In Search of Authenticity*

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ABSTRACT   After showing that authenticity is socially constructed rather than an attribute of that which is called authentic, we examine the authenticity work involved in claiming authenticity and discuss the processes of authentication. We then explore the situations in which the quest for authenticity makes for change and conclude by showing that the salience of authenticity can change.

AUTHENTICITY IS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED

Issues of authenticity most often come into play when authenticity has been put in doubt. As Trilling (1972, p. 94) has noted: 'authenticity is implicitly a polemical concept'. It is loudly proclaimed, for example, on behalf of royals whose legitimate right to the throne is widely in question and is muted when the natural right of succession is not publicly challenged. The polemic of authenticity is nicely illustrated by the frequent mediaeval era disputes, seizures, and thefts, of relics, bones or objects reputed to be associated with holy men of the Christian church. Their test of authenticity had two elements: did the relic perform miracles and did it attract large numbers of pilgrims to the site of the relic (Geary, 1986)?

This polemic of authenticity is often seen in contemporary mundane product marketing campaigns as illustrated, for example, in the case of contests over the quality of elite French wines. It is generally agreed that the Chateau-made *grands crus* wines of the Bordeaux region of France are among the best in the world. But, as Ulin (1995) has shown, as late as the 14th century, the wines of the interior east of Bordeaux, along the Dordogne River, were more highly prized on the Paris market. To change this the Bordeaux wine-makers and merchants first began by trying to compete on price. They persuaded the English, who controlled the port of Bordeaux and thus the riverain means of transporting heavy goods from the interior, to place differentially heavy taxes on wine from the interior, thus increas-

ing the cost of that wine. In the next several centuries, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian wine growing expanded, and the Bordeaux merchants found that they could not lower their prices sufficiently to compete in those markets. Unable to compete on price, the Bordelais collectively agreed to compete by showing that their wines deserved a higher price (Ulin, 1995). To do this, the merchants organized the innumerable small grand crus plots of land into a few larger holdings, giving the wine from them a unifying identity by associating them with the name of a neighbouring country house or château. Once established, it gave further gravity and sense of antiquity to the wine so-designated, as the association between wine and château came to reciprocally reinforce each other as part of the 'natural order' of fine things.

As Beverland (2005) shows in the article on luxury wines in this issue (Beverland, 2005), such tactics are still employed by growers and merchants around the world who advertise that they employ traditional methods of wine-making, while at the same time they obscure the array of industrial processes that have been introduced to make better wine in larger quantity and still sell it at a lower price. Such tactics of asserting authenticity by saying that the new authentically represents the old are used in selling a wide range of products. For example, Anand and Jones (2005) show that a London tea and coffee retailer takes great pains to underscore the authenticity of its products by continually referring to the date the store was founded and to the name of the founder, by noting that the chief taster was trained by the son of the founder, and by training retail staff in order to impress customers by seeming to know and care about the products they sell.

It is not just individuals, firms, or industries that work to establish their authenticity. In this era of global homogenizing, the distinctive social and cultural characteristics of places are obscured, and tourism promoters engage in concerted efforts to recreate something that is taken to be 'traditional' especially for the sake of tourists. For example, pointing to Yeats's folklore collections, tourist marketing material, and beer advertisements, Graham (2001) suggests that the idea of an 'authentic Ireland' has been fabricated. One example he cites is the 1994 'Heritage Island' marketing brochure. It states that:

> The story of Ireland's heritage is a new reason for visiting Ireland. It is told in a modern but authentic style and mirrors European culture preserved in an island which makes it possible to visit centres from the Neolithic to 19th century, even on a short visit. Heritage Island properties can be found throughout Ireland and range from restored castles and historic houses to state-of-the-art story telling of the legends and history of Ireland. All interpretation has been professionally researched and where there has been reproduction the style is authentic. (Cited in Graham, 2001)

If tourism promoters can reimagine the historical past of a country, they have also tried to reimagine the locus of popular mythical worlds. As Jones and Smith (2005)

show in their article in this issue (Jones and Smith, 2005), the New Zealand government and other tourism interests have taken advantage of the fact that the film epic, *The Lord of the Rings*, was filmed in New Zealand to turn into tourist destinations the beautifully rugged places where the various important scenes of the mythic story were filmed. Another case in point is provided by Grayson and Martinec (2004) in their study of tourists' evaluations of the authenticity of the Baker Street flat of the mythical detective, Sherlock Holmes.

