

# REASONS, CONCERNS, AND NECESSITY

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## ABSTRACT

This article concerns the compatibility of orthonomy (making the right choices) and autonomy (making one's own choices). On the one hand we have the experience that we do not just want to govern ourselves, but that we want to do so rightly. On the other hand, it seems that the very fact that our choices are responsive to reasons is insufficient to explain why making these choices adds up to leading a life of one's own. It is argued that we can develop a viable view on the co-realisation of autonomy and orthonomy by using the concept of a *concern* which is closely linked to the concept of *caring*.

**Key words:** autonomy, caring, concern, orthonomy

At the background of this paper is a worry about the possibility of co-realisation of two important values: orthonomy and autonomy. This worry arises from two sides. On the one hand we have the experience that we do not just want to govern ourselves, but that we want to do so rightly. At least, we seek to distinguish better and worse ways of living our lives. Arbitrarily choosing how to live lacks the kind of grounding and depth of meaning that is precisely the point of engaging ourselves in practices of reflection and deliberation about what is right and good. We want our choices to be responsive to reasons. This is the normativity problem.

On the other hand, it seems that the very fact that our choices are responsive to reasons is insufficient to explain why making these choices adds up to leading a life of one's own. The standards of correctness need to be individualized or in some sense made into my own standards in order to make the life I lead recognizable as my life. This is the identity problem. There is, therefore, a worry about the way autonomy (making one's own

choices) and orthonomy (making the right choices) could both be realised. How can we get a sense of making the *right* choices, if autonomy implies that in some way we ourselves set the standards of correctness (or at least have a say in the kind of person it is worth being), thereby taking our lives in our own hands? And, how can we get a sense of making our *own* choices, if orthonomy implies that the criteria for doing so cannot simply be of our own making?

Kantians tend to downplay the importance of the identity problem, by reducing autonomy to orthonomy. A person (or more accurately: a will) is only autonomous (and not heteronomous) as long as the will governs itself rightly, i.e. according to principles that can be made into universal laws that bind every rational creature (Allison 1990, pp. 85-106; Hill 1991, pp. 43-51; O'Neill 1989, pp. 51-65). Neo-Humeans like Michael Smith hold that the value of autonomy is entirely derived from the value we place on orthonomy, for – says Smith – “...we value agents ruling themselves to just the extent that, in so doing, they thereby manifest their capacity to get things right” (Smith 2004, p. 2).

Volitionalists like Harry Frankfurt seem to downplay the importance of the normativity problem in favour of an account of identity that explains where, in practical deliberation, the agent is to be found (Frankfurt 1988, Frankfurt 1999). Frankfurt's hierarchical account aims at elucidating why we are authorized to prefix an 'I' to the uptake of reasons and what it means that a person is leading a life of her own.

Although I strongly disagree with Frankfurt's account of the source of normativity, I believe that we can develop a viable view on the co-realisation of autonomy and orthonomy by using a concept that is central to his project: the concept of a *concern* which is closely linked to the concept of *caring*.

## 1. Concerns: Harry Frankfurt's position

Concerns point out the things that we care about. As such concerns are the source of mattering *and* of identity. The concept of a concern (what we care about) will help us to understand how we can make the right choices as well as our own choices in leading a life.

Caring about something differs from judging it to be valuable. There are many things that I may recognize as intrinsically valuable, without wanting to pursue them. There are many inherently valuable ways of spending your time and effort, but only some of these ways will be important to you in such a way that you can be said to care about what you do. Concerns are valuables in which we are in a way 'invested'. Caring about something involves a complex set of mental dispositions and states of commitment by which a person *identifies* with particular concerns. Such identification confers an identity on us. It delineates our shape as a person as it determines the self-conceptions under which we value ourselves. Identification, understood as a specific kind of volitional commitment

also explains why our concerns have special authority for us. We are necessitated by what we care about because our commitment is a form of *wholehearted* acceptance. Wholeheartedness, as Frankfurt uses the term, “does not consist in a feeling of enthusiasm, or of certainty, concerning a commitment” (Frankfurt 1988b, p.175). Wholeheartedness is a state of harmony or lack of inner conflict that we reach because we find no further reason to question or be ambivalent about the commitments we have.<sup>1</sup>

Frankfurt understands the wholeheartedness of our commitments as a kind of what I would call *acquiescence*: a lack of ambivalence and, therefore, a lack of pressure for change of what we are committed to.

