actions one expresses one's true self. However, empiricist, neuroscientific and postmodern lines of thought have vividly challenged the existence of the self. We cannot confidently refer to a privileged truth lying within the individual self or to a form of steadiness that is reached through identifying wholeheartedly with attitudes. The premises to "be yourself" or "be true to who you are" are misleading. I argue that authenticity lies in the activity of creation itself and not in a form of self that is hidden within the person. It is not a matter of having an authentic mind, but rather of the ability of the mind to create authentic attitudes. Thus, the conception that I have put forward is not a view of authenticity as self-expression. Besides, taking for granted that our selves are pre-given and unified, means accepting that they are ready-made, which results in the suppression of our potentiality to become what we would like to be.

2. What Creativity is

Make it new.
—Ezra Pound

In the existing literature, creativity is generally understood as the creation of something that is both original and valuable in some way. Let us look closer at some of the most widely accepted contemporary conceptions of it. Most current accounts of creativity require either a combination of novelty and appropriateness or a combination of originality and spontaneity. I shall refer to conceptions of creativity that are based on different views of novelty and value, i.e. the distinctiveness of each depends on the different way that each thinker conceives novelty and on the kind of value each one includes as a core condition for creativity.

To put some order to the several different conceptions of creativity, let us begin with Kronsfeldner's (2009) distinction, which is based on four different kinds of novelty: anthropological, psychological, historical and metaphysical. For the purpose of this paper, I shall concentrate on discussing the concepts of 'psychological' creativity (P-creativity) and 'historical' creativity (H-creativity). P-creativity, which is the most widely accepted in contemporary psychological and neurological accounts, requires both originality and spontaneity.¹ The

1. For most contemporary thinkers, originality and spontaneity are commonly understood in the way Kronsfeldner defines them, "Originality is displayed if someone does not copy the traditional form. It refers to a partial opposition between learning and creativity. Spontaneity refers to a certain

anthropological concept of creativity ignores originality and spontaneity, while the metaphysical requires overly demanding degrees of them.² P-creativity involves coming up with a surprising, valuable idea that is new to the person who comes up with it. It does not matter how many people have had this idea before. However, for a new idea to be H-creative, no one else should have had it before: it should have arisen for the first time in history. H-creativity can be divided into ‘relative historical creativity’, which refers to a creation that is new for a group of people who are bound together diachronically and synchronically as a tradition, and ‘objective historical creativity’ which refers to a creation that is new in the sense of making its first appearance in history.

Based, therefore, on the difference of P-creativity and H-creativity, ‘new’ may take two distinct meanings. While H-creativity is important, it is P-creativity that refers to what we are interested in terms of everyday life. In art it may be crucial to know who thought of an idea or who created an artwork for the first time in history. Nevertheless, in everyday life it is equally important to know how a person managed to come up with an idea that she had never thought of and had never come into contact with before, even if other people had thought about it before. In light of all this, the conception of novelty that shall constitute a core necessary condition for my account of creativity is the following:

One’s attitudes and actions are novel when they are new in regard to both the person and the person’s social environment and they manifest an exploration and/or transformation of a conceptual space.

The account of novelty proposed here is personal, psychological and relative-historical. It can be either improbableist or impossibilist. However, novelty alone cannot guarantee creativity, and an equation or identification of creativity with any kind of novelty, even the most demanding, would be misleading and inadequate. A machine or a computer can provide extremely novel outcomes, yet this alone is not adequate to prove that a computer can be creative. Something is missing; something more is required.

Many thinkers have argued that computers should not be considered creative because of the possible randomness of the mechanistic processes on which they

independence from the intentional control and the previously acquired knowledge of the person whose creativity is at issue. It includes a partial opposition between routine production and creativity.” (Kronsfeldner, 2009: 579)

2. Given the limits of this paper, I should only briefly state that the metaphysical creativity experiences the exact opposite problem from the anthropological: instead of being too broad, it is too narrow, to the degree that it is almost unreachable.

operate. My view is that the relation and distinction between creativity and randomness can be better conceived if we understand their connection in the form of a spectrum. Let us imagine that on the one side lies an obsessive painter, whose processes of creation are not creative because they are bypassed by the obsession. In between lie creative creations, for example an abstract expressionists' way of painting, like the one of Pollock or de Kooning, which meets the conditions for creativity that I shall propose. On the other extreme lies a machine, which paints in a completely random and mechanistic way. It is my view that creativity and authenticity often begin where randomness ends (though in some cases the later may enrich the former).