Such fabrications are hardly unique to the contemporary era. As the authors anthologized by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) show, similar large scale efforts to fabricate authenticity took place in the 19th century. See, in particular Trever-Roper's (1983) chapter on the invention of traditional Scottish clan tartans by a Quaker Yorkshire coal mine owner. In a similar vein Anderson (1983) shows how the idealized ideas of democratization in the West were accepted by 19th and 20th century non-Western nation-builders as the model for creating democracy. While the deliberate fabrication of the past is highlighted in the Irish example and in those just cited, Halbwachs (1992) has used the term 'collective memory' in exploring the reinterpretation of past people or events to harmonise them with current political needs and cultural understandings. See also Portelli (1991) on the misremembering of the dates of several political murders to fit the contemporary view of the downfall of the radical Left in post-World War Italy, Kammen (1991) on the gradual transformation of the idea of the United States, Sewell (1996) on the creation of the storming of the Bastille as the first event in the French Revolution, and Fine (2001) on the reputations of some of the US's less illustrious leaders of the past.

The debate over authenticity or contrivance of teen-oriented rock bands has raged ever since the Beatles became famous for singing their own songs. The challenge to authenticity was forgrounded by the explicitly constructed group the Monkees who sang professionally written songs. While many boy bands are created by professional managers, they must be taken to be real by their young fans to have commercial success. The group 'N SYNC is an excellent case in point. Responding to a casting call by an Orlando professional manager associated with the Walt Disney Company, five good looking and energetic young men including Justin Timberlake, a Disney Mickey Mouse Club veteran, were selected to form a pop band that was given the name 'N SYNC (based on the last letters of their first names). In sharp contrast to this picture of a constructed group, the official 'N SYNC website makes the story one of a group of boys who acted on their own volition:

> In 1996 five guys got together, formed a band, made an album, and changed the world, all in one shot. That's the basic story behind the quintet known as 'N SYNC. Five talented young men from across the country, joined together in Orlando and created one of the most successful groups in music history. (http://www.nsync.com/content/group/history.aspx)

As these diverse illustrations suggest, authenticity, like 'creativity' (Csikszentmiha-lyi, 1988) and 'entrepreneurship' (Peterson, 1980), does not inhere in the object, person, or performance said to be authentic (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). Rather, authenticity is a claim that is made by or for someone, thing, or perfor-mance and either accepted or rejected by relevant others. The most nuanced description of the process of fabricating authenticity since Niccolo Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* in 1513, is presented by Erving Goffman in his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* first published in 1959. His discussion focuses on the individ-ual and group level, but it applies as well to the organizational and societal levels of analysis. He sees human behaviour as a kind of play in which participants take roles as members of teams of actors who through their performances seek to mystify and thus manage the impressions that others in the 'audience' held of them. He describes in detail the many problems that emerge when participants play roles that are incoherent or communicate in a way inconsistent with the char-acters they are playing. Hughes (2000) has shown the numerous links between Goffman's idea of impression management at the interpersonal level and my study of the fabrication of authenticity at the institutional level.

Moeran's piece in this issue (Moeran, 2005) provides an example of Goffman's ideas seen in the context of a corporation's fabrication of authenticity. He describes a Japanese company's use of a European person's reactions to test for the authenticity to Westerners of an advertising campaign they were developing. The constructedness of authenticity is perhaps never so clear as when it is vocif-erously claimed by the person who is seeking to be identified as authentic. As an example, see the case of the Spanish film director, Pedro Almodóvar, as described by Svejenova in this issue (Svejenova, 2005). To be sure, authenticity is not equally important in all contexts. For example, in the case of opera and theatrical per-formances, the criterion of excellence is not whether an actor is authentic but whether she can sublimate her own personhood in order to act the part demanded by the particular role.