Now, it seems natural to think that this lack of pressure for change must in some sense be the result of *reasonable conviction*. One endorses the importance of the projects and ideals one is committed to, at least one sees no reason to question their importance, and *therefore* one lacks any feelings of ambivalence or doubt about one’s commitments. Therefore, it seems natural to think that one’s state of acquiescence ultimately rests upon one’s reflective awareness of the merits of what one cares about or at least upon one’s conviction that there is no reason to doubt those merits. This thought is nourished by the comparison Frankfurt makes to arithmetic (Frankfurt 1988b, pp. 167-168). Having made a calculation, you may perform another one in order to check the answer. If the outcome is identical, you may check again, but why would you do that? You will only do that, if there is reason to be more cautious, for instance because the calculation is very complex or because you know that you are very tired and apt to make a mistake. In the absence of such reasons, it seems perfectly reasonable to be unequivocally confident that the result is correct or to decide that the negligible likelihood that a mistake has been made does not undermine the correctness of the answer. Having no reservations is the hail mark of wholeheartedness. But, as this example makes clear, the lack of reservation rests upon your reflective insight into the soundness of the calculation, together with a lack of reasons to doubt that insight.

As with arithmetic, it seems that one’s state of acquiescence in case of what we care about is the result of having been ‘brought to rest’ by what is reasonable. Of course, coming to care about something needs not be the result of reasoning and deliberation. But wholehearted identification with one’s concern, involving a full lack of ambivalence, may require some level of scrutiny and critical reflection.<sup>2</sup> Many interpreters

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<sup>1</sup> This lack of conflict at the level of our commitments does not preclude tensions with first-order desires. A person may wholeheartedly have distanced herself from a desire, and yet this desire may still exert a powerful pull. It may even move her to do things she really doesn’t want to do. There is no tension in the person, however, as to whether the desire *should* move her or not. She has separated herself from it and she non-ambivalently embraces other desires. The latter desires are the ones she nourishes and wants to persist, which means that these desire are related to her identity-conferring concerns.

<sup>2</sup> In general, this seems to be more so with goals and ideals, than with love for persons. Even so, we may come to scrutinise the worthiness of our loves, e.g. by questioning the worthiness of the sacrifices we make for our beloved ones: Are they really worth it?

of Frankfurt, therefore, have thought that one's wholehearted identification with one's concerns must involve at least some moment of reflective endorsement.<sup>3</sup> The wholeheartedness that is at the basis of volitional necessities must rest, so it seems, upon a reflective awareness of the merits (or lack of non-merits) of our concerns. This means, however, that the effective authority of our concerns must finally derive from the fact that someone or something is worthy of our care. However, Frankfurt explicitly denies this order of derivation.

...the fact that a person cares about something (...) need not derive from or depend on any evaluations and judgements that that person makes or accepts. The fact that something is important to someone is a circumstance that naturally has its causes, but it may neither originate in, nor be at all supported by, reasons. It may simply be a brute fact. (Frankfurt 2002, p.161)

This brute fact, says Frankfurt, needs no further reflective support. That a person wholeheartedly accepts something "...is free of any suggestion concerning his basis for accepting it and, in particular, it does not imply that he thinks well of it" (Frankfurt 2002, p. 87). Of course, we may come to scrutinise our concerns. But, says Frankfurt, the fact that "there is considerable room for reasons and argument in the clarification....and in the evaluation of their worthiness" (Frankfurt 1999a, p. 115), does not imply that wholeheartedness necessarily rests upon our grasp of the reasons there are for deeming one's object of concern as worthy of it. "Wholeheartedness", says Frankfurt, "consists just in a certain harmonious volitional structure, which can come about independently of a response to reasons" (Frankfurt 2004, p. 126).

This means that the attitude of acceptance which results in the kind of commitment that makes some of our concerns authoritative to us need not involve any kind of reflective endorsement.

A person may be led to accept something about himself in resignation, as well as in approval or in recognition of its merit. The fact that he accepts it entails nothing, in other words, concerning what he thinks of it. (Frankfurt 2002, p. 160)

At some places, Frankfurt, even suggests that acceptance out of exhaustion or depression may result in concerns that are authoritative for us. Now, this does not only put doubts on the normative authority of such concerns, but of course also on the idea that such concerns have a say in where the agent stands. It is strange to think that acting out of a concern that one accepts in resignation or out of exhaustion is constitutive of the agent's determination of the action. I doubt whether acting out of concern that one 'accepts' in a state of depression amounts to full-blown agency, just as I doubt that such concerns have normative authority.