Nevertheless, the possible randomness of the outcome or the process that caused it does not constitute in itself an obstacle to considering an idea or work creative. What worries me most, as I shall further argue, is the inability of a computer to acknowledge either cognitively or emotionally the value of its creation. What primarily distinguishes human from machine production is the sensitivity of the former towards the intrinsic value of his or her creation, which the latter lacks. (If some time in the future a computer is developed, which has the capacity to be aware of the value of what it creates, I would consider it creative. For the time being though such a possibility remains science fiction.)

In light of this, my account of creativity can be articulated through the following conditions based on which a *creative process* is:

- i) *a conscious or unconscious process, which originates from either the conjunction of the person's imagination and intellect, or imagination alone,*
- ii) *and tends to result in novel ideas that are new in regard to both the person and the person's social environment and that manifest an exploration and/or a transformation of a conceptual space,*
- iii) *while the person is sensitive in regard to the value of its outcome.*

Let me further elaborate on these three conditions. The first one aims at suggesting that all psychological processes can potentially be creative despite their nature. That is, any process having its source either in the conscious or the unconscious mind, whether rational or irrational, may produce creative outcomes. There should not exist any rational constraints. Creativity can obtain either deliberately or unconsciously. For most theorists of creativity, creative actions are results of creative cognitive thought processes. By contrast, I hold that processes of imagination combined with emotional and non-cognitive processes might also lead to extremely creative outcomes. Of course, imaginative processes do not necessarily always have their origin in the unconscious. Imagination, and

especially radical imagination, although often non-rational, and in many cases even irrational, may be completely conscious.

As Castoriadis notes, it has been surprisingly neglected that Aristotle in Book III of the treatise *De Anima* speaks of two different kinds of *phantasia*. The first one, which is the one that has been noticed and majorly discussed, is the imitative, reproductive and combinatory imagination, i.e. what has been understood as imagination throughout the centuries. The second one, which has been ignored, is “a totally different *phantasia*, without which there can be no thought and *which possibly precedes any thought.*” (1997: 319; emphasis mine) It is this kind of imagination, the one that precedes any thought, which may be called *radical imagination* and that operates as the origin of anything yet unthinkable; the genuinely novel and innovative creation.

When I speak of imagination, I do not refer only to a capacity that simply recreates visual images of things that the person has already experienced. The kind of imagination referred to here entails the triggering of the person’s ability to create potentially what has not existed before in exactly that form. When this occurs we may speak of *imaginative creativity*, which is based on a kind of imagination that we may call *radical* in order to differentiate it from the simple everyday form of it. Through radical imagination the constitution of one’s creative and authentic internal world is almost ensured. Even though Kant, through the concepts of reproductive and productive imagination, brought imagination back to the centre of philosophical focus, Parmenides and, especially, Socrates may have approached more directly the essence of its radical nature.³

The second condition refers to a conception of novelty that, based on the various different types mentioned above, is: i) personal and psychological, since it should be novel in regard to the person, ii) relative-historical, since it should be novel in regard to the person’s social environment, and iii) either improbableist or impossibilist, since an exploration and/or a transformation of a conceptual space is required, meaning that the person should have the capacity to produce ideas or works that either expand the already known limits of an existing cognitive field or transmute its very nature by rearranging its elements while creating a