AUTHENTICITY WORK

If authenticity is constructed and subject to continual change, then it clearly takes an effort to appear authentic. Such 'authenticity work' can take a number of forms.

Authenticity through Ethnic/Cultural Identity

As Grana (1989) notes, the easiest sort of authenticity work is seen in those situa-tions in which ascribed group membership, rather than training and passing qual-ifying tests, gives the right to represent the group. Lu and Fine (1995), for example, found that the ethnic appearance and role performance of cooks and waiters is crucial to customers' evaluation of the authenticity of the food in ethnic restau-

rants. Other examples of such an essentialist basis for the judgment of authenticity include Pueblo Indian art (Wade, 1985), 1950s commercial country music (Peterson, 1997), punk music in the 1980s (Fox, 1987; Gosling, 2004), blues music tourism (Grazian, 2004), and contemporary rap music (Judy, 2004; Kelley, 2004; Lena, 2003; Light, 2004; McLeod, 1999). Of course, authenticity through ascribed group membership can be a cruel trap. Gates (1991) cites numerous examples of African American, Jewish American, and Euro-American writers whose work is acclaimed but only when they write about their own group, while their writings about another group's experience are ignored by critics or derided as derivative.

The Elasticity of Group Membership

Authenticity through group identity is a construct that is elastic. The 1990s dance world of salsa provides an excellent case in point. Salsa, which in Spanish means sauce, is a mixture of several Latin dance forms and has attracted dancers from many non-Latin ethnicities. Studying salsa dance clubs in London, Urquia (2004) found that such outside patrons regularly engaged in inventive authenticity-work to show that they have the 'right' to dance salsa. Various dancers claimed identity by being hot-blooded, Mediterranean, taught in Cuba, gregarious, or natural dancers (see also Katz, 2005). An interesting example of such authenticity work is found in Waxer's (2002) introduction to her anthology on salsa in the Diaspora. She says she is Jewish and from Toronto and claims the right to write on salsa because of her mixed ethnic culinary experiences.

Contemporary performers themselves may seek authenticity by claiming an association with earlier artists, types of music, or lifestyles as Beal and Peterson (2001) found in their study of the authenticity claims and lyrical themes written by performers in contemporary alternative country music. Gillian Welch, the singer and composer of haunting folk-like songs, for example, artfully plays with reporters who ask how a person who grew up in Los Angeles in a family of college-educated musicians has the right to sing, let alone compose, such songs. Adopted at birth, Welch does not know who her parents were so she imagines a family background in the Appalachian mountains and wonders whether her birth father was Bill Monroe, a widely reputed philanderer and legendary father of bluegrass music, or Levon Helm, drummer for the 1960s folk-rock group called the Band (Wilkinson, 2004).

Elasticity in the claim to authenticity is stretched to its limits in the case of the photographs of corporate chief executive officers. As Guthey and Jackson show in their article in this issue (Guthey and Jackson, 2005), CEO publicity photographs are used to put a human face on an impersonal corporation in annual reports and other advertising material, but the photos are so similar that they generally fail to have the humanizing effect. Guthey and Jackson look at the CEO photos of the noted Danish celebrity photographer, Per Morten Abrahamson. As

with his other subjects, he places the executives in unconventional contexts and poses them in novel and often unflattering ways. These stylizations clearly bear the stamp of the photographer, and, I think, have the effect of casting the CEOs with his other similar photos of authors, models, film stars, and politicians as among the authentic mover-and-shaker celebrities of the Danish nation.

Authenticity through Status Identity

In some creative fields, authenticity is directly linked with the status of the author of the work, as Fine (2004, pp. 65–8) shows in examining the world of 'outsider artists' or as he calls them, 'self-taught artists'. Here the value of the work of art depends not so much on its quality but on whether the artist is untouched by influences from the fine art world. In what Fine calls 'identity art', the value of the work is judged not by its quality, but by the authenticity of the artist. In order to know the value of the work in such fields, one needs to be told the background of the artist, and the more bizarre the better for the value of their work. Are the creators untrained and poor? Are they from the farthest reaches of rural poverty? Are they from an inner city slum? Are they convicts, mystics, zealots, or insane? The art world status of eccentric Chicago bag-lady, Lee Godie, provides a good case in point. As one critic noted to Dubin (1997, p. 46) 'Her eccentric and unpredictable behavior, her bizarre habits and perceptions, her considerable charm and wit – all must be included in the oeuvre of this Outsider artist.'