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<sup>3</sup> See Herman 2002, Moran 2002, Watson 2002 and Wolf 2002.

Why, then, does Frankfurt allow such concerns to play a role in addressing the identity and the normativity problem?

This is so because we simply need goals and purposes in our lives. Without caring about things our lives would be void of any meaning. Of course, it is better to care about things with which we have affinity, rather than to care about it in resignation. But, says Frankfurt, this affinity need not be something that we endorse. It may be a kind of affinity we just happen to have or even an affinity with horrible goals and abhorrent ideals, as long as caring for these goals and ideals provides for “continuity and coherence to our volitional lives”(Frankfurt 1999c, p. 162).

Hitler’s affinity with the abhorrent ideology of Nazism has brought him the opportunity to develop the fullest range of his personal capacities and talents. It brought him fame and pride probably not attainable in other ways. Nazism, says Frankfurt, was for Hitler a suitable ideal, despite its evil character.<sup>4</sup> Of course, Frankfurt admits that “it is better for us to care about what is truly worth caring about than it is to care about things that are inconsequential or otherwise unworthy or that will bring us harm ”(Frankfurt 1999c, p.162). However, it is not better because we want to seek truth, but because things that are truly worth caring about are in general more suitable to be taken as important in our lives. They are suitable for establishing and sustaining “thematic” unity in our lives. The suitability of our concerns is not derived from their value as such, however.

## 2. *Necessitation*

This makes clear what I meant when I said that Frankfurt is downplaying the importance of the problem of normativity in favour of solving the identity problem. The fact that one’s concerns have become part of one’s own volitional structure and provide for thematic unity to one’s life does not entail that one is necessitated in a normative sense by what those concerns involve. The example of Hitler is a case in point.

What is going wrong here is that Frankfurt takes wholehearted acceptance not only as the source of the integration of a concern into what is constitutive of an identity (my leading this life)<sup>5</sup>, but also as the source of the normative authority of that concern. However, even concerns, strivings and worries a person identifies with cannot, without further ado, be authoritative for that person. The kind of volitional necessity Frankfurt

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<sup>4</sup> “It is possible, I am sorry to reveal, that immoral lives may be good to live. In my view, at least, the value to Hitler of living the life he chose would have been damaged by the immorality of that life only if morality was something that Hitler actually cared about, or if the immorality of his life somehow had a damaging effect on other matters that he cared about.” Frankfurt 2002, 248.

<sup>5</sup> I am not sure whether his account is fully successful. See for similar doubts Bratman 2001, pp. 314-315.

is thinking of is not what we are looking for when we think of the normative necessitation.

Necessitation means that you respond to a sense of ‘ought’. It results from what is normative for you. Something is normative if it provides for a conclusive answer to the question ‘What should I do?’ A conclusive answer is an answer that is imperative because it stops further questioning. Most parents will find it impossible to ignore their own child crying in the night. They are volitionally necessitated by the love for their child. But even so, they may come to the conclusion that it is at some point better to try to ignore the crying child, for instance because it now has to learn that not every cry will be rewarded with the comfort of parental consolation. Our self-reflective reasoning capacities make it possible for us to ask critical questions about what we cannot help caring about. We may come to the conclusion that we had better take steps to try to distance ourselves from some of our concerns. We may find good reason to try to escape the grip of some of our commitments. We can, at some point, ask whether what we care about really is worth it.

But, what can be imperative to us in such a way that the train of questions (‘Is this really what I should do or should strive for?’) comes to a halt? Well, as Kant taught us, if our critical mind is the source of ongoing questions, then our mind must be the source of conclusive answers too. Only reflective conviction can stop the train of questions. We can only be bound by what satisfies our critical mind. Therefore, we can only be bound by our own conviction about what is reasonably the right thing to do and to care about. And, as Kant *also* taught us, as soon as this conviction includes the conviction that the insight arrived at would be inescapable for *all* rational minds, our being captivated by conviction results in a kind of necessitation that is *unconditional* and *final*.

The lack of freedom that we have in view of what is ‘reasonable’, however, is not identical to the lack of freedom that results from the need to establish and sustain “thematic” unity in our lives. The true life might be scattered and discontinuous in many respects.