3. As Castoriadis explains: “In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (§24, B151) a proper definition is given: ‘Einbildungskraft ist das Vermögen einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen’ - ‘Imagination is the power (the capacity, the faculty) to represent in the intuition an object even without its presence.’ One may note that Parmenides was already saying as much, if not more: ‘Consider how the absent (things) are with certainty present to thought (noo).’ And Socrates was going much further when he asserted that imagination is the power to represent that which is not. Kant goes on to add: ‘As all our intuitions are sensuous, imagination therefore belongs to the sensibility. ‘Of course, just the reverse is true.’ (Castoriadis, 1997: 322)

new one. In this sense, for a creation to be truly creative, it needs to be an unprecedented creation. Such a creation should not be misunderstood as either an *ex nihilo*, in *nihilo* and/or *cum nihilo* creation or as a creation of parthenogenesis. It should be self-evident that the origination of every creation has a number of certain roots and influences. However, for a creation to be unprecedented, it means that its degree of novelty and innovation render it a creation of which the influences and starting points cannot be traced in an obvious way. I believe that this extra aspect of creativity also sheds further light on the improbable and impossible types of creativity. A creation can never emerge out of nothing; a creation always emerges out of a number of things. However, if this creation before its emergence was something unsaid, unwritten, and, more importantly, previously unthinkable, then when it emerges it is so radically new that it creates its own novel space. Nevertheless, it is imagination that can give birth to what has not been thought before and that is why imagination plays such a crucial role in this account of creativity. This seems in line with the Romantic Ideal of creative imagination and, although, as I argue, my analysis involves crucial digressions from it, my overall approach stands close to the one of the Romantics. However, my view is concentrated more on a concept of *imaginative creativity* rather than *creative imagination*.

Heidegger calls the social reality into which we are “thrown” when we are born, ‘Geworfenheit’ (thrownness). He asserts that our birth and upbringing take place in our narrow social milieu which is surrounded by rigid attitudes, archaic prejudices and necessities not of our own making (Heidegger, 1962 [1927]). In this sense, for one to be authentic a continuous struggle against this social status quo is required, although we should not overlook that Heidegger admits that our existence is always a ‘co-Dasein’ or a ‘being-with’.⁴ I endorse Heidegger’s (1962 [1927]) and Sartre’s (1992 [1943]) view that one needs to struggle against the possible oppression and

4. For Heidegger, two ways of living exist: one may simply follow a life proposed and led by and for the masses, the they-self as he names it, a life that is doomed to be inauthentic, or one may take responsibility for one’s own life, experiencing it as a whole (Heidegger, 1962: 231-4). Heidegger attempts a distinction between the individual self and the social self, between the ‘myself’ and the ‘they-self’, “The self of everyday Dasein is the they-self, which we distinguish from the authentic self —that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way.” (Heidegger, 1962: 167) In Heidegger’s *Being and Time* “das Man”, i.e. what I call here the social world, is described as a “dictatorship” (Heidegger, 1962: 164) and everydayness is characterized as a mode of Being in which Dasein “stands in subjection to Others” (Heidegger, 1962: 164). In the same way that for Heidegger the Dasein lives in das Man and this is a fundamental aspect of its existence, the individual lives in the social world of shared meaning and its existence in this everyday world seems to condemn, restrict and constrain him or her to an inauthentic mode of Being. However, everydayness can undergo an authentic transformation.

exploitation coming from one's social milieu. However, this cannot be achieved through a form of self-exile. Creativity and authenticity are significantly enhanced when the person develops her creative processes within a social environment through fruitful interrelations. In order for one to be creative one does not need to isolate oneself from other human beings and their socially constructed reality; on the contrary, one should be part of the socio-political reality in which one was born, while at the same time defend oneself from the potential oppression and exploitation that may bypass one's capacity for *creativity*. Since most of the elements that enhance our capacity for creativity are socially constructed, e.g. language, one's creativity would be diminished in an asocial environment.

Theories of production and deduction are based on conceptions of "difference" that explain the new as either solely a derivative, i.e. a modified sameness, or in many cases an already-existing thing. However, 'new' comprehended in these ways cannot grasp the essence of novelty and creative creations. For instance, if we attempt to explain the radical novelty of an individual or collective creation, e.g. Edvard Munch's *Madonna* or the Athenian Democracy, in terms of what already existed in the specific social environment at that time, we would not be able to fully comprehend its essence. What makes such a creation radically new is that it broke through the conditioning constraints of the existing social status quo and that is why it may be considered genuinely creative.