Seeking Authentic Experience

It is not uncommon for people to claim a bit of authenticity by immersing themselves in what they take to be authentic experiences. In this regard, Grazian (2004) found that numerous tourists believe Chicago is the home of the blues. Some find authenticity in the large bright franchise blues clubs in the hotel district where they are served stereotypical electric blues and barbecue. Those who view themselves as more knowledgeable seek out the smaller, dingier, North Side blues bars that simulate a local conviviality. Finally those who want to avoid what they see as the inauthenticity of these two types of clubs seek their authentic experience in the few clubs located in the South Side African American ghetto that remain open. These clubs, sites of the 1950s blues clubs scene, were once bright and well appointed, but the few that still remain are now very run-down and feature desultory music. Interestingly the few intrepid tourists who venture into this world take the dilapidated conditions as marks of heightened authenticity (Grazian, 2004). Fine (2004) also reports this sort of authenticity-work among collectors of art by untrained artists. In showing the works that they have purchased, the collectors often tell stories of how they succeeded in tracking down an artist in some impoverished rural or urban back-water, and the stories may be backed up by photos

with the artist in her/his environment. Typically the collectors claim a bit of the authenticity of the art for themselves. Such authenticity by association is also claimed by middle class African Americans who collect the art of poor, uneducated blacks.

Technologically Mediated Authenticity

Historically music scenes, those tightly bound aggregations of performers, business people, and fans, depend on continual face-to-face interaction to maintain a sense of identity and cohesion. Beside a shared love of the particular kind of music, they identify other scene members by their clothing, age, hairstyles, costume accessories, language and demeanour (Peterson and Bennett, 2004), but with the advent of Internet-based list-serves and chat-groups devoted to specific music and lifestyle scenes, people can join without having any of these characteristics. As Lee and Peterson (2004) have found for the Internet-based aspect of the alternative country music scene, and Williams (2004) and Williams and Copes (2005) have found for the Internet-based component of the straightedge music scene, a good bit of the communication is devoted to weeding out inauthentic participants. Williams and Copes (2005) have found that a new type of straightedge participant is emerging – people whose scene participation is limited to the Internet. Williams (2004) explores how straightedgers negotiate their affiliations with the Internet-based scene vis-à-vis the larger face-to-face straightedge subculture and how they value others' participation.

Authenticity to Constructed Self

A final sort of authenticity work involves what Goffman (1959) called remaining true to the presentation of self one claims and Taylor (1992) calls self-reflexivity. The country music entertainer Loretta Lynn (1976) provides an excellent example of remaining true to the authentic self one has created. Lynn arrived on the commercial music scene in 1960, a spunky hard working wife and mother with a self-produced and marketed record *Honky-Tonk Girl*. In it and in many records that followed, she sang of love battles in an unadorned and heavily-accented Appalachian voice and fought efforts to change her image. For example, as Bufwack and Oermann report:

> On one of her early tours, a booking agent updated her image by buying a sheath, hiding Loretta's cowboy boots and making her practice walking in her first pair of high heels. . . . Frustrated by her balance problems during the concert, Loretta kicked off the heels and broke into a Kentucky buck dance in her stockings. The spontaneous hillbilly gesture remained in her show for years afterward. (Bufwack and Oermann, 2003, p. 265)

Lynn's 1976 autobiography, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, accented her early hard-scrabble life in the Kentucky hills, marriage at 13, numerous pregnancies, and her husband's early efforts to get her to sing her songs in public. In a later song she affirmed 'You Are Looking at Country'. Unlike some other country music entertainers, Lynn remained true to the authentic self she had lived and capitalized on (Bufwack and Oermann, 2003; Malone, 2002). Other examples of authenticity gained by establishing one's personal presentation of self can be found among rap artists (Judy, 2004; McLeod, 1999), fans of punk music 'being' rather than 'doing' punk (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1990), and for those who adopt the gothic lifestyle (Hodkinson, 2004; Widdicombe, 1993).