Why does Frankfurt deny that volitional necessity must be rational (instead of psychological)? Because he thinks that necessitation by reasonable conviction cannot escape a fatal circularity:

There can be no well-ordered inquiry into the question of how one has reason to live, because the prior question of how to identify and to evaluate the reasons that are pertinent in deciding how one should live cannot be settled until it has first been settled how one should live. The question of what one should care about must already be answered, in other words, before a rationally conducted inquiry aimed at answering it can even get under way. It is true, of course, that once a person has identified *some* things as important to him, he may readily be able on that basis to identify others. The fact that he cares about certain

things will very likely make it possible for him to recognize that it would be reasonable for him to care about various related things as well. What is not possible is for a person who does not already care at least about something to discover reasons for caring about anything. Nobody can pull himself up by his own bootstraps. This means that the most basic and essential question for a person concerning the conduct of his life cannot be the *normative* question of how he *should* live. This question can sensibly be asked only on the basis of a prior answer to the *factual* question of what he actually *does* care about. If he cares about nothing, he cannot even begin to inquire methodically into how he should live; for his caring about nothing entails that there is nothing that can count for him as a reason in favour of living in one way rather than another.(...) As a matter of fact, however, nearly everyone does care about something. Nearly everyone cares about staying alive, for instance, and about avoiding severe injury, disease, hunger, and various kinds of psychic distress and disorder. They care about their children, about their livelihoods, and about how others think of them. Needless to say, they generally also care about many other things as well. For nearly everyone, there are a number of considerations that count as reasons for preferring one way of living over another. (Frankfurt 2004, pp. 27-28)

### 3. *The structure of rational reflection*

Frankfurt is right that there might be a circularity, but only because he starts from too simple an idea of what is involved in a rational inquiry into how we should live. Reasonable conviction does not involve having insight into the rational groundings of all our concerns *ad infinitum*. We have to take some things for granted. That we have to start somewhere and take certain considerations or views as given (for the time being) does not mean that a well-ordered rational inquiry is impossible.

Let me first express a general observation about this and then (in the next section) analyse the role of concerns in practical thought by taking the example Frankfurt gives about our concern to stay alive as a starting point.

Lewis Carroll showed that for any valid argument, there must be a background rule of inference that is endorsed without having this background rule itself being made explicit in the argument as a premise (Carroll 1895). I hold, but will not argue for it, that such background rules of inference are best understood as expressing *inferential dispositions*. The idea is that in reasoning we have to make a distinction between the explicit reasons that figure on the foreground as the premises in the argument and dispositions on the background that we could make explicit if pressed, but that we do not need to make explicit in order to be justified to draw the conclusion. Inferential dispositions in the background, like those expressed by rules of inference, *shape* our reasoning without

fulfilling a supportive role in the inference. This is why the explicit argument in the foreground is not *enthymematic*: it is not an argument that is incomplete because one of the premises is not explicitly stated. The argument is complete and the conclusion is justified, in spite of the fact that the argument is being given shape by dispositions in the background that we do not need to justify.

This does not mean that the inferential dispositions in the background are never taken into explicit consideration. Someone may opt for a deviant system of logic, which makes it necessary for me to make the inference rules that I take for granted explicit. However, this is an unusual event. Usually, we may endorse background dispositions, necessary to make rational reflection possible, without having these dispositions play a role on the foreground of deliberation.

An important corollary of this is that our reliance on background dispositions is not due to limitations of reasoning power. Even unlimited minds, perfectly rational and fully informed, will have to rely on inferential dispositions that have no explicit role to play on the foreground of reasoning.

#### *4. Concerns shape reasoning without functioning as premises on the foreground of deliberation.*

My contention is that concerns function in the above-sketched way as background dispositions in practical reasoning. In his paper “The Concern to Survive”, David Wiggins says that our desire to survive into the future is not “a thing that we can treat as a brute datum” (Wiggins 1987, p. 305), although there is “something instinctive here and irreducible” (Wiggins 1987, p. 307). These are, says Wiggins, “things that we need reasons to opt out of rather than things that we have to look for deep reasons to opt into. That is how it is with human rationality” (Wiggins 1987, p. 307).

Many of our concerns function like this. We may have reasons to opt out of these concerns, but in the absence of such reasons, it is reasonable for us to harbour them, and let them shape our practical deliberation. They are needed in the background, but they need not to be made explicit to complete the reasoning that is made possible by them. They inform our reasoning without functioning at the foreground of deliberation as premises to our conclusions.