The third condition outlines the kind of value that I believe is necessary for a novel attitude or work of any nature to have in order to be creative. It refers to the person who is the source of this attitude or work and it depends on whether one can actually acknowledge the existence of one's creation and appreciate its value. The value of the creation that one should be consciously or unconsciously aware of may be either positive or negative. One, nevertheless, must be able to acknowledge even to a minimum degree its existence or to form some opinion about it. As I shall argue in the following chapter, this does not entail either that one must necessarily be expressed through one's creation or that the creation should have any kind of causal or other relation to the person's self. In this sense, a computer cannot be, at least in our present days, creative, since it lacks the ability to acknowledge, even to a minimum degree, the either positive or negative value of its creation.

3. What Authenticity is

*I loved her against reason, against promise,
against peace, against hope, against happiness.*
—Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

In my view in order for a person to be authentic with respect to an attitude not only rationality and good reasons but also activity, wholeheartedness, mere

reflection and unreflective reasons cannot operate as either necessary or sufficient conditions. Harry Frankfurt's (1988, 1999) and Gerald Dworkin's (1988) theories experience critical flaws, since they do not take into account the personal history and development of the individual. Since manipulation in regard to higher-order desires may take place, one can meet any of the aforementioned conditions, while at the same time being inauthentic with respect to an attitude. Given this, it has been argued that these conditions may not be sufficient for authenticity, but that they are certainly necessary. In contrast to the majority of the prominent autonomy and authenticity thinkers, I believe that they are not necessary either. On the other hand, theories which incorporate the personal history of the agent, like the ones developed by Charles Taylor (1989, 1991), Alfred Mele (1995), and John Christman (2009) are restricted to conditions founded solely on rationality, rendering them weak, inadequate and unrealistic.⁵ 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 kind of reflection constraint. In short, the historical condition required for authenticity that I propose is based on the conception of creativity developed in the previous section and it is externalist, anti-intellectualist, non-rationalist and content-neutral. More precisely, it requires the non-bypassing of the person's creative processes. Thus, when it comes to understanding authenticity as creativity the question of an attitude's authenticity is a question of that attitude's history. This condition is both necessary and sufficient for *authenticity* and it can be phrased as such:

A person is authentic with respect to an attitude if this attitude either arises from a creative process (genuine authenticity) or arises directly from a prior authentic attitude of the person (plain authenticity).

Following from this, an account of *inauthenticity* should be formulated too. I argue that:

*A person is inauthentic with respect to an attitude if she was caused to have that attitude by another person in a way that bypassed her creative processes, or if that attitude arose from a prior inauthentic attitude.*⁶

5. As mentioned in the Introduction, due to the limited length of this paper, instead of concentrating further on the reasons why I believe authenticity does not necessarily require the conditions proposed by the dominant theories, I shall concentrate on analytically presenting mine.

6. Attitudes may not only be either authentic or inauthentic, but they may also be non-authentic. Besides, it seems odd to refer to a person as being inauthentic while she is not even able yet to formulate authentic attitudes. For instance, a child may not be considered authentic since she

My account of authenticity is asocial, while my account of inauthenticity is social. By this, I mean that when we refer to a person as being authentic, we refer to her internal creative processes, i.e. to her capacity to be creative. Given this, my account of authenticity is positive. By contrast, when we refer to a person as being inauthentic we are interested in her relation to others, i.e. we focus on whether her capacity for creativity has been bypassed by other persons. Hence, my account of inauthenticity is negative. The above conditions show that my theory of creativity is based on a functional definition of it. Given the distinction between form and substance, the focus of my account lies on how a creative process is to be realized and not what a creative process is exactly like.