Of course the self that is created, or is created for one, may also be the source of life-long problems. For example, Schwalbe (2004) recounts the stores of two black men living within the constraints of rural southern poverty and racial discrimination, who seek authenticity for themselves by creating tragicomic characters to express themselves. In like manner, performers who play a stage role may fatally conflate the life they act out on stage, while others around them are better able to separate the performance from their off-stage lives. John Belushi, Billie Holliday, and Hank Williams are example of performers who died attempting to live the life they portrayed, while others in like circumstances including Dan Aykroyd, Tina Turner, and Hank Williams Jr were able to successfully separate their stage roles from their lives off the stage.

AUTHENTICATION

Our attention has been on those who claim authenticity and the circumstances in which they do so. In finishing this discussion it is useful to focus more explicitly on those who, in different circumstances, are able to grant or reject the authenticity claim.

The Call for Submissions for this special issue, it seems to me, gives a false sense of the locus of authenticity in suggesting that 'the creative expression of gifted individuals [is] mediated by masterful corporate strategies to create "authentic" cultural products'. The gifted individual creator may claim authenticity and the master corporate strategist may, indeed, promote the individual or their products as authentic, but other classes of actors are important as the arbiters of authenticity.

The most common sense use of the term authenticity has to do with discrete objects. So for example, looking at the page which you are reading, you might ask, 'Is this the original Magna Carta?' or 'Is it a ten Euro note?'. Reasonable folks would likely agree that it is neither of these. Works of art or archaeological artefacts may be more difficult to authenticate, but experts of any given time agree on the appropriate procedures to be used in testing for authenticity (Conklin, 1994; Harrington, 2004).

There are, however, many cases in which people do not accept the judgments made by experts. I was made acutely aware of this fact when I first began to study country music. Coming to the research without any prior knowledge of the genre, I looked to others to find out what 'real' country music was. I found that folklorists and other experts were free with their judgments of authenticity – and more often inauthenticity – by comparing contemporary performances with specific music styles said to have been practised in the past (Cantwell, 1996). Fans of the music also considered authenticity to be of central importance, but they paid no attention to the folklorists. Rather, they made judgments on very different grounds, so that what folklorists would call authentic, fans wouldn't consider at all relevant to country music as they understood it (Ellison, 1995). Whisnant (1983), for example, reports how bemused rural people were when experts were brought in to teach them the songs which were said to be traditionally theirs! And Rosenberg (1993) points to the role that folklorists have played in changing the music they set out to study and protect.

Over the course of my research, it became clear that authentication in the field of country music was made not by experts but by the end consumers of the music, the fans. More accurately, no one person or group authenticates country music. Rather there is a cycle of authentication involving everyone active in the field. Pared down to its simplest elements, performers and songwriters offer their best efforts at producing what they think country music to be. A few performers and songs are selected by the record companies with an eye to authenticity. How artists are dressed and presented, and in the case of some, the very names they use, are created by others. Any given song has to run a twisting gauntlet of a decision chain as it passes – or more likely fails to make it from being written, to being pitched by a publisher, to being accepted by a producer and singer. At each of these stages it may be modified, if not rejected entirely. Then in the recording studio the song becomes something still different in the hands of the vocalist, back-up musicians and engineers. Next the rendition is either rejected or accepted by the executives, and it is then further shaped by the photo art, video, and promotion departments. Once released, the recording may be played or rejected by country music radio programmers, and as the final link in just one cycle of the decision chain, fans may, or may not, buy the song in large numbers. If it is a hit, artists, songwriters, and those in the industry will look for other songs that could be shaped along the lines of the hit song. Decisions are made ostensibly to satisfy fan tastes, but in practice they are made largely to satisfy the expectations of the next gatekeeper in the decision chain (Peterson and Ryan, 1983; Ryan and Peterson, 1982).

Armed with the distinction between authentication by experts and authentication by end users, I tried to build a taxonomy of distinct types, but I found no scheme that did not induce more problems than it solved. I also sought guidance

from the other recent taxonomies by Kivy (1995), Anand and Jones (2005), and Grayson and Martinec (2004). Each of these had some utility, but none proved useful in classifying the broad range of examples discussed here. Consequently I am content to discuss the range and combinations of people who sometimes have a part in the process of authentication.