Let me illustrate with some examples. Say that upon hearing the news that your mother has fallen seriously ill, you decide to cut short your holiday trip and return home immediately to visit her in the hospital. You think you must do so because your mother really needs your presence now. This is enough reason to pack and take the next plane home. In order to justify your decision you need not add premises like: ‘My mother is very important to me, therefore I want to be there now that she needs me’ or ‘As a son I have a duty to support my parents, especially when they really need it’. These



are not the premises upon which your practical conclusion is conditional. You do not decide to take the plane, *because* you want to relieve your concern with being a good son or because you are disposed to help a person who is important to you. You pack immediately, because your mother needs your presence now. Similarly, a mother does not decide to take an extra job to pay for the school fees of her child because of the prospect of relieving her concern with being a good mother if she does so, but because of the prospect that this will serve the future opportunities of her child. Motherhood and childhood are practical identities that involve specific concerns and expectations that have no discursive role to play on the foreground of deliberation. Their role is in the background: they explain why the illness of these women or the future of this child matters to you and why you are bound to cut short your holiday trip or to work hard for your child's future, but they do not play a role in the *justification* of your choices. Your decision is not reached *via* de recognition that being a mother or a son brings with it having certain things matter to you. Being a son or being a mother simply has it that certain things matter to you. Agents are disposed to act upon what they care about without bringing these concerns explicitly into the foreground of deliberation.

It is even strange to have such background concerns function as premises in the foreground of deliberation. They seem to lose part of their character as concerns –dispositions to take things as deeply mattering to us-- the moment they (or constraints implied by them) are brought forward as premises in the argument. The mother who explicitly calls upon her mother role in justifying the support she gives to her child seems to have brought forward 'one premise to many'. Is it not obvious to her that she has to do this as a mother? Or think of the teacher who justifies his call for silence by saying "You *have* to listen to me, *I* am the teacher". By appealing to something that should be self-evident the teacher seems to have lost half of his authority already.

Concerns cannot function on the foreground of deliberation. **Why is this?**

(a) It is because concerns themselves are not reasons, and, therefore, cannot function as premises. Reasons are facts. Concerns are mental states or complexes of mental states.

(b) This is shown in the fact that the invocation of concerns by the agent herself as justification of her action involves taking up a too third personal point of view, rather than speaking from a first personal angle. And this explains the rather odd feeling we have when the mother calls upon her motherhood to justify her care for her child.

## ***5. Reasons, concerns and character***

Reasons are not mental states. Reasons are normative facts: facts that make valid claims on agents. Reasons make such claims by putting certain actions or attitudes or feelings in a favourable light. Reasons as normative facts are motivating in virtue of their normativity (it is in virtue of their normativity that people are moved to act in accordance with them).

Reasons are not mental states, although we sometimes seem to refer to mental states when we mention the reason for doing something. Why are you not coming to the faculty party tonight? Because I want to help my foster son with his homework. Instead of taking that to mean that my desire is the reason to help my foster son, we should take it as expressing my *response* to the reason for staying home: my foster son needs my help. I could as well say “Because I need to help my foster son” without meaning that *my* need instead of *his* is the reason for staying home and helping him. Saying “Because I want to help my foster son with his homework now he needs it” is double: I point out the reason for staying home (my foster son needs my help) and I signal my recognition of this reason as normative. We have to look through the mental state of responding to a reason in order to find the reason itself - which is a fact. Similarly, why in the recent Dutch referendum did I vote in favour of the new European Constitution? Because I believe this is the only way to give Europe enough power to countervail the US. This is not pointing out my belief as a reason. We have to look through the belief to find the reason, which is a fact.

I think that the tendency to identify reasons with the mental states of recognising and responding to reasons is due to the tendency to mix up a first personal and a third personal way of answering the why question. Why did I vote in favour of the new European Constitution? Because I believe that this is the only way to make Europe powerful enough to countervail the US. This explains my vote, in a third-personal way, by pointing out the fact that I take a certain reason as conclusive.

In explaining someone’s behaviour we may refer to his mental states, e.g. his state of responding to a reason (he believes that..., he felt that...). But that does not mean that these mental states are part of the reason for the agent or that they play any role in the agent’s own deliberation. From a first-personal point of view we look through our mental states to the facts that constitute normative reasons.