According to the conditions outlined, an attitude can be authentic either if it is an outcome of the person's creative processes or if it is an outcome of her previous authentic attitudes. Given the latter, not all attitudes need to be creative in order to be authentic. Attitudes can be authentic if they are simply by-products of other authentic attitudes, so long as their generation has not bypassed the person's capacity for creativity. Hence, creativity is sufficient, although not always necessary, for authenticity. But what exactly does it mean for an attitude to arise directly from a prior authentic attitude? Authentic love is unique and distinct, there exist so many authentic emotions of love as not only the persons that have created such emotions of love, but also the number of times that each person has authentically fallen in love.⁷ Depending on the distinctiveness and uniqueness of each emotion there exists a certain spectrum from an imitative inauthentic emotion to a completely genuine and creative one. A kiss between lovers may not be creative each time, but, as long as it is a direct outcome of a creative emotion of love, it can be authentic.

What if, however, the creative processes of the person are not bypassed but, on the contrary, enhanced, through manipulation, without the person knowing it?

may have not yet created any authentic attitudes, but this does not mean that she is inauthentic. She is simply non-authentic. The same may stand for persons with severe mental illnesses, e.g. bipolar disorders. Not being authentic does not necessarily mean that they are inauthentic; they might be non-authentic, since no authentic attitudes may exist in them or they may not be able to further formulate any. Following from this, everything that is not authentic or inauthentic is non-authentic. In this sense, the distinction between an attitude being authentic and inauthentic depends on whether creativity is involved or not and the distinction between an attitude being inauthentic and non-authentic depends on whether it was caused by another person or caused by nature. The addition of the idea of non-authenticity seems crucial in the sense that most conceptions of thinkers characterize certain persons or attitudes as inauthentic, whereas, in my view, in reality they may be non-authentic.

7. Think of Anna Karenina's words in the homonym book by Tolstoy, "I think," said Anna, playing with the glove she had taken off, "I think...if so many men, so many minds, certainly so many hearts, so many kinds of love."

The attitudes that result in such a case are still creative as long as the manipulation occurs only in regard to the capacity for creativity, and not in regard to the outcomes of the creative processes. For instance, suppose that my girlfriend secretly throws pills in my coffee in order for me to become more creative. If, through this, I only become more creative than I was before, while the nature and source of my attitudes, ideas, and actions do not change in any sense, then I remain authentic with respect to them.

One could argue that the only element that is not authentic in such a case is the degree of my creativity. Nevertheless, the ideas that are born out of me are still my own and are still creative; the only thing that has changed is my ability to become more creative and manage to express my creativity through formulating these ideas. Does this mean, however, that I am not authentic with respect to the degree of my ability to be creative? Not necessarily. One who lacks the capacity to be creative cannot become creative even if one was given a tone of pills. For instance, if Baudelaire and Rimbaud wrote such great poetry only because of the absinth and opium they were consuming, then all opium users would be poetic geniuses, but sadly they are not.

I have argued that the aspects of creativity that lead to authenticity are novelty and the non-bypassing of one's creative processes by other individuals or social structures. A person therefore needs not be expressed by an attitude in order to be authentic with respect to it. Consider the random composition of avant-garde music through mathematical formulas. Despite the fact of whether the composer expresses her self through it, if this musical outcome is directed and amended towards certain creative outcomes, e.g. a number of compositions by Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis, it can be considered authentic. Philosophers of authenticity and autonomy, however, have always based their conceptions on the existence of some kind of true self, based on which authenticity obtains as a form of self-expression. Let us call this the "Self-Expression View": *One acts authentically when one expresses one's true self.*

Intuitively when we speak of authenticity we equate it with an idea of self-expression. Almost all theories of authenticity require or at least entail an aspect of self-expression. The main difficulty and weakness of such views is that they necessarily require the existence of a self. This direction of thought leads us unavoidably to dead ends. An important contribution of the conception of authenticity that I propose is that it is not a self-expression view, i.e. the theory proposed here does not require an extensive theory of the self. The majority of philosophers, since Plato and Aristotle, have conceived the self as a robust coherent entity with specific stable character traits, identifying it with the human capacity for reasoning, a view which I find inadequate, while others have argued that the self is non-robust and incoherent or even an illusion, albeit it a necessary one,

a view that I find also problematic.⁸ In my view, in order for attitudes to be authentic they only need to be creative; only in this way we can know that they are truly one's own attitudes. They need to neither express a certain true underlying robust entity, i.e. a specific true self, nor arise from such an entity. Therefore, neither a robust inner underlying coherent entity nor any kind of rational or mere reflective process is required for one to formulate authentic attitudes.