There is ample evidence in the recent literature that the case of country music is not unique. As shown in several of the works cited in this issue, a number of different sorts of people have a part in the authentication process. For example, in the case of religious relics in mediaeval times mentioned above, it included Catholic officials who certified the relic, those who testified to the miracles it performed, and the pilgrims who flocked to its shrine (Gearey, 1986). In his study of Turkmen carpets, Spooner (1986) finds a case in which the creators have no part in assessing authenticity. He finds authentication to be in the hands of merchants, critics, and collectors. Beverland, writing on luxury wines in this issue (Beverland, 2005) illustrates a more typical case in showing that producers, consumers, critics, competitors, and regulators all have a hand in making authenticity. The importance of team cooperation in selling the end user on authenticity is also shown in Bruner (1994), Anand and Jones (2005) and Grayson and Martinec (2004).

While many kinds of people may be involved in authentication, some kinds become more and some less important over time. Country music provides a good case in point. Fans are most important in authenticating a contemporary artist, performance, or phonograph record as being country music (Ellison, 1995). With the passage of time, however, much of the detail is lost when the past is re-remembered as part of one or more stories people tell to make the current field of country music comprehensible and the necessary outcome of prior developments in the music. Such simplification and reimagining of the past has also been observed in studies of intellectual history (Bourdieu, 1993, Ch 1.), collective memory (Fine, 2001; Schwartz, 1996), and more generally (Olick and Robbins, 1998).

One of my best informants, Hugh Cherry, chided me for doing just that. A disk jockey in the late 1940s and 1950s, he said that Hank Williams was not the paragon I made him out to be. Cherry averred that Williams was a reprehensible human being, and, if one looked at contemporary record sales and income from touring, he was not the most popular. Nonetheless, critics and historians since have labelled Williams as the most important country music artist of his, or perhaps any other, time, and I devoted an entire chapter to his brief life because it personified so eloquently the fabrication of authenticity. I don't know any studies that have made this point, but from the examples available, it seems that end users have more of a voice in authentication initially, but that the most visible keepers of collective memory, the critics, historians, archivists, teachers, documentary makers, music reissue specialists and the like, are increasingly important in enunciating the evolving idea of authenticity in any creative field as time goes by.

THE QUEST FOR THE AUTHENTIC MAKES FOR CHANGE

According to the call for papers, the subject of this issue of the *Journal of Management Studies* is 'authenticity and creative voice in cultural industries'. While, on the face of it, authenticity and creativity seem to be diametrically opposite attributes, nonetheless, the editors of this issue call for papers on 'authentic creative voice'.

While seemingly paradoxical, the editors are hardly alone in conflating 'authenticity' and 'creative voice', as I found while researching the development of country music in the first half of the 20th century. The content of the music and how it was presented changed remarkably from decade to decade, but media commentators and industry talent scouts alike referred to an implicit ideal that they regularly called 'authenticity'. Yet, at the same time, while 'authenticity' was an ever-present quest, 'originality' was said to be necessary for 'authenticity'. A performer is said to have 'originality', that is a 'creative voice', if he or she is judged to have an interpretation that makes their presentation distinctive and clearly recognizable (Peterson, 1997, pp. 3–4, 209–11). Thus, for example, a person only slightly acquainted with country music could distinguish the vocal renderings of George Jones, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson and Emmy Lou Harris.

This melding of the contradictory elements of authenticity and creative voice was possible in country music, and also in most of the cases analysed in this journal issue, because the performances, objects, or persons are judged in reference to an implicit template of the authentic. Consider the authenticity of Elvis Presley's 1957 rendition of *Jailhouse Rock* as country music. If the criterion is the recording's appearance on the *Billboard* Country Music charts, then it is demonstrably country music, having been on the country chart for 24 weeks and ranking as high on the chart as number 1 (Whitburn, 1994). But when one asks whether the rendition fits within the ideal of authentic country music, the answer is not at all clear. In fact a furious debate raged through the late 1950s about this song and others like it. Some saw this younger generation of rockabillies, including Presley, Bill Haley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash, as the rising wave of country music, while others saw them as traitors who were destroying country music.