Can we do without mental states, then? No, of course not, because an agent can only act for a reason if she is *aware* of that reason. Acting upon reasons, and not just in accordance with them, requires that the agent responds to a reason-constituting fact by acknowledging the to-be-doneness that is involved in that fact, and here concerns come in. For the recognition of to-be-doneness, the awareness of normativity, is a sign of the agent taking a certain view on things: a view in which certain facts matter and others do not, certain facts are important in relation to what she feels, chooses, does or leaves undone. This view is provided by our concerns that consist in sets of dispositions to take certain facts as having certain justifying significance or weight. Concerns are not, as Frankfurt has it, mental states of wholehearted identification and subjective necessity. Concerns are windows on the world of normative facts: they give us a view on what is normatively important.

This suggests a second reason why concerns cannot function as premises on the foreground of deliberation. I said that the invocation of concerns by the agent herself to

justify her action involves taking up a too third-personal point of view, rather than speaking from a first-personal angle, and this explains the weirdness of a son appealing to his filial love as a reason to fly to his mother, now she needs him.

We can see this, not only because of what I just said about the tendency to identify mental states like concerns and reasons being due to the tendency to mix up the third-personal and the first-personal point of view. We can see this also, if we think of it that patterns of concern are often typical of a person's *character*, and as such of a person's personality or identity.

For sure, this is why practical reasoning shaped by background concerns reveals where the agent stands. In our search to govern ourselves rightly, we are responsive to reasons. But as this responsiveness itself is shaped by our background concerns, our orthonomous choices will add up to leading a life that is recognisable as a life of our own.

This does not mean that our responsiveness to reasons can be taken to result in orthonomous choices *only* if we acknowledge that our conclusions are *premised* upon the concerns that provide for windows on the world of normative facts. Concerns and the character that they add up to cannot unproblematically be invoked by an agent to justify her own action; at least this is how we experience it. If you ask me, why I take the next plane to visit my mother now that she needs me and I say "Because I have never been able to set myself free from my mother's influence" this sounds more as an excuse (I refer to a psychic trait I wish I didn't have) than as revealing to you the reason why I take the next plane. Someone else can say of me "He has never been able to set himself free from his mother's influence" or "He is still such a mother's child", but such a reference to a personal trait does not rationalise my action. Therefore, if I refer to my love for my mother (the background concern that makes the fact that she is in need normatively salient), I seem to be taking in a similar way a too third- personal stance towards myself. This is too third-personal at least to be able to reveal the reason why I take the next plane. Asking the agent why she does something naturally is asking the agent to give her interlocutor a window into the reasons that justify her action. Answering "I cannot but take the next flight to see her because she needs me" is of a different character than answering "I cannot but take the next flight, because I am still such a mother's child" or "I cannot but take the next flight, because I deeply love my mother". The first answer is normative: it reveals why I am rationally necessitated to do what I do. The second two answers are psychological: they reveal why I am psychologically bound to do what I do.

## **6. Concerns have epistemic, not just pragmatic authority**

Concerns are dispositions that provide for windows on the world of normative facts.

Concerns make facts salient and important by default. That they do so needs no further justification. This is the default situation. Sometimes we are challenged to justify our

viewing things in a certain way which makes us take up particular facts as normative. Someone may challenge my sense of filial obligation or criticise the maternal dedication that makes it a matter of course for women to take a second job to pay for the school fees of her child. Sometimes we need to scrutinise our concerns. But this is not the default situation. Normally, our concerns shape and steer our practical deliberation without being themselves in need of rational support. As long as their authority as windows on the world of normative facts is unchallenged, they may shape what counts for us as a reason.

Why is this? I contend that the authority of concerns is epistemic. Concerns, as I understand them, have epistemic authority. We trust the epistemic soundness of the way concerns give us a view on the world of normative facts (until we have reason to challenge this way of viewing things). The authority of the presentation of what is normatively salient does not depend on the unifying and organisational function of that way of viewing things; hence, it is not pragmatic. We trust the way our concerns shape what counts for us as a reason and what weight that reason has, just as we trust our disposition to apply *modus ponens* if we derive  $q$  from  $p$  &  $(p \rightarrow q)$ . The instrumental use of concerns in practical thinking does not *add to the reasons* we have for taking these concerns as reliable outlooks on the world of normative facts. These reasons are given by *what* we see and not by the fact that ‘seeing structure’ is to be preferred to ‘seeing chaos’ and being deeply confused about what the right choices are. Authentic life may be scattered, confused and discontinuous in many respects. But even such a life will always be better than the good-to-live life of Adolf Hitler.

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Received: September 5, 2005

Accepted: October 28, 2005

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