Most theories of the self since Plato and Aristotle refer to the idea of a static robust self with certain stable character traits. However, there exist a number of theories which hold that such a self does not exist at all, while others claim that even if a self does not exist, it is just a necessary illusion required for us to form an identity within our socially constructed realities. Intuitively, when we speak of authenticity we often equate it with an idea of self-expression. Most theories of authenticity require or at least entail an aspect of self-expression. The main difficulty and weakness of such views is that they necessarily require the existence of a self.

Postmodern thought has vividly challenged the existence of a self as an inner entity with essential properties which can be approached through inwardness and introspection. Thinkers in this tradition have argued that the notion of something being authentic in the sense of being essential is misleading and mistaken. I do not intend either to strengthen the postmodern criticism of the self or to address the problems that they have pointed out. I only intend to highlight that authenticity may remain intact from these criticisms as long as a self is not involved in it. Given this, I believe that one important contribution of my theory is that I put forward a view of authenticity that is not a self-expression view, i.e. it does not require a substantive theory of the self.

The account proposed in this thesis presupposes *no theory of the self*, and so avoids these problems. Philosophers of authenticity and autonomy have typically based their conceptions on the existence of some kind of true self. I argue that

8. One of the major lines of critique against theories of the self has its origin in the empiricist traditions and includes thinkers from David Hume (2000 [1738-40]) to Daniel Dennett (2007) and Bruce Hood (2012), as well as most of contemporary neuroscientists. In short, they are claiming that we are not able to locate the self, we put human nature under the microscope and we cannot find it. In addition, postmodern thought, including feminists and critical theorists, has vividly challenged the existence of a self as an inner entity with essential properties which can be approached accessible through inwardness and introspection. Based on this, they have argued that the notion of something being authentic in the sense of being essential and coherent is misleading and mistaken. I do not intend to neither strengthen postmodern criticism of the self nor address the problems that they have pointed out. I only argue that authenticity, understood in the way proposed in this essay, may remain intact from these criticisms, since the idea of a self is not involved in it.

this direction of thought leads us unavoidably to dead ends. A main strength of the theory proposed here therefore is that I put forward a view of authenticity that is not a self-expression view of authenticity, i.e. it does not require an extensive theory of the self.

I am not arguing that we should completely abandon rationality in favour of imagination, intuition or emotions. I am only arguing that we should put the necessary weight on imagination, emotions and intuition, as we have been doing until now for rationality. Creativity and by extension authenticity are based on all human attributes, none of which should be given a dominantly primary role over the others. Besides, to argue that irrational persons are inauthentic is to argue that many of the greatest poets and artists of human history were inauthentic. Think of William Blake as an illuminating example. If we are to aim at reaching the essence of authenticity, both in its everyday and radical aspects, we should free our thoughts about it from the “monopoly” of reason.

4. Conclusion

I have proposed a necessary and sufficient historical, externalist, anti-intellectualist, non-rationalist and content-neutral condition for authenticity based on a novel conception of creativity, which does not require either an extensive theory of the self or any rational, reflection and moral constraints. Authenticity conceived as a product and/or a by-product of creativity provides us with the ability to understand it in its full essence. That is, to accept as authentic, elements of a person that, even though may be authentic, are occasionally neglected or unjustly considered inauthentic by the dominant conceptions of authenticity (which, as mentioned, define it as relevant only to rational or mere reflection and/or equate it with autonomy).

I have claimed that taking a step backwards and rationally reflecting on what is one’s own does not ensure us in any way that what one settles on is truly one’s own authentic creation. Rationality and all kinds of reasoning need to be authentic too, in order to be adequate to be used as 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, authenticity comes before rationality and reflection, and not vice versa.

We find ourselves ‘thrown’, as Heidegger would say, into a world and a situation not of our own making, already disposed by moods and particular commitments, with a past behind us that constrains our choices. The “ethic of authenticity”, if radicalized, may provide us with more fruitful responses to

the tensions of post-modern morality and enrich the answers generated by the more mainstream tradition of the “ethic of autonomy”. An authentic life is not one that can be simply discovered and then experienced; it is one that needs to be *creatively* created. In the face of a contemporary post-modern drift toward a standardized instrumental mass society, it seems to me that through creative creation the possibilities of an authentic and genuine life may be awakened.

One should choose between living a life based on what one rationally believes that is best for one, i.e. act on one’s good reasons, and living a life based on what one creatively creates, despite the fact of whether it is good or bad for one, but with the certainty that it is one’s truly own creation. To me, authenticity-as-creativity seems to be one of the last tools with which we are left in order to transcend the predictable average externally generated everydayness; to reattempt an approach towards what Heidegger (1962 [1927]: 358) called “sober joy” of an authentic existence, a joy which obtains when one leads one’s life with uncompromised openness. Besides, managing to be genuinely authentic in our postmodern world may be one of the few ways left to fill the moral gap that the loss of an objective and universal deity (God) or entity (Logos) has created. I cannot but believe that a human life worth living is one that is at least to some extent authentic. I guess that one could not precisely answer why that is so, yet only as much as one could not answer why a fulfilling life is better than an unfulfilled. In any case, I stand confident that, “To be nobody-but-yourself — in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else — means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting...Does this sound dismal? It isn’t. It’s the most wonderful life on earth. Or so I feel.” (e.e. cummings, 1958: 13)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle (1999). *De Anima II and III*, with Passages from *Book I*, transl. by Hamlyn, D., with a review of recent work by C. Shields, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boden, M. A. (2004). *The Creative Mind*, London: Routledge.
- Castoriadis, C. (1997). "Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary", in *The Castoriadis Reader*, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis, New York: Blackwell.
- Christman, J. (2009). *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-historical Selves*, Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press.
- Cummings, e. e. (1958). *e.e. cummings, a miscellany*, edited by George James Firmage, New York: Argophile Press.
- Dennett, D. (2007). Bennett, M., Hacker, P., and Searle, J., *Neuroscience and Philosophy: Brain, Mind, and Language*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dworkin, G. (1988). *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press.
- Frankfurt, H. G. (1988). *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical essays*, Cambridge U.K. & New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Frankfurt, H. G. (1999). *Necessity, Volition, and Love*, Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Heidegger, Martin (1962) [1927]. *Being and Time*, translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Hood, B. (2012). *The Self Illusion: Why there is no 'you' inside your head*, Constable.
- Hume, D. (2000) [1738-40]. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, I. (2000) [1790]. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Edited by Paul Guyer, translated by Paul Guyer and Eric Mathews, Cambridge U.K. and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kronsfeldner, M. (2009). "Creativity Naturalized", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 59, 577-592.
- Mele, A. (1995). *Autonomous Agents: From Self-Control to Autonomy*, Oxford U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Mill, J. S. (1975). *Three Essays: On Liberty; Representative Government; The Subjection of Women*, Oxford U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1992) [1943]. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, New York: Washington Square Press.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge Mass.: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1991). *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

ABSTRACT

Most theories either identify autonomy and authenticity or else conceive the one as a core condition of the other. It is my view that authenticity may be irrelevant or even conflicting to autonomy and each of these concepts needs to be understood in its own terms. At the heart of this paper lies the development of a novel conception of authenticity. In contrast to the vast majority of prominent thinkers, who base their conceptions of authenticity on rationality and reflection, I base mine on creativity. Creativity has been widely understood as the creation of something both original and valuable. I develop a novel conception of creativity, which is designed to help us understand authenticity. I focus on what a creative process is, and I define it in terms of a conception of novelty and of sensitivity to the intrinsic value of the creative outcome. In light of this, I formulate a necessary and sufficient historical/developmental, externalist, anti-intellectualist, non-rationalist and content-neutral condition of authenticity. While almost all theories of authenticity necessarily require the existence of a true self or at least some kind of self — the existence of which has been widely questioned by empiricists, neuroscientists and post-modern thinkers — the conception that I put forward is not a self-expression view of authenticity.