Over time the continual quest in any field for 'creative voice' has the effect of destabilizing the image of the authentic, so that the idea of authenticity continually evolves. An example might help to make this point clear. As noted above, Hank Williams made innovations that led him to be defined by those in the field of country music as the paragon of the genre in the mid-1950s. But, ironically, other artists who faithfully copied his work were considered without originality and thus inauthentic. To be considered authentic, the aspiring new artist had to sound similar to Hank Williams in being 'country', but sound somewhat distinctive as well. Some like Lefty Frizzell, Webb Pierce and Faron Young found their own

voices. They demonstrate that authenticity is a moving target, and the content of the authentic, like fashion (Simmel, 1997), is continually evolving. Such a shift in authenticity is clearly illustrated in the case of country music when in 1975 Waylon Jennings questioned the continuing relevance of the Hank Williams model of authenticity. In a song lamenting the travails of the country entertainer on the road, he sang 'Are you sure Hank done it this way?'.

THE CHANGING SALIENCE OF AUTHENTICITY

This said, the salience of authenticity may change over time. Berman (1970) argues that the concern with authenticity is the product of the rise of radical individualism. But others have traced an increasing concern about authenticity to the process of industrialization. For example, in his famous 1936 essay, Benjamin (1969) argued that works of art lost something of their sacred aura in the present industrial era because they can be so easily reproduced. Thus only with the mass reproduction of symbols does the authenticity of an art work emerge as a quality to be prized. Orvell (1989) gives further evidence for this observation in his careful study of the changing attitudes about furniture and the decorative arts in the USA between 1880 and 1940. He has shown that before the industrial mass production of furnishings, veneers and pine painted to look like fine wood or marble was the height of fashion. As industrialization introduced the possibility that almost anything could be made to look like anything else, value shifted to showing what objects were made of, and old furniture was not refinished to bring it up to date but was valued as an antique stripped or restored to reveal its original look and feel.

The salience of authenticity in specific creative fields can also change over time. Jazz provides an excellent case in point. Before the Second World War, liberal critics and intellectuals asserted that only blacks could play jazz properly (Leonard, 1962; Lopes, 2002), and by the 1960s those in the black pride/black power movement said that only blacks had the right to play jazz (Baraka, 1963). But now there is general agreement that anyone who is trained in the tradition and has the skill to play well has an equal right to play jazz, so, in effect, the right to play jazz now depends not on ethnic authenticity but on certifiable knowledge, skill, and experience. In the process the music has gone from jazz clubs to a dedicated space in New York's Lincoln Center (Lopes, 2002; Shipton, 2001). Folk music (Cantwell, 1996; Cohen, 2002; Frith, 1996, pp. 39–41; Rosenberg, 1993) and bluegrass music (MacKay, 1999; Rosenberg, 1985) have travelled much the same path, if not as far.

However as Grazian (2003) shows in the case of blues music, questions of the right and ability are still hotly contested, and tourists at the turn of the millennium generally believe that blues must be played by African Americans to be authentic. And, if what Glynn and Lounsbury, in this issue, describe for the Atlanta

Symphony Orchestra is true for the genre more generally, the anchoring of classical music authenticity in strict adherence to the music canon and traditional production techniques, is becoming obsolete as the discourse of critics becomes increasingly focused on pleasing the public.

The history of commercial country music (Peterson, 1997) shows that the change can move in the opposite direction. With few exceptions, the most popular country music records made before 1930 were made by professionally trained performers who took on the guise of a hillbilly. Even Jimmie Rodgers who grew up in the country music tradition and sang in a rural southern voice, did not like country music but was able to act the part in accordance with the norms in the vaudeville tradition of the time. Things changed rapidly from 1930 to the 1950s when Hank Williams had become the paragon of country music authenticity and famously said, 'You have to plow a lot of ground and look at the backside of a mule for a lot of years to sing a country song' (quoted in Peterson, 1997, p. 217).

NOTE